



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

President's Report

- Charles Merrifield

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held after the worship service on June 14. The agenda of the meeting will cover several items. One item is the election of new members of the Board of Trustees and a president-elect. Also, each committee is requested to provide a report of their activities for the concluding year and their plans for the forthcoming 12 months. The Finance Committee report includes a proposed budget for the forthcoming fiscal year, July 2015 through June 2016. The congregation will be requested to approve the proposed budget.

The Finance Committee did propose a revised budget at the May 20 meeting of the Board of Trustees. The budget was based on the success of the stewardship campaign that is soon to be completed. The stewardship pledge drive has raised over \$119,000 as of May 20. (Note that the pledge drive this year exceeded the amount of last year's record amount. Nevertheless, we did not quite reach our goal so we will continue to attempt to meet our goal.) The revised budget kept several significant changes that were introduced in the

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Get your Sense of Musical Humor Ready! DeMasi Brothers in Concert at First UU

Joseph and John DeMasi, the DeMasi Brothers, will bring their toe tapping folk music to Wichita at 7:30 pm, Friday, June 26th. They infuse their concerts with a mix of their Unitarian Universalist values and their unique blend of harmonies. Perhaps you've heard them on NPR radio, "Good Morning America," "Crook and Chase" or "Entertainment Tonight." Listen to them on their home page, www.thedemasibrothers.org. Their play list includes "Who Do You Say I Am?," about the quest for religious truth, "I'm Gay," a look at the folly of sexual discrimination and "Billy Blue," what country music sounds like when played by two Italian boys from Brooklyn. They draw upon the seven principles of UUism as inspiration and incorporate singalongs and audience participation.

Ticket price has not been set at "press" time. Watch for announcements in Weekly Update and social media.

From the Treasurer

- Marsha Diggs, Co-Treasurer

"Generosity could be as contagious as the zombie plague as long as enough people were willing to be carriers." ~ Jonathan Maberry, *Dust and Decay*

Money is coming in and bills are being paid. Ho-Hum. That's good, but is it good enough? As we are preparing our spending plan for next year, I am asking each of you to reflect on our church. What does how we spend our money say about us as a church and a community?

If you want to help us make a bolder statement in the upcoming church year, consider increasing your pledge.

Haven't pledged yet? It's not too late! Just contact one of the members of the Finance Committee (Charles Merrifield, Elaine Edens, Anne Bailey, or Marsha Diggs) they would be delighted to help you!

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.

SETH GIRTON, GUEST ARTIST CHAMBER CONCERT, MAY 31

- Carol Neighbor

Seth Girton, cellist, will be the guest artist at First UU Chamber Concert, 3 pm, Sunday, May 31, Sunday, 3:00 pm. Seth has performed on our series from time to time. He recently played his Graduate Cello Recital at Emporia under the instruction of Susan Mayo. He has offered to play portions of this recital augmented by a Latin Jazz segment including Carol Neighbor and Greg Golding, a cello sonata by Boccherini with bassist, Carol Neighbor; and a selection of his greatly entertaining voice and cello folk/pop songs. Seth is an excellent cellist and an extraordinary performer. You will really enjoy this concert. As usual, a reception is included and the suggested offering of \$10 stands. Do plan to attend.

The Green Guitar Folk House Concert at Shawnee Mission UU

The Green Guitar Folk House presents Peter Mayer in concert at the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church, 9400 Pflumm Road, Lenexa, Kansas on Saturday, **June 13**, at 8:00 p.m. One of the most respected songwriters and performers currently on the folk/Americana circuit. Mayer writes songs for a small planet - songs about interconnectedness and the human journey; about the beauty and the mystery of the world. \$15 with reservations, \$17 at the door. Reservations: greenguitarfolk@gmail.com or 913-304-4816. Shawnee Mission UU Church invites you to come to Kansas City for the concert and stay to worship with them on Sunday.

From the Caring Committee:

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:

Ermalee Skillman is gaining strength while a patient in the Kansas Masonic Home's Rapid Recovery Suites. Cards, calls and visits are welcome.

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO COMPLETED THE CARING COMMITTEE SURVEY! Forty eight (48) surveys were completed. A special THANK YOU to Louis Goseland who compiled the information from the surveys onto an easy to read spreadsheet. If you haven't completed a survey yet, please see Jana or LaRilla.

Minister's Musings

- Rev. David Carter

That's Not What We Had in Mind!

More and more Kansans are objecting to Governor Sam Brownback's policies that oppose the basic human rights of hundreds of thousands of the state's people, according to a survey conducted by the Docking Institute of Public Affairs at Ft. Hays State University (link below*).

Concealed weapons: 75% of respondents opposed allowing legal gun owners the right to carry concealed weapons in Kansas without first obtaining training and certification. Governor Brownback signed the legislation into law. **THAT'S NOT WHAT WE HAD IN MIND!!!**

Tax cuts and education: 70% interviewed expressed concern that the economy crafted by Governor Sam Brownback poses serious threats to their well-being and that of their families. Kansans interviewed registered strong objections to the unprecedented tax cuts for the wealthy and to the budget deficit of \$400 million dollars. For example, the cuts to education are enormously unpopular. Public education in Kansas is under attack by its supposed protectors! **THAT'S NOT RIGHT!!!**

Marijuana: 66% of Kansans favor legalization of medical marijuana in Kansas and 63% favor the decriminalization of recreational marijuana. Kansans want to reverse mass incarceration. **KANSANS CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER!!!**

Medicaid expansion: 58% of respondents interviewed supported expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Sam Brownback is vehemently opposed to "Obama Care." In fact, the governor's policies put Medicaid services *which are already paid for by Kansas taxpayers* beyond the reach of many in Kansas – men, women, children, and *even babies*. For those facing health crises, the ability to access medical services often spells the difference between life and death. Why is pro-life advocate Governor Brownback blatantly insensitive to the right to life of those without deep pockets? Surely a life free of medically preventable pain and suffering and protected from unnecessary death is a basic human right guaranteed to all its citizens by any responsible government. The majority of Kansans want the expansion of Medicaid! **DENYING HEALTH CARE TO THOSE IN NEED IS NOT A FAMILY VALUE!!!**

Environment: 56% of survey participants were opposed to hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in Kansas. **WRECKING THE ENVIRONMENT IS NOT WHAT WE HAD IN MIND!!!**

This administration's policies oppose basic human rights. And history teaches a pointed lesson, ignored only at great peril, namely this – people whose basic human rights are chronically denied finally reach a critical point of outrage, because their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness have been stolen from them. **And such situations eventually erupt.** Why is our governor and those who back and support his policies willing to ignore the will of Kansas citizens and the lessons of history?

Enough is enough! It is time for responsible leadership to redirect Kansas away from its current crash course and restore transparency, integrity, compassion, and prophetic witness to government in Kansas.

*<https://www.fhsu.edu/docking/Kansas-Speaks/>

President's Report, continued proposed budget at the Congregational Midyear Meeting in January. These changes include increasing the minister's responsibilities and salary, employing a half-time social action coordinator, and giving away the plate for two Sundays per month instead of from only one Sunday. The Board of Trustees approved submitting this budget to the congregation's vote at the June 14 meeting.

The Board of Trustees reviewed and discussed the written report of our consultant, Michael Durall, from his April 12 visit. The report, though brief at three pages, is dense with ideas. It will require much discussion and thought. I will describe 4 basic ideas in the report, but I may lead the reader astray and I may miss the point myself. Here is a summary of the 4 points.

1. The minister and the congregation should articulate their callings.
2. The Sunday service would be improved by
 - a. Offering a note of hope,
 - b. Changing the music,
 - c. Quickening the pace,
 - d. Having "special" Sundays,
 - e. Developing an alternative to joys and sorrows.
 - f. Including professional quality music in addition to Jenny Clayton (with whom he was very impressed).
3. Give away the Sunday offering each week to a selected charity.
4. The Wichita UU Church needs to get away from its decades long history of not trusting its minister.

"Awake: The Life of Yogananda" Augusta Historic Movie Theatre

Advance tickets are required for the award-winning movie to be shown at 7:30 June 22nd at the Augusta Historic Theatre: "Awake: The Life of Yogananda." At least 67 people must reserve advance tickets by June 11th. There will be absolutely no tickets at the theatre -- online sales only. (\$10.00). www.Gathr.us/screening/12175

Rev. Carter points out that Yogananda came to American the first time to attend a Unitarian sponsored International Congress of Religious Liberals in 1920. Unitarian thinkers - Emerson, Thoreau, Parker, and others - had great interest in Eastern philosophy and yoga practices. Take advantage of this opportunity to access an aspect of the religious pluralism which enriches our liberal faith tradition.

Yoga practitioners will be interested in seeing "Awake!" Film buffs will appreciate the 100% score on Rotten Tomatoes and the awards won at the Seattle International and Maui Film Festivals, as well as "Best Film" at the Illuminate festival. The movie was released in 2014.

A SHOUT-OUT TO THE UU KIDS!

The Food Bank of Wichita received our largest single donation the week of May 17th. Marcia Ellsworth and Charles Merrifield toted 137 pounds! Marsha Diggs announced during the Recognition Service for Religious Exploration Staff that the youth made donations to CornUUCopia in honor of their teachers: Denise Jackson-Simon (DRE), Wendy Haynie-Cosby, Magda Garrett and Sheri Barnes. A wonderful way to put our UU Principles into "real life" action!

Pagan Community Events

The next Full Moon Celebration is scheduled for Tuesday, June 2. Our celebrations begin at 7:00. You are invited to bring drums or other rhythm instruments and join us for singing, chanting and dancing.

In addition, we will be celebrating the Summer Solstice on Saturday, June 20. (Summer officially begins the next day on the 21st.) We will meet at 6:00 to enjoy a potluck feast followed by an informal ritual to mark the changing of the seasons. Please bring a generous dish to share, or feel free to join us for the ritual at 7:00.

Questions, comments? Call Anne Bailey (650-4905) or Kathy Hull (204-9956)

June 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 6:00p Zen Friends	2 7:00p UU Craft Night 7:00p Full Moon Celebration	3 7:00p Committee on Ministry	4	5	6 4:00p Private Event
7 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch 12:15p Leadership Council 3:00p Private Event	8 6:00p Zen Friends 6:30p Ethical Eating Vegan Potluck	9	10 7:00p Worship Committee	11 7:00p EcoFest Committee General Meeting	12	13
14 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:30p Congregational Annual Meeting	15 6:00p Zen Friends	16	17 7:00p Board of Trustees 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	18	19 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group	20 6:00p Summer Solstice Potluck
21 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Call to Action Group	22 6:00p Zen Friends	23	24 1:00p Newsletter Mailing	25	26 6:00p Climate Book Discussion Group 7:30p The DeMasi Brothers Concert	27 10:00a Caring Committee
28 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Music Committee	29 6:00p Zen Friends	30				

Religious Exploration Corner

-Denise Jackson-Simon,
Director, RE

Join us as we celebrate the "end of the Sunday School year" on May 31 with a walk in the Great Plains Nature Center's park. We'll explore the area and feast on watermelon. We'll leave the church shortly after 11:00, so be sure and be on time so you're not left behind.

June 7 is the beginning of our summer program which will be filled with a variety of activities from yoga to gardening and a field trip to the Humane Society. Our congregation members share their interests and knowledge with our UU children. It is a fun, informative time and great opportunity for an intergenerational experience.

We're looking forward to seeing you this summer. Remember, it's much more fun when you are there!

"The freedom of the mind is the beginning of all other freedoms." - Clinton Lee Scott

ECOFEST 2015 Is Greening Away

- Marcia Ellsworth & Vivien Minshull-Ford

There is a lot going on right now to get ready for Ecofest 2015. Thanks to the input of last year's participants, there are several changes that are planned. We think these changes will result in an even more successful event. Volunteers, as well as better signage, will direct visitors to booths or demonstrations tucked away in rooms. There is a UU Craft booth in the works along with an Estate Treasures and Kitchen Wares booth. In addition, this year, visitors will be charged a \$1.00 entrance fee (the best deal in town!) for the event and children under 12 years will be free.

We have had wonderful offers of donations from books for the book sale to collectibles for our "estate" treasures booth, particularly from Sigrid Trombley and Lila Arnold, but we still need more. Please let us know if you have anything you can donate for the cause. We are in particular need of old yarn that can be knitted into hats and scarves. Just remember, we are not having a garage sale but need vintage, collectible items in good condition. In addition, quality kitchen items and decorative household items are welcome. Unique used clothing in good condition will also be appreciated.

So far, we already have a great team of twenty-two volunteers who will be working in various areas of our green-living festival. On June 11, there will be a general meeting for committee chairs and members. Of course, we could do with more volunteers. If any of the following interest you, please contact Nancy Milner or LaRilla Combs. Categories which need additional helpers include crafts, estate sale treasures, food preparation, food serving, sign making, traffic supervision, second hand and upcycled clothing, event promotion, and a myriad of small and big jobs which will arise.

We have sent out vendor invitations, and are actively looking for sponsors. If you know a vendor or sponsor who would fit our green format – organic, natural, recycled, upcycled, please contact us. If you have any questions about EcoFest 2015 or an idea that we can add to our plans – please call Marcia Ellsworth at 688-5352 or Vivien Minshull-Ford at 683-9295. It takes a village!

Candidate Statements – 2015-16 Church Year

Editor's Note: All nominees are listed. Statements which were received by newsletter deadline follow.

President-Elect - Corey Swertfager

During his homily on May 3, Rev. David Carter asked the congregation what First UU called them to do. As if a Pentecostal flame took hold of my tongue, I declared before the crowd that I was called to throw my hat in the ring to be First UU's next President-Elect!

I was born and raised a Lutheran in a small town near Syracuse, NY. I first became aware of Unitarian Universalism when I attended non-violent confrontation training hosted at a UU church in the San Francisco Bay area in 1987. In the late nineties I attended the UU church in Eugene, OR. When I spoke to the minister about becoming a member, she emphasized that members were expected to contribute both time and money to the church; becoming a member took true commitment. Not ready for such a commitment at that time, I decided to remain a friend of the church.

When my company transferred me to Los Angeles in 2000, I started attending the UU church in Santa Monica. There I met my wife, Annie Welsbacher, and became a member in 2001. Other than attending some classes and social events and creating a couple church brochures, my involvement with the church was mainly making pledge payments.

In 2006 Annie and I moved to Wichita to be close to her family, then signed the membership book at First UU in early 2007. At First UU, I have been inspired to take on more active roles: I was part of the Green Sanctuary committee, revived the Adult Religious Exploration program, served on a Ministerial Search Committee, served on the board, assisted with a couple of pledge drives, and provided technical support for events and Sunday services.

I am now ready for true commitment. I am excited by the direction our church has taken in recent years and am ready to join forces with those who have worked years to transform our church into a home of healthy relations. Together we can stoke the fire of compassion, love, and wisdom. With a bright beacon of hope we can strengthen our bond with the community and expand our reach into the world. Let us continue to be the change we want to see.

Candidates for Board of Trustees

Bonnie Till – I have been a member of First Unitarian Universalist of Wichita for 35 years. Over those 35 years, I served mostly on the Religious Education Committee. In addition, I served on the Board three times, once as President of the Congregation, and chaired the Stewardship Committee (a time or two). Currently, I am on the Membership Committee and the Social Action Committee. I really like the energy in the congregation and the strides First UU has made in becoming a public church. I strongly support the current Board's emphasis on social action and the activities to increase our membership.

Kathleen McGee – This is an exciting time in our church history. We are changing from a private to a public church, implementing recommendations of Michael Durrall. I am running for a seat on the Board of Trustees because I want to be part of the action. I have been a member of this congregation for 25 years. During an early period of my membership I served as a member of the Board of Trustees, as Secretary of the Peoples Alliance, and took the reins of the Humanist Club from Bob Wherritt for about two years. Currently I am a member of the Bylaws Committee and the Caring Committee and I regularly attend Adult RE on Sundays. I would appreciate your vote.

George Rivera –

Laura Roberson –

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"Church is a place where you get to practice what it means to be human." - James Luther Adams

Candidate Statements, continued,

Candidates for Nominating Committee/Team

Susan Hund-Milne -I have been an active member of First UU since 1987, and I would be honored to serve on the Nominating Committee. This First UU church community is very important to me and I want to do everything I can to see us continue as a living, loving, tolerant haven of social justice and spirituality. During my years as a member I have served on the Membership Committee, the Board of Trustees, the Aesthetics Committee, the Committee on Ministry and the Worship Committee. Thanks for your consideration.

David Brewer -

Doug Clayton -

Millie Cherryholmes -

Jennifer Hess -

Rich Barrans Profile

You may have noticed a tall man who bicycled to 1st UU every Sunday in full Tour de France style gear and helmet, and then changed into street clothes for the service. By now Rich Barrans will have taken up his post in Malawi as a Peace Corps volunteer. His posting was to have been Kenya, but after the recent terrorist events, the Peace Corps pulled out, impacting the lives of its Kenya volunteers. Rich was scheduled to start Peace Corps work last September, but having quit a teaching job which he loved at the University of Wyoming for the Kenya posting he was compelled to find a teaching job in Wichita and has been teaching physics at Newman University.

Rich's spiritual journey began with the Methodists, but he has tried several Protestant denominations—and no church affiliation at all: "I run hot and cold. I've been an atheist and I've been a born-again Christian, both more than once. Right now I'm an atheist." Urged by a wise uncle, he began regularly attending Unitarian Universalist services in 2011 while going through a divorce: "it was like water to a man dying of thirst." When he arrived in Wichita, he googled for a UU church and found us.

Rich claimed that he was not very involved in church activities, being wholly and understandably tied up in his teaching job and preparing for his work in Malawi. However, he found time to help with First Sunday lunch preparation, putting up tables and doing dishes. His hobbies are cooking, bicycling, and singing; he was a member of the Wichita Choral Society. A couple of years ago he even tried his hand at acting: "I auditioned for a community theater production of Dracula, hoping for a bit part. I ended up the role of Dracula!"

Except for a niece who is a congregation church pastor in Ellinwood, Rich Barrans has no family ties in Kansas and his move to Wichita was meant to be just a few months. After Malawi, he says, "We'll see what happens," and we wish him good fortune and hope he comes back to First UU.

Say "Hello and welcome" to ...

New Members: Suzanne Miller, Jim Buchhorn, Max Johnston, Chris Erwin, Alan Reeder, Rachel Rutledge, Durell Gilmore and Teresa Price.

Rachel, a former member, introduces herself: "I am a social worker here in Wichita. I am single, no children. I also like to be creative and I like needlecrafts and painting. I am glad to be a part of the church again. I have not come for many years but it feels right to come back to attending. I don't have any expectations for my church experience, and I think that helps me appreciate First UU even more."

FIRST SUNDAY LUNCH DESSERT MARRIAGE EQUALITY CAKE

A potato bar with all the toppings heads the menu for June's First Sunday Lunch. We'll bake the potatoes; volunteers will supply the toppings, including vegan options. Sour cream, cheese, bacon bits, chives and other chopped veggies, and other goodies. June is traditionally the month of weddings-- let's honor Marriage Equality with special wedding cakes provided by Magda and Friends. Let Magda Garrett know how you'll help, 684-0520 or magdagarrett@gmail.com.

June Worship Schedule

6/7 Rev. Carter – **Light the Light of Smiles** – This sermon celebrates the beauty of the human countenance when it blazes forth the intrinsic divinity of the soul in a brilliant burst of dazzling light from the heart and thereby transforms a restless and broken world with the creative Light of Smiles.

6/14 Corey Swertfager – **Just Say Yes!**

6/21 Rev. Carter – **Singing Summer** – Guided by angelic diction and using the scalpel of wrought language, poets sing the world, the world, the world to life anew, giving new eyes to see the dawn anew. “Singing Summer” is an offering of poems celebrating the paradox of summer unlasting and the creative power of Love that dwells in us all.

6/28 Miranda Pollock – **Team Building**

First UU Will Be At UUA General Assembly June 24-28, Portland, OR

Rev. David Carter will be among the delegates from our UU congregations at the UUA's annual meeting and conference, General Assembly. This year, nearly 5000 of us will gather in Portland, Oregon, from June 24-28th to learn, celebrate, grow, and attend to the UUA's business. Other First UU members may be attending as well.

There is nothing quite like being in worship with so many UUs, and listening to some of the most stellar preachers of our era. Workshops help lay leaders and religious professionals learn how to do "church" better, and how they can help their congregations grow and thrive in these changing times. There is an overwhelming number of workshops-enough to entice anyone-and for those who like to sing, the GA choir is a marvelous experience.

Cornel West will be the Ware Lecturer on Saturday night, and many events (including all the business meeting segments) will be live streamed. You can check out the UUA website for more details of programming, registration, and (closer to the date) the live streaming details. Just visit: <http://www.uua.org/ga> to see details for this year, and links to programming from previous years.

And get ready: in 2018, GA is coming to MidAmerica when we all gather in Kansas City.

Two Effortless Ways To Support First UU

Do you buy groceries? Dillon's new Rewards system really pays off! If you've not registered yet, go to www.dillons.com/communityrewards, fill in your information and select "First Unitarian Universalist Church" (#10162) at the prompt. Or call 684-3481 and Anita Culp will register your card. The last two months (December, 2014 and January, 2015) under the old Gift Card system we earned \$334. Under the new Rewards program, we earned \$497 in two months (February and March, 2015). And that was with most of our registered congregants not signed up until March.

Do you read books? Another way to help the church without extra effort is taking advantage of the Chalice Bookstore located in the library. Even though it's not heavily promoted our programs have been supported by \$260 in sales since last November. It's self-serve. Prices are displayed on the table by the library door. Ridiculously low prices, too!

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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From The Eclectic Readers Group

11:30 am, Friday, June 19 - “Sure, there’s no place like home – but what if you can’t really pinpoint where home is? By the time she was nine, Tracy Seeley had lived in seven towns and thirteen different houses. Her father’s dreams of movie stardom, stoked by a series of affairs, kept the family on edge, and on the move, until he up and left. Thirty years later, settled in what seems like a charmed life in San Francisco, a diagnosis of cancer and the betrayal of a lover shake Seeley to her roots – roots she is suddenly determined to search out. *My Ruby Slippers* tells the story of that search, the tale of a woman with an impassioned if vague sense of mission: to find the meaning of home.” Amazon review of *My Ruby Slippers: The Road Back to Kansas*. (2011) Available from the Wichita Public Library. All are welcome. Brown bag lunch and discussion. Del Smith, 316-612-0826.

Privacy, Property, and Free Speech

Breathtaking changes in technology are posing stark challenges to our constitutional values in democracies around the world. From free speech to privacy, from liberty and personal autonomy to the right against self-incrimination, basic constitutional principles are under stress from technological advances unimaginable even a few decades ago -- let alone in the founding era.

On June 14 Adult RE will begin the 24-week series, *Privacy, Property, and Free Speech: Law and the Constitution in the 21st Century*. This course identifies the range of options that judges, technologists, legislators, and citizens have as they struggle to respond to technological shifts. Join us Sundays at 9:45 AM. Childcare is available upon request. Contact Frank Ruf, 316-650-3842, FDRUF93@hotmail.com.