



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

President's Report - Viven Minshull-Ford

Following the June decision to give another Sunday collection plate to a second charity, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to give these funds to Global Faith in Action for a year. Global Faith in Action (GFIA) is an interfaith/intrafaith "Dialogue in Action" emerging organization. They contend that religious "dialogue in action" is the bridge to the transformation of families, communities and our world. It was founded by Rev. Sam Muyskens. The first Sunday collection plate will continue to go to Sunflower Community Action.

Eleven new members of First Unitarian Universalist Church signed to attend the New Member classes on Saturday July 18 from 9 am to 2:30 pm. The morning session was the history of the church and of the denomination. Following lunch, new members were informed about committee and other activity opportunities, in particular EcoFest, Social Action, and Stewardship.

On July 16 and 23, Charles Merrifield organized Southern Cluster (formally Prairie Star) Skype & Google Hangouts conference sessions to promote Unitarian Universalist congregation interest in participating this year at White Memorial Camp on Council Grove Lake on October 16 - 18. Southern Cluster represents
Unitarian Universalist

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GA Report 2015 - Charles Merrifield

I came back from GA with ideas from several workshops that I attended. Here are projects that I want to discuss and, hopefully, incorporate in our church life.

Develop a Planned Giving Program: We need to develop a simple process by which we can encourage members to include the church in their wills. Further, we need to encourage members to consider gift annuities and trusts.

Develop a Kansas UU Advocacy Network: Thirty years ago there was a Kansas unit of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee that consisted of volunteers from all the UU churches in the state that worked on social justice issues. About 20 years ago the UUSC changed its organizational structure and dropped the state units. Since that time various states organized state advocacy networks, <http://uustatenetworks.org/>, to achieve similar goals as the old UUSC units. Kansas does not have a UU advocacy network. It is time that it should.

Community Ministry: One of the workshops I attended was on Community Ministry. It turns out that community ministry in the UUA appears to be mostly community organizing and social action within a congregation.

This ministry appears

Continued on page 8

Volunteer For EcoFest

Volunteers are the heart of making Eco Fest a success so please sign up to help make EcoFest a HUGE SUCCESS! Volunteer hours and tasks vary and can be worked out with your schedule. So.....just say "YES, Count me in!"

Please add your name to the Volunteer sign-up sheet at the EcoFest display table in the Church's Gathering Space. If you'd like more information please see me before or after Church or email LaRillaCombs@aol.com or call 316-733-2089. -LaRilla Combs

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

Environmental Justice: Be Part Of The Change

- Marcia Ellsworth

It is time to put Ecofest 2015 on your calendars! Our second year to host our unique family friendly, living green festival for the community is just around the corner. We are expecting hundreds of visitors to our building and will need every hand on deck to make this Ecofest another big success. Please plan to be part of the festivities on Saturday, Oct. 3, from 10am until 4pm.

This will be our day to shine and let Wichita know that we are here as a liberal voice promoting environmental awareness and sustainability. Of course, it is also an opportunity to raise funds to support our First UU goals and activities. We are hoping that a part of this year's proceeds will go to purchasing solar panels for our roof!

There will be activities for all participants from crafts for children to shopping and educational booths inside and outside the building . We have an exciting line up of vendors from the community and from our own members selling upcycled, recycled, organic, and repurposed goods that you won't want to miss. In addition, lunch will be available, music will be provided, and unique works of environmental art will be on display.

If you haven't already, please join the fun by signing up as a volunteer. When we all pitch in, we can make a difference! In addition to volunteering, we are hoping that everyone will be able to donate something for the bake sale so start looking at your recipe books. This can be either a vegan or non-vegan item.

Don't miss out on the excitement! Be part of the change we want to see in the environment. Join this worthwhile project and be sure to invite your friends and neighbors.

Our Visitors

- by Anita Culp, FUUW Office Manager

The Visitor Information Cards that visitors fill out reveal some interesting information about how people found out about First UU Church in the last two years. Of the cards filled out in church year 2013-2014, 16 people heard from a friend, 3 from a relative, 21 from the web site, 2 from the phone book, 2 from Facebook, and 11 listed "other". Of the cards filled out in church year 2014-2015, 12 heard about the church from a friend, 4 from a relative, 15 from the web site, 2 from Facebook, 7 from the church's electronic sign (operational in November 2014), and 11 listed "other."

FUUW Communications Team Invites You!

- Del Smith

Anyone interested in effective communication about First Unitarian Universalist Church Wichita is invited to attend a meeting at 11 am, Saturday, August 15, at the church.

We've been told we do a good job of keeping people informed, but there's always room for improvement in what we do and how we do it. There may be some reshuffling of responsibilities and new hands and ideas will help in that regard.

Who does what (primary responsibility): In Touch (Del Smith, content, Rolando Gomez, layout), Website (Jack Regehr), Facebook (Del Smith and Louis Goseland), Twitter (Louis Goseland), Yahoo Lists (any member of the list can post), Office Bulletin Board (Del Smith), Event Media Listing (Del Smith). Anita Culp, Office Manager, is responsible for the Weekly UpDate and Orders of Service.

General Assembly - Portland, OR: A Solid Hit with No Errors

-by Bonnie Till

First UU Wichita players at General Assembly: Rev. David Carter (delegate), Marsha Diggs, Mike Diggs (delegate), Marcia Ellsworth, Kathy Hull, Charles Merrifield (delegate), and your reporter, Bonnie Till. (Nancy Milner was to attend but was sidelined by her dog's health issue.)

After 40 years of being a utility player in the minors of the Unitarian Universalist league, I was finally called up to the "Big Show." I received the call in spring 2015 and was told to report to Portland, Oregon, on Wednesday, June 24, for the league's General Assembly. In preparation, I was given a housing contract and a play book.

The 5,000 Unitarian Universalists who came together in Portland, Oregon, in late June for this year's UUA General Assembly were not disappointed. From the Welcoming Celebration on Wednesday evening to the Sunday morning worship service and Sunday afternoon closing, there was a sense of joy and celebration. And two Supreme Court decisions -- Affordable Care Act (King v. Burwell) and gay marriage (Obergefell v. Hodges) could not have been better timed. To celebrate these events with 5,000 other folks who were as elated as we Wichita First UUs was almost more than we could contain within ourselves. Truly, there was joy in Mudville.

There were approximately two hundred presentations over the five days of GA. Fortunately among the seven of us, we were able to cover a wide range of topics. Attendees will share what they learned, beginning with the July 19 Sunday service, and the delegates will give a rundown on what was covered and voted on in the business sessions. Charles Merrifield's report on some of those sessions is also in this issue.

There were many wonderful speakers at GA. The two who hit the ball out of the park were Representative John Lewis of Georgia and Cornell West. Representative Lewis is an icon of the Civil Rights movement. Dr. West is a prominent and provocative democratic intellectual. Being in the presence of these two men inspired awe. When asked how he wants to be remembered, Rep. Lewis said "He'd like to be remembered as having helped a little."

The joy at GA was tempered by the shooting of nine members of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church. We wept with their congregation as we watched President Obama's eulogy for Rev. Clementa Pinkney. It was a stark reminder that much has been accomplished and much is yet to be done.

There are plans afoot to attend GA 2016 in Columbus, Ohio. All are welcome to be part of the First UU of Wichita presence at GA 2016.

President's Report, continued

churches from Kansas and environs. Set in an area of natural beauty, the camp offers spiritually bonding activities, including workshops, planning meetings, communal meals, children's activities, music around a campfire, s'mores and more. If you are interested in a special campout, contact Charles Merrifield. and check out <https://youtu.be/M7NC0I5vMPg> for a video of a former Cluster. For more information, see Charles' article on page 6.

First UU was greatly saddened by the news of Richard Welsbacher's death on Monday 13 July. A life-long member of the church, Dr. Welsbacher was also a pillar of the theatre establishment in Wichita, remembered with affection by his WSU colleagues and revered by the students he taught and directed. On Saturday 18 July there was a small Memorial service of readings, silence, and music at First UU for "family, friends, fellow travelers."

Chalice Bookstore Special Offering

A small collection of music books recently donated to the Chalice Bookstore will be on sale the first week of August. Just two of the titles: "Dixie Lullaby: a story of music, race and new beginnings in a new south" and "Fast Food, Stock Cars & Rock-n-Roll, Place and Space in American Pop Culture." The books will be in a basket on the small table and individually priced.

While you're there, take a look at some of the other Chalice Bookstore offerings. A new section features books by and about Unitarian Universalism. Unless the books are individually priced, use the posted price list as your guide and put your money in the plastic box.

Popcorn, Beer, Soda Pop & Posters! 6:30 pm, Friday, August 21

What better way to make street signs advertising EcoFest 2015 than having a party? Marcia Ellsworth and Del Smith are hosting a "Popcorn, Beer, Soda Pop & Poster Party" at the church at 6:30 on Friday, August 21st. Everyone is invited.

All the supplies to make the signs will be provided. We do need to know who is coming so we'll have enough Popcorn, Beer, and Soda Pop! Marcia Ellsworth (688-5352); Del Smith (612-0826). More information about EcoFest 2015 on our website, www.firstuu.net, and elsewhere in this issue of In Touch.

Ethical Eating Schedule: "A Bit of a Change"

- Dianne Waltner

Having organized the Ethical Eating group's Meatless Monday vegan potluck for about six years now, I feel that it's time for a bit of a change. We would like to diversify our activities and include other things like film showings, meeting at restaurants, etc. So, for the time being, we're going to have the potluck every other month. We will have our usual vegan potluck in August - on the 10th. However, we will not have a potluck in September. (The event for September has yet to be determined.) We are planning the regular potluck again in October, on the 12th, with no potluck in November. We will have our 7th annual vegan holiday potluck in December (date to be determined).

If, however, someone else is interested in continuing the monthly potlucks and would like to take over that responsibility, or if you have any questions or comments, please contact Dianne Waltner - 946-1115 or dwaltner@mac.com.

August 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	3 6:00p Zen Friends	4 7:00p UU Craft Night	5 7:00p Committee on Ministry	6	7	8 5:30p Summer Foods Potluck Dinner
9 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council	10 6:00p Zen Friends 6:00p Occasional Book Club 6:30p Ethical Eating Vegan Potluck	11	12 7:00p Worship Committee	13	14	15 11:00a Communications Committee
16 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Call to Action Group	17 6:00p Zen Friends	18	19 7:00p Board of Trustees 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	20	21 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group 6:30p EcoFest Popcom, Beer/Soda and Posters	22 10:00a Caring Committee
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	26 1:00p Newsletter Mailing	27	28 6:00p Climate Book Discussion Group	29 7:00p Full Moon Celebration
30 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	31 6:00p Zen Friends					

Used

Stop, Look, Read!

-by Del Smith

Many of us do just that when we enter the church, especially if we are arriving early or find ourselves alone in the Gathering Space. We **Stop** in front of the framed Covenant of Healthy Relations, **Look** at it, and take time to **Read** the Covenant.

It is prefaced by these words: "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."

Good advice: Please take time to Stop, to Look, and to Read!

A little history for those who are newer to the church: In the fall of 2013 a series of congregation-wide workshops gathered input for the covenant, which was worked on by smaller groups through spring of 2014. The small groups' work was presented for discussion to the congregation at two meetings, tweaked a bit and the Covenant of Healthy Relations was presented to the board in May, 2014. The Congregation voted to adopt it at the June, 2014, meeting. The Committee on Ministry did a service on the Covenant of Healthy Relations May 10, 2015.

Plan on attending Cluster in October

- Charles Merrifield

Unitarian Universalists from Kansas and neighboring areas will meet for the annual Southern Cluster at White Memorial Camp on Council Grove Lake, October 16, 17, and 18. Lovers of nature and peace are welcome to visit the camp on Friday, October 16. No group activities are planned for Friday, but there is always a bunch of enthusiasts who arrive to share the day.

Saturday will be a day of activities together when most people arrive. There will be workshops, planning meetings, meals together, children's activities, music around a campfire, and much more. Sunday there will be breakfast and lunch, morning walks, planning, and a lakeside worship service. Much of the planning will concern maintaining the state UU organization and establishing a Kansas Action Network.

Cluster is a great opportunity to get to know other UUs in the area in a relaxed setting. Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7NC0I5vMPg> for a video of a former cluster with Del Smith and Jim Hammer. I may have seen Mike Diggs in it, too.

Sleeping arrangements will consist of group cabins or tenting space. Costs are yet to be determined. Be sure to save these days on your calendar.



Minister's Musings

Rev. David Carter

Black Lives Matter and Our UU Principles and Sources

No one earns moral points for FINALLY agreeing to remove the Confederate flag from public display. Sure, it needs to come down and it needs to come down now. It champions a differential outlook predicated on race hatred and catastrophic brutality. It romanticizes a system of injustice that must topple except for campaigns of relentless terrorism, unconscionable violence, and incessant bloodshed. So, what is it that we are pretending not to know?

Let's be real! More important than banishing symbols of hatred and violence, our real work is the dismantling of systemic racism. Systemic racism is a catastrophic evil. It opposes America's cherished ideals – life, liberty, and justice for all. And systemic racism opposes religion's highest aspirations – moral integrity, cent-percent compassion for others, and universal love for all beings in the interdependent web of all existences. Infinitely more important than discrediting the emblems and shibboleths of systemic racism, systemic racism itself and its encrypted structures, assumptions, and societal norms must be abolished once and for all. Spiritual sickness must be transformed into spiritual wellness, ere we all go down in flames.

Instead of more rhetoric, let's marshal our many talents and take the right stand on "Black Lives Matter." "Black Lives Matter" translates into an endorsement of our UU Principles and Sources. Our UU mission is clear. We aim to make the world a better, safer, more just world that reflects both the cherished ideals of American democracy and the highest spiritual aspirations of religion. All people, Black, White, Yellow, Red, and Brown will be the beneficiaries:

1. Wichita needs a Civilian Review Board wholly independent of police influence and possessed of definitive powers, capable of mandating due process in the indictment and stringent prosecution of miscreant police officers.
2. Police officers must wear body cams when on duty and/or carrying arms.
3. Officers assigned to high stress services must periodically be relieved of those life-threatening assignments and for interim periods be cycled into "respite" shifts where they learn or enhance conflict resolution skills, receive training to understand and implement restorative practices, and where they engage in spiritual practices that expand consciousness and heighten compassion, integrity, courage, and virtue.
4. All candidates for the police force must take humanities courses in moral and ethical issues, developing inter-cultural intelligence and sensitivity; they must also undergo extensive training in conflict resolution skills and become conversant with and proficient at implementing restorative practice models.
5. To qualify for active duty, police academy graduates must achieve high scores on a rigorous exam that evaluates their moral and ethical character as well as their grasp of the service nature of the career choice they are making; and the exams must be graded by an independent, outside agency.

The Confederate flag has been and is emblematic of catastrophic brutality and injustice. It proclaims a barbarous system that is kept up by relentless terrorism, unconscionable violence, and a merciless reign of bloodshed. Let's take it down. But let's go the whole distance and take down the monstrosity the flag cloaks – race hatred and profound spiritual ignorance.

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

GA Report, continued

very similar to what we at the First UU of Wichita have been talking about in a social action coordinator. The web page for the UU Society for Community Ministries is www.uuscm.org which might be helpful in order development of a social action coordinator.

One of the community ministers at the workshop described her work with mental health. She has led a depression support group for several years. <http://www.mpuuc.org/mentalhealth/mentalintro.html>

Serving the Nonreligious: A Community-Focused Congregation: In one workshop leaders from the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis discussed the humanist emphasis of their church. They said that there are not many differences between most UU public beliefs and the public beliefs of many liberal churches. Many Millennials and GenXers are looking for nonreligious approaches to religion, and they see little to distinguish between liberal Christians and UU churches. The Minneapolis church has found that they can set their church apart by emphasizing the humanistic aspect of UUism. They have a whole series of humanist programs, groups, and activities that have been successful. They encourage congregations to gain the designation of Freethinker Friendly to make known in the community that such a congregation welcomes people with atheist, agnostic, humanist, and other non-theistic worldviews. <http://huumanists.org/programs/freethinker-friendly>

Year Round Pledging: We at First UU Wichita have been discussing getting away from the annual pledge drive. One workshop discussed how to set up a 12-month pledge drive that solicited 1/12 of the congregation each month. The main presenter was Mark Ewert from a consulting firm named Stewardship For Us. <http://stewardshipforus.com/is-year-round-pledging-for-you/>

E-Giving: Contributions for the 21st Century: Stewardship For Us presented a workshop on how to use electronic communications as a means of collecting payments as opposed to using checks and cash. We definitely need to investigate these ideas. <http://stewardshipforus.com/the-essentials-of-electronic-giving/>

Thanks for using your Dillons Plus Card!

Because of you First UU added \$784 to the coffers (covering the months of April through June). And it could be more in the next quarterly cycle, because every time you use your existing Dillons Plus Shopper's Card, you earn money for the church.

If you haven't gotten around to activating a Rewards Program account, don't delay! To get started, create an account that ties into your Plus card by going to www.dillons.com/communityrewards. Fill in your information. Towards the end of the short process under Community Rewards select "First Unitarian Universalist Church" (no. 10162). That's it - your registration will last for the rest of the calendar year. Or contact the church office at 684-3481 and have Anita Culp register your card.

Religious Exploration Corner

-Denise Jackson-Simon,
Director RE

Fun times continue with our summer RE program led by our wonderful congregation members. Rounding out July we made miniature gardens. Look forward in August to folk music, collage, gardening and a swim party at the Jenneys on August 23. Watch your Weekly Update and e-mail boxes for more details.

We hope to see you at church. It's much more fun when U are there!

Yes, it is a BLUE Moon!

- Anne Bailey

If you are reading this before the end of the month, we will be celebrating a second Full Moon on July 31. The August celebration is scheduled for August 29. Please join us at 7:00 at the Church for an opportunity to take part in drumming, chanting, and dancing offered by WUUPS, Wichita Unitarian Universalist Polytheists' Society.

August Worship Schedule

8/2 Rev. David Carter – **Singing Summer** – Guided by angelic diction and using the scapel of wrought language, poets sing 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 unending and the creative power of Love that dwells in us all.

8/9 Mike Diggs – **What is Your Place in the Universe?** Can science inform our role in the universe?

8/16 Rev. David Carter – **Famous UUs: Bronson Alcott** – Reflecting through the lens of history on the role of spirit in bringing about change to the world.

8/23 **To be announced** – Details to come. Check social media, Weekly Update and Orders of Service.

8/30 Rev. David Carter – **Water Ceremony** – This service, a long-standing tradition observed by UU churches all across the country, celebrates our beloved community. We bring water from near and far, gathered during the summer, to mingle in a common bowl. In Wichita this tradition includes watering our Partner Church Tree with the ceremonial water after the service.

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:

We are saddened that Dick Welsbacher, longtime member of First UU Church, passed away July 14, 2015. Our Heartfelt Condolences go to the family.

The family of Richard Welsbacher, who died peacefully on July 14, 2015, held a small memorial service for UU members, friends and fellow travelers at the church Saturday, July 18. There will be a public celebration of Dick's life Saturday, July 25, 11 am, at WSU's Wilner Auditorium (just off 17th street at Fairmount), followed by a gathering at 1 pm at Mosley Theatre in Oldtown.

We are happy to that Janet Roberts and Jennifer Hess have joined the Caring Committee.

Dick Welsbacher Memorial Fund

The Dick Welsbacher Memorial for WSU Performing Arts Angels has been established. The fund's name reflects the name of a loyal group of "angels" who helped fund the WSU Summer Theatre program in its early years, and today funds students in a variety of theatre, music theatre, and dance endeavors. Donations may be sent to: Dick Welsbacher Memorial for WSU Performing Arts Angels; WSU Foundation, 1845 Fairmount St.; Wichita, KS 67260-0002.

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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From Our Book Reading Groups

Occasional Book Group: 6 pm, Monday August 10, at the church. Everyone is invited to discuss *Murder of a Medici Princess*. Caroline Murphy illuminates the brilliant life and tragic death of Isabella de Medici, one of the brightest stars in the dazzling world of Renaissance Italy. Murphy is a superb storyteller and her fast-paced narrative captures the intrigue, the scandal, the romantic affairs, and the violence that were commonplace in the Florentine court. She brings to life an extraordinary woman, fluent in five languages, a free-spirited patron of the arts, a daredevil, a practical joker, and a passionate lover. You are welcome to bring a sack dinner.

Eclectic Readers Group: 11:30 am, Friday, August 21. In *The Girls of Atomic City: The Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win World War II*, **Denise Kiernan** tells the story of the Oak Ridge center of the Manhattan Project, a town of 70,000 workers – primarily women – who lived in a camp-like environment of [propaganda](#), barbed wire, checkpoints, code words, and spies, while working a thousand different jobs, all of which contributed to the events of August 6, 1945 and the [dropping of the atomic bomb](#). Some copies at the public library; used copies available from Amazon, beginning at \$1.99. Be prepared for a lively discussion. Brown bag lunch. Del Smith, 316-612-0826.