



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

Presidents' Report - March 18, 2015 - Charles Merrifield

Michael Durall, the consultant who first visited our church in October, 2013, will be back April 12. He is the author of two books, *Making the Annual Pledge Drive Obsolete* and *The Almost Church Revitalized*, that many at the church have read and discussed. After the Sunday service, Mike will lead a seminar on growing and developing the church. All members and friends of the church are encouraged to attend. Also, he will be meeting with the leadership of the church. There should be a chance for you to visit with him during his visit.

The Stewardship Committee has begun the annual pledge drive. All members and friends will be asked to provide a pledge of financial support for the forth coming fiscal year. We will hold a celebration of a successful drive on May 16 when all contributors are invited to a dinner. More details later on the pledge drive and the celebration.

Louis Goseland has agreed to serve as social action coordinator for the church on a ¼ time basis for 3 months from April through June. This position is part of the plan to expand the social impact and growth of the church. Related to this position, the church was recently awarded an \$8,000 grant from Chalice Lighters to help support the social action coordinator position for the upcoming fiscal year.

Remember that the UUA General Assembly will be in Portland, OR June 24-28. The board is encouraging members to attend. The church is helping send Rev. Carter who is likely to receive a scholarship from the UUA. Several board members and others are planning to attend.

From the Treasurer - Anne Bailey

As of February 28, 2015, two-thirds of our fiscal year, we have received 75.8% of our budgeted donations. We will be preparing pledge statements dated March 31. Hopefully, most members will pick theirs up at Church and save us the postage. Don't forget to sign up your Dillons card to give a portion of your spending to the Church.

Religious Exploration Corner

-Denise Jackson-Simon, Director, RE

Happy Spring. We have several reasons to celebrate coming up. We will be finishing the month of March with A World Water Day Celebration and Lesson on Love. April 5, we will celebrate Easter with an egg hunt and activities. The 19th will find us celebrating again with Earth Day.

And, of course, these will be much more fun if YOU are there to join in the fun and festivities. See you at church!

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.

CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT APRIL 26

- Carol Neighbor

Plan to attend this splendid afternoon of music at our church on Sunday, April 26, at 3:00 pm. Bring guests! This event promises to deliver great performances by excellent Wichita area musicians and great cookies at the intermission reception for a donation of only \$10.

Take advantage of this excellence to share your church with others. Chastity Pawloski and Rachelle Goter will play “Duos for Flute and Clarinet” by Robert Muezynski and also “Three American Miniatures” by John Rutter. Laura Clark Martinez and Eric Crawford plan to perform “Duet for Cello and Double Bass in D Major” by Gioacchino Rossini. Eric also hopes to bring some superb young string players from East High School to play. Violinists, Nancy Johnson and Dominique Corbeil have scheduled the Handel/Halvorsen “Passacaglia” and “Sonata for 2 Violins” by Johann Kalliwoda.

And that's not all – Phillip Black will appear with The WSU Tuba/Euphonium Ensemble to complete this fabulous program.

Do not miss this concert!

Hutchinson UU Fellowship's Invitation to Celebrate

The Prairie UU Fellowship is thrilled to announce that we now have a home at 1809 E. 30th Avenue in Hutchinson, Kansas. We attribute our success to our fellow UU supporters in Salina, Manhattan and Lawrence as well as our devoted and wonderful members.

We also acknowledge the many members over the past 100 years who worked so hard to establish and maintain our Fellowship.

As a celebration and a chance to re-dedicate ourselves to the tasks of further building our congregation, we invite you to share with us our First Italian Dinner on April 4 at 6:00 pm at our new home at 1809 E. 30th Ave.

Please be our guests. If you plan on attending, RSVP to our address by April 1.

Minister's Musings

-Rev. David Carter

My Mosaic Identity

Coming of age in the 1960s, an African American male, that I became as counter cultural as I did is no wonder. My disaffection with mainstream America was in response to its consumerist obsessions predicated on materialism, its inveterate racism, and its broader, historical abuse of those deemed "other," the native peoples whose civilizations were destroyed, women, the working poor, and countless non-human living beings. And, this profound disaffection shaped the outcome of my religious exploration. Namely, I found in Vaishnava spiritual culture a spiritual home that resonated with my soul's longing for truth and justice.

Its appeal to me was manifold: central to Vaishnava philosophy is the inherent worth and dignity of all living beings; religion is viewed as a science which, when properly applied, culminates in realized knowledge of the self and its spiritual ground; clear distinction is made between the permanent and the transitory in religious thought and practice; its polymorphic monotheism celebrates a deity comprising coequal counter-wholes, female and male; and its theodicy, mitigated by envisaging karma and reincarnation, trumped depictions of eternal damnation familiar to me from Abrahamic tradition.

Before I married, this worked well. I was content to operate on society's periphery, and my identity as a Vaishnava priest fulfilled the modest aspirations I cherished of simple living and high thinking. However, after marriage, practical economic considerations raised the question of how I would integrate as a family man into the mainstream culture. I returned to school and earned a degree in philosophy and religion to compliment my decades of formal study and qualification in Eastern theology and praxis (Advaita Vedanta and Bhakti). After graduation, for nearly a decade I served the actively dying and their loved ones as a hospice chaplain. Later, when for a host of reasons I chose to leave what had been a deeply rewarding career in hospice care, I searched for a Western religious tradition that could comprehend, value, and welcome a clergy person with my background.

A longtime friend of nearly forty years is a lifelong UU. Through our friendship I acquired knowledge and appreciation of the tradition. Also, I had fond memories of reading my poetry at a spiritual poetry symposium hosted by a Unitarian church in Manhattan, NY. Apart from these and other favorable encounters with Unitarian Universalism, reading Parker, Emerson, Coleridge and other notable Unitarian and Transcendentalist voices engendered great admiration for the tradition. Finally, I knew of a remarkable and little researched phenomenon: Unitarians and Vaishnavas have a longstanding history of mutual admiration and enculturation based on much fruitful interaction.

I deeply appreciate Vaishnava culture for its radical eschewal of sectarianism, its universalist (as in *all souls*) conclusions, its embrace of perennial philosophy and, in its praxis, the centrality of applied spiritual technologies as effective means for personal and societal evolution. Similarly, I greatly value UU tradition's adamant refusal to become mired in anachronistic religiosity through parochialism, cultural chauvinism, or willful ignorance. And, I am won by its long history of enlightened social activism which, inarguably, has and continues to transform the world in powerful ways for universal good. Thus, I joyfully claim "dual citizenship" in these two extraordinary and entirely complimentary traditions. My protean, mosaic identity is an unexpected and welcome gift of great value. And, enriched by both traditions—Eastern and Western—I continue to grow and learn.

No Pain – Big Gain Available April 5

Debra Clements and Corey Swertfager will sign up people for the Dillons Plus Community Rewards Program on First Sunday Lunch Day. This is the easiest way to support First Unitarian Universalist Church once you've signed up for the new program. Every time you swipe your Rewards Card the church receives a percentage of your purchase. Bring your card Sunday, April 5, and Debra and Corey will do the rest.

This is an entirely new program; the old "gift card" program is being phased out. Once the money on that card is spent, it's done for. The advantage of the new program is that once enrolled, there's no need to reload the card. Your initial enrollment lasts for the entire calendar year. It's absolutely free of charge, too.

What if you left your card at home? Just tell the cashier your phone number. Once you're signed up, you're in the system! You earn rewards on almost anything every time you shop. Only exclusions: alcohol, tobacco, stamps, gift and debit cards, lottery tickets, sales tax. Community Rewards enrollment does not affect your fuel points or coupon discounts.

The bulletin board is looking pretty "smiley faced," thanks to Debra's personal reward system for our name tags. But let's make it even brighter with more smiley face stickers!

-- Del Smith

Curious? Join the Full Moon Celebration April 4

The next Full Moon Celebration will be on Saturday, April 4, beginning at 7:00. You are encouraged to bring drums or other rhythm instruments and join us for drumming, chanting, trancing and dancing. We continue our 25 year tradition of offering public earth-centered programming at First UU Church of Wichita and plan to include Dances of Universal Peace as well as dances celebrating our connections to the earth.

Whether curious or dedicated, we invite you to join us.

– Anne Bailey and Kathy Hull

First Sunday Lunch April 5

First Sunday Lunch will be an "Easter Feast." I will do ham and scalloped potatoes, green salad, and fruit bowl. Donations of other traditional Easter meal mainstays are invited.

– Magda Garrett, Kitchen Maven

Happy Dyngus Day!

Monday April 6th is the traditional Polish Holiday known as Dyngus Day. Join us on Saturday April 11th as we celebrate this spring-time holiday. Bring your favorite Polish dish, dessert or drink and, if you have them, a pussy willow or two! What exactly is Dyngus day? You'll have to come to the party to find out! Doors open at 5:30. Dinner at 6:00. Hosted by the Holiday Party Group.

– Amy Geyer

From the Content Editor:

Thanks to Anita Culp, Office Manager, for stepping up to format In Touch. Rolando Gomez's work involves travel and this month he was unable to get back to Wichita to do the formatting. Timely communication is important to the congregation and I know you all join me in a huge hip, hip, hurray for Anita.

- Del Smith

April 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 7:00p Committee on Ministry	2 7:00p UU Video History	3	4 7:00p Full Moon Celebration
5 No Adult Relig. Exploration 11:00a Childrens RE Easter Egg Hunt 11:00a Worship Service 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	6 6:00p Zen Friends	7 7:00p UU Craft Night	8 7:00p Worship Committee	9 7:00p UU Video History	10	11 9:00a Private Event 5:30p Dyngus Day Polluck
12 9:45a Adult Relig. Explor. 11:00a Childrens RE 11:00a Worship Service 12:15p Leadership Council 12:30p Durall Workshops	13 6:00p Zen Friends 6:30p Ethical Eating Vegan Polluck	14	15 7:00p Board of Trustees 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	16 7:00p UU Video History	17 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group MidAmerica Regional Assembly - Naperville, IL	18 MidAmerica Regional Assembly - Naperville, IL
19 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult Relig. Explor. 11:00a Childrens RE 11:00a Worship Service 12:15p Call to Action Group	20 6:00p Zen Friends	21	22 1:00p Newsletter Mailing	23	24 6:00p Climate Book Group	25 9:00a Private Event 10:00a Caring Committee
26 9:45a Adult RE 11:00a Childrens RE 11:00a Worship Service 12:15p Music Committee 3:00p Chamber Music Concert	27 6:00p Zen Friends	28	29	30		

It's Easy Being Green: Spring Cleaning? Remember EcoFest 2015 -Del Smith

Debra Clements is thinking about spring cleaning, and wisely thinking ahead to EcoFest 2015. She's heading up the Antiques & Collectibles Booth. Donations for her booth can be brought to church now and she'll coordinate storage of them until October 3, our second edition of EcoFest. Contact Debra at 558-2528 or debra.clements@cox.net.

Also keep an eye out for books and clothing for UU booths while tackling those spring cleaning chores. Storage space at church is limited, so for now keep them in your garage or closet, but please don't donate them elsewhere!

Our first annual EcoFest was a wonderful opportunity to share our values with the community, while celebrating green living and generating income for the church. Vivien Minshull-Ford, Marcia Ellsworth, and Susan Hund-Milne are leading the charge to success, with help from many others. UU booths in addition to Antiques and Collectibles, Books, and Repurposed Clothing include Fair Trade, Plants, Art, Crafts, Youth Activities, Music, and Bake Sale. Of course we'll have a full range of vendors and exhibitors inspiring people to live green and delicious food!

There are many ways to help ensure another successful event. Get in touch with Vivien, 683-9295, yminshull@yahoo.com, or Marcia, 688-5352, mjelsworth@aol.com. They'll find the best match for your interests and EcoFest 2015!

Mid America Region, UUA, Who We Are: By the Numbers

(Excerpted from a longer article written by Nancy Heege, Congregational Life Consultant)

The region is made up of 186 UU congregations affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association spread across 13 states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. A few small congregations are not affiliated with UUA.

Eighty-nine have full time ministers and many are also served by full and part time religious educators, administrators, membership, and other professionals, including social justice coordinators. Four of the 186 affiliated congregations are over 750 adult members and six between 500 and 749. Twenty four are between 250 and 499 adult members and 24 are between 150 and 249 adult members. Nearly 70% of the affiliated congregations (128) have fewer than 150 adult members. First UU is currently in that 70%.

2015 Regional Assembly is April 17-19 in Naperville, IL, just outside Chicago. Charles Merrifield has details about registration for this gathering which features speakers, workshops and getting acquainted with UUs from all over the region.

Hermine Greywall's Work: GALLERY XII through April 21

Hermine Greywall was a long time member of First UU. Upon her death in 2014, her family generously donated her paintings which are being shown at Gallery XII, 412 E. Douglas. If you miss the opening reception, Final Friday, March 27, the paintings will be on view and for sale through April 21. The proceeds go to our church programs.

April Worship Schedule

4/5 Thomas Vitkus - *Snakes in the Grass* - Every culture celebrates spring in their own unique ways, but there are a few fairly universal themes among them. Experience the harbingers of spring!

4/12 Michael Durall - *Surprise!* - Author and parish consultant Michael Durall pays us a return visit. He'll be the preacher on Sunday morning. Following the service, he'll lead a seminar from about 12:30 to 2:30. (Light lunch provided.) He doesn't believe in announcing sermon titles or topics in advance, but rather that people should come to church no matter what the subject, and be surprised. Shouldn't UUism include surprises from time to time?

4/19 Allison Celik - *Circles* - Circles is a community driven solution to addressing the underlying causes of poverty and supporting families in a holistic, long-term pathway to economic stability. Allison is the currently the coach of the College Hill site of the Wichita Circles Network. This service was rescheduled from March 1, when church was cancelled due to inclement weather.

4/26 Rev. Carter - *What the Frack?* - Everyone knows that disease, debt and fire need to be extinguished immediately or there may be hell to pay. The earthquakes that have dramatically increased in Kansas as a result of fracking may be a sort of disease manifesting in the body of our Mother Earth. Or else they may be seen as a kind of fire ignited by our ceaseless pursuit of the "good life." But, have we overstepped our bounds; have we zoomed right by the "good life," too caught up in the case to notice our misadventure; are we flirting with hell to pay?

From the Caring Committee

-LaRilla Combs and Jana Rambo

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

Thought you'd like to know:

While the Caring Committee spearheads efforts to meet needs within the congregation, sometimes more help is needed than committee members can provide, especially with needs that are ongoing. We would like to have a pool of people who can be called upon to provide various types of assistance.

By completing the Caring Committee Survey you indicate which type of assistance you would be willing to provide. The Survey can be completed online by clicking on the link below or there will be paper copies of the Survey available after the Church Service the next few Sundays. The survey takes only a few minutes to complete. Jana and LaRilla will be available to answer any questions you may have.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1PqCFoSc0Xy9ZJ90BKM_zihiMG5T3PZux40XYd1A8s8g/viewform?usp=send_form

A Note of Thanks:

Thanks to everyone who has given a helping hand to someone during this last month.

FIRST UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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From the Eclectic Readers Group

11:30 am, Friday, April 17. - *The Monuments Men*, by Robert Edsel with Bret Witter, is the story of a group of men and women from 13 nations, all with an art background, who were charged with saving as much of the culture of Europe as they could **during WW II combat**. Hitler's armies were methodically pillaging the finest art in Europe, from Michelangelo and DaVinci to Van Eycks and Vermeers, all stolen for the Fuhrer. Their mandate from President Roosevelt was supported by General Eisenhower, but they had no support -- no vehicles, gasoline, typewriters, or authority. They did have the notes and journals of a French museum employee who secretly tracked Nazi plunder. These unlikely heroes walked away from successful careers into the middle of war, risking -- and some losing -- their lives. They volunteered for service in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section (MFAA). The book was the basis for a recent movie of the same name.

Join us at 11:30 for a brown bag lunch, followed by a lively discussion. - Del Smith,
316-612-0826.