



# In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

## President's Report

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

This is my last report, so I think I will do something different and talk about spiritual community. My earlier years were spent steeped in the liturgy, reciting the Confession: "Almighty and most merciful Father: we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed the devices and desires of our own hearts.... Thou, oh Lord, have mercy upon us miserable offenders," a very heavy burden to assume. There were the hymns, the Creeds, and unmemorable sermons, but I still respect and revere those draughty stone churches and the droning clergy in black and white vestments as part of my own and my country's history.

However, there was no real involvement in any spiritual sense. My epiphany came in the late sixties with two works of art: Dennis Potter's play on the BBC, *The Son of Man*, in which Jesus is portrayed as a man full of doubt, frequently crying out "Is it me?" before the inevitable agonizing ending; the other was *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* by the Marxist atheist film director, Pier Paolo Pasolini, in which Jesus is a simple man of the people instead of a "transcendent evangelist in shining white robes." The idea that Jesus was not divine stayed with me for decades until I found what I needed at First UU.

And that spiritual community? It's in the like-minded people who I mix with on Sundays and other days. It's having something really useful to do, being part of outreach and social action, upholding the Principles, listening to memorable sermons, and being able to be fully myself.

## Message from Incoming President

- Corey Swertfager

I am thrilled to start my latest role at First UU this month, that of President of the Congregation. During my presidency, I'll have dual mantras as guiding lights: "Connect the Dots" and "Just Say Yes!"

Connect the Dots. We live in separate bodies, going our own ways until our last breaths. As isolated individuals, we may feel helpless against the woes of the world. But when we connect with others, we can feel the power of the collective. We come together intentionally at First UU to put our Seven Principles into action, to help each other grow into the best we can be. When we connect with other people and organizations beyond the walls of First UU, we feel the power of community. We build strong relationships and a brighter world when we connect the dots.

Just Say Yes! It's easy to get stuck in the rut of "No." "No, we can't raise enough money to flourish and grow." "No, we can't make a difference." "No, I cannot change." But when we open up to the world of "Yes," we start living in the realm of expansive possibilities. "Yes, we can improve ourselves and nurture others." "Yes, we can be more tolerant and understanding." "Yes, we can be the change we wish to see." Embracing a life of deep loving, kindness, curiosity, and understanding begins with "Yes!"

# In Touch

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

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

## Message from Incoming President-Elect

- Holly Terrill

Faith drives humanity. Faith in our families, employers, churches, deities of choice, and people who surround us every day compels us to do better, try harder, and be present for each other. A need for community and acceptance brought me back to this church after many years away. I look forward to being part of that which draws others in to an environment of support, compassion, love, and hope. It's an honor to serve First UU as President-Elect this coming year. I have lots to learn about the ins and outs of my new role and can't wait to get started. All my life, I've been curious about religion and eager to learn as much as I can about leadership; this experience will help me fulfill both of those passions. The congregants of First UU possess a plethora of knowledge and a willingness to help their fellow persons. Collectively, our life experiences help guide each of us to search for truth and meaning within our global sphere of existence. Let the delight and wonder of youth stay present and active long into our lives: "Growing old is mandatory, but growing up is optional."

## Welcome, New Member

**Stuart Boehmer:** My interests are physics, mathematics, literature, and I have liberal political and social justice leanings; the services at UU, judged by entertainment value alone, are rather boring [:-)], but the messages given out are usually very engrossing--I usually even forgo getting another coffee until the main sermon or talk is over! Pastor David Carter is an especially powerful & inspiring speaker. I usually can make it only once/month--and my preference is for the first Sunday (the food, you know).

## Where Your Treasures Are

- Anne Bailey

As we near the end of our fiscal year, now would be a good time to catch up on your pledge payments, if you are behind, or get an early start on next year. Any contributions will be greatly appreciated. We will be sending out end-of-the-year statements soon.

## Summer of Mercy Redux: We're Ready!

- Del Smith

Remember the infamous "Summer of Mercy" 25 years ago? And the demonstrations at Dr. Tiller's Clinic in 2001 in an unsuccessful attempt to shut the clinic down? They're coming back! And Trust Women and Planned Parenthood will be ready for the approximately 400-500 protesters.

We're expecting folks from out of town to join forces with local supporters of choice to keep South Wind Women's Center open during the July 16-23 anniversary effort to close the clinic. Some of those out of town folks will need housing. Typically, home hospitality does not involve meals, but coffee or tea and juice in the morning is a nice touch.

If you can offer home hospitality for one or more nights, please let Del Smith, [wichitadel@aol.com](mailto:wichitadel@aol.com), know, by July 13, what accommodations are available. It's an easy and much needed support of an important cause.

If you'd like to lend support in other ways, Corey Swertfager, [bikercorey@gmail.com](mailto:bikercorey@gmail.com), or Margi Ault-Duell, [socialaction@firstuu.net](mailto:socialaction@firstuu.net), are also on the planning committee for Summer of Show No Mercy activities.

## Social Action

- Margi Ault-Duell

**Book Study on Mass Incarceration and Racism:** This summer we'll be reading and discussing *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, the UUA's Common Read. This poignant book shares the author's experiences as an attorney representing incarcerated folks in the South, particularly people on Death Row and those who are underrepresented (literally) by legal counsel, such as children who've been tried as adults. Bryan Stevenson, who has successfully defended multiple cases at the U.S. Supreme Court and co-founded the Equal Justice Initiative, explores how racism is very much alive in our criminal justice system, both at the interpersonal and the institutional levels. You can purchase your copy of *Just Mercy* through the UUA's online bookstore ([www.uuabookstore.org](http://www.uuabookstore.org)). A purchase of five or more copies gets a discount rate, so see me after Sunday services (or email me at [socialaction@firstuu.net](mailto:socialaction@firstuu.net)) before July 17 if you'd like to order together. We'll discuss the book over a brown-bag lunch on **August 28** after the Sunday service, as well as at our August Social Action Meeting (**Wed., Aug 24**, from 7-8:30 p.m.). You are welcome to attend either or both discussions! And please invite your friends outside of First UU to read and discuss with us!

**Summer of Mercy Reunion: Time to Respond!** See Del Smith's "Summer of Mercy Redux" article in this issue.

**First UU Blog:** If you haven't noticed yet, our congregation's blog is active. We're sharing stories and reflections from our members on a variety of Social Action issues. If you'd like to write for the blog (once or multiple times), please contact our Social Action Coordinator Margi Ault-Duell at [socialaction@firstuu.net](mailto:socialaction@firstuu.net) or at (520) 396-0633.

**Black Lives Matter: Solidarity and Love:** Our congregation has expressed in multiple ways that the Black Lives Matter movement matters to us. One of the ways we are choosing to show our support for racial justice is to create a Black Lives Matter banner, which will hang on the front of our building. The design incorporates the words "Black Lives Matter" as well as the portraits of several Black folks killed in recent years, most of them by police officers. Their deaths and the prosecution of their killers highlight our nation's need to examine our racism, and to hold each other accountable for changing the ways People of Color continue to be targeted by systemic violence, interpersonal violence, and economic marginalization. If you'd like to contribute to the cost of creating the banner, please contact Margi Ault-Duell, our Social Action Coordinator, at [socialaction@firstuu.net](mailto:socialaction@firstuu.net) or at (520) 396-0633.

## July First Sunday Lunch – Asian Theme

- Jim Buchhorn

Our previously postponed plans for an Asian meal are back on for the July 3 First Sunday Lunch. Bring an Asian dish. Or bring whatever you want, and we will call it a fusion meal! Deserts are always welcome.

## Welcome, New Members

- Bonnie Till

Since February, First UU has gained seven new members:

Stuart Boehmer, Christina Grande, Rosalind Hodges-Phillips, Carrie Horton, Sharon Kniss, Jessica Wewer, and Doug Wilson.

These folks were “officially” welcomed to the congregation on Sunday, June 19.

## Two Holiday Parties in July

You are cordially invited to the UU Holiday Party Group **\*Fourth of July Party\*** on Monday July 4. Come help us celebrate the 240<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Gather at First UU Church at 5:30; dine at 6. We'll enjoy a potluck dinner, and then play games.

After the summer solstice, as the days begin to shorten, many faith traditions celebrate the time of the harvest. Also, July 30 is the International Day of Friendship. The Holiday Party Group invites one and all to a **First Harvest Potluck Dinner** on Saturday, July 30, at First UU Church. Please bring your favorite dish to make or eat in the summer, perhaps cut melon, garden salad, fruit salad, or a special bread, and join us for fine food and fun friends. Gather at 5:30; dine at 6.

## Music Committee Notes

- Jana Rambo

We continue to look for ways to improve the music at First UU. Carol Denning has an extensive list of contacts who may be willing to perform during a service. Also, we have Roy Zimmerman returning in July. We continue to need more members – please contact me if you're interested.

## Summer (RE) Religious Exploration Classes

- Denise Jackson-Simon

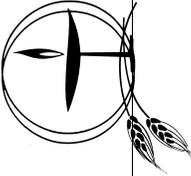
Come one, come all to our fun-filled summer RE program featuring a variety of activities led by several of our own congregation members.

Experience a variety of topics from card tricks and dance to story making and cooking. An exciting intergenerational happening, it's much more fun when you are there!

## Full Moon Celebration

We will gather on Tuesday, July 19, to sing, chant, and chat – maybe even dance a little. All are welcome to join us in the gathering space at First UU as we celebrate our place in the universe. Feel free to bring your drum or other rhythm instruments. Call Anne Bailey (650-4905) or Kathy Hull (204-9956) if you have questions.

# July 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 6:30p Humanist/ Freethinker Group
<b>3</b> 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	<b>4</b> Office Closed 5:30 4th of July Potluck	<b>5</b> 6:30p Zen Friends 7:00p UU Craft Night	<b>6</b> 7:00p Committee on Ministry	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 2:00p Membership Committee	<b>9</b> 10:00a Caring Committee
<b>10</b> 9:45a Adult RE 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council 3:00p Roy Zimmerman Concert	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 6:30p Zen Friends	<b>13</b> 7:00p Worship Committee	<b>14</b> 9:00a Garage Sale	<b>15</b> 9:00a Garage Sale 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group	<b>16</b> 9:30a Private Event
<b>17</b> 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 6:30p Zen Friends 7:00p Seeking Circle 7:00p Full Moon Celebration	<b>20</b> 7:00p Board of Trustees 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	<b>25</b> 2:00p Movie Group 6:30p Writer's Group	<b>26</b> 6:30p Zen Friends	<b>27</b> 1:30p Newsletter Mailing 7:00p Social Action Group	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 5:30p First Harvest Dinner
<b>31</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE						

**Unitarian Universalist Association Principles**

*We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:*

- \* The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
  - \* Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
  - \* Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
  - \* A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
  - \* The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
  - \* The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
  - \* Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.
- (Adopted by the 1984 and 1985 General Assemblies)
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**Who's Who @ First UU****FIRST UU OFFICERS & BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

President – Corey Swertfager

President-Elect – Holly Terrill

Board of Trustees – Mike Diggs, Nancy Milner, Kathleen McGee, Bonnie Till, Anne Welsbacher, Jana Rambo, and Doug Wilson

Treasurer – Anne Bailey

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Adult RE – Frank Ruf

Buildings/Grounds – Tom Moore

Caring – Jana Rambo and LaRilla Combs

Chalice Lighters Ambassador – Bonnie Till

Children's RE – Wendy Haynie-Coxby

Communications – Del Smith

Denominational Affairs – Mike Diggs

EcoFest 2015 – Marcia Ellsworth and Vivien Minshull-Ford

Finance:

Financial Commitment – Charles Merrifield

Stewardship – Elaine Edens

Kitchen Mavens – Magda Garrett

Membership – Anne Bailey and Bonnie Till

Music – Jana Rambo

Partner Church – Betty Hensley and Debbie Wadman

Personnel – Janet Roberts and Magda Garrett

Social Action – Margi Ault-Duell

Worship – Marcia Diggs

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

Charles Merrifield, chair; LaRilla Combs, Marcia Ellsworth, Linda Jordan, Lara Pollack, and Doug Wilson

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Susan Hund-Milne, Linda Jordan, and Del Smith

**GROUP CONTACTS**

Chalice Bookstore – Del Smith

Craft Night – Anita Culp

Digerati Buchgemeinschaft – Rolando Gomez

Eclectic Readers – Del Smith

Garden Group – Anita Culp

Occasional Book Club – Amy Geyer

Pagan Group – Anne Bailey and Kathy Hull

Zen Friends of Wichita – Bob Feleppa and Vivien Minshull-Ford

## Minister's Musings

- Rev. David Carter

## Faith

*"now the Lord prepared a great fish  
to swallow up Jonah.  
and Jonah was in the belly of the fish  
three days and three nights."*

once  
long time ago  
papa built a palace for my babies –  
the newborn rabbits, Winken, Blinken and Nod –  
out back of the barn,  
up off the floor,  
away from harm.

now, they say a snake climbed a tree,  
just to make Adam's wife fall;  
well, what daddy built  
wasn't grand as that tree  
nor near so tall  
still, one time a snake got up there  
swallowed Winken, Blinken and Nod.

papa came just then  
saw it all and was on it,  
like cold on ice,  
big brown hands like lightnin'  
fingers, long as his long fine face,  
and strong; swift, sure, and careful,  
like the thought of love.

lickety split (gentle though he was)  
he cut that ole snake's head right off  
with his jackknife, see!!!  
right quick, lickety split!  
and me, I'd come a'skippin' from out the barn -  
just in time to see it all

"o! papa!" –

there's that no-good snake, twistin'  
headless, real big, still thrashin' like –

"o! papa!" –  
my three babies inside him, see, like three welts  
shiverin',  
shakin' on achin' flesh, and papa's hands all  
bloodied –  
"o papa!!! papa!" –  
then, careful as a midwife,  
tears in his great big eyes,  
with his bloody jackknife,  
like a surgeon, papa delivered them  
Winken, Blinken, and Nod

I stood without breathin'; they just lay there,  
then they shivered and sighed,  
last, they commenced to hoppin'.  
daddy and I just laughed till we cried.

*"and the Lord spake unto the fish  
and it vomited out Jonah upon dry land."*

later, that same day, I asked him  
how he could be so lucky,  
to have momma for a wife,  
and God not be married?  
and he said yes, I was right.  
so I asked him  
if Mother Goose was God's wife?  
and he said "Yes."

## It's Easy Being Green

- Bonnie Till

**EcoFest Wichita** is **October 8, 2016**. Be sure to put the date on your calendar now and plan to help with and participate on the day of. This is a major fundraiser for First UU – by all of us working together to insure a financial success, we strengthen our bonds of friendship. I call that a win win!

This will be First UU's third annual **EcoFest Wichita**. The purpose of **EcoFest Wichita** is to celebrate, inspire, and empower people to make a difference for the environment and to promote eco-stewardship. Food; music; eco-demonstrations; children's activities; vendors of upcycled, repurposed, and recycled products; advocacy groups; and eco-centric art are all a part of this fun day.

**What can you do now to help?** Nancy Milner is in charge of the "Antiques & Collectables" booth. If you have any A's or C's that you'd like to donate to EcoFest Wichita, let Nancy know (316-841-4727 or [nmilner142@aol.com](mailto:nmilner142@aol.com)). (See Nancy's "EcoFest" article in this issue). **What is an Antique or Collectible?** These are quality items that you like, but no longer need/want. These items have some value and are too nice to sell at a garage sale for a dollar. By donating them to the church, you get them out of your house, pass them on to someone who will love them, and help the church make some money.

If you would like to help with **EcoFest Wichita**, want to have a booth, or have an idea for a sponsor, vendor, or educator, contact Marcia Ellsworth ([mjelsworth@aol.com](mailto:mjelsworth@aol.com)), Vivien Minshull-Ford ([vminshull@yahoo.com](mailto:vminshull@yahoo.com)), or Bonnie Till ([bect@cox.net](mailto:bect@cox.net)).

## Jumble Sale July 14-15: Items Needed!

- Marcia Ellsworth

Do you need a deserving place to deposit some of the things around the house that you don't use anymore? If so, we have the perfect opportunity for you. As our first UU fundraiser of this fiscal year, we are planning a Jumble Sale (we borrowed this name from the Brits) at the church July 14-15.

We need your castaways to fill our tables in the gathering space, and we need volunteers to help with the sale. Bring your items with a price marked on them July 10, the Sunday before the sale, or between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Wednesday, July 13. If you need to arrange another time to deliver your things, or have a few hours to volunteer, just let me know at [mjelsworth@aol.com](mailto:mjelsworth@aol.com) or 316-688-5352.

We plan to sell antiques and collectibles at **EcoFest Wichita** this fall, so we also need items such as valuable dishes, jewelry, antique clothing, lamps, clocks, watches, and coins. If you will bring those to the garage sale, we will store them for EcoFest. (See Nancy Milner's "EcoFest" article in this issue.) Let Anita, our office manager, know if you would like proof of your donation for tax purposes.



## EcoFest: Antiques and Collectibles Needed

- Nancy Milner

While gathering items for the July 14-15 Jumble Sale Fundraiser, please separate out items that may be appropriate for the Wichita Eco-Fest antiques and collectibles sale: nice jewelry, collectible dishes, knick-knacks, truly vintage hats, clothing, crystal, fine china, and antique items not used in modern society. Bring them to the church, or call 685-7682 or email [nmilner142@aol.com](mailto:nmilner142@aol.com), and I will pick them up.

## What Makes First UU First UU?

- Del Smith

There are people whose names and faces are familiar to all at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita. I'll name just three: Corey Swertfager, President as of July 1, 2016; Vivien Minshull-Ford, past President as of July 1, 2016; Charles Merrifield, who staffs the Fair Trade table. We know how their work serves the rest of us in the congregation. They're doing shared ministry, whether they call it that or not.

What is "shared ministry"? Ministry happens whenever someone recognizes that their volunteerism, their work for the church, helps serve the mission and vision of First UU. Our minister and other professional staff are essential and appreciated, it goes without saying, but the work of the church, "ministry," is provided by many.

So what *does* make First UU uniquely First UU? Congregants, i.e., shared ministry.

Jana Rambo doesn't regard her committee work as being "just" a volunteer; she used to work for an organization that would collapse without volunteers. Jana says, "I perform a necessary function by volunteering for the Worship Committee, since the service is a time when our attention is drawn together to renew our energies for the work of the church. It's a task uplifting and inspiring." We "people in the pew" recognize that the Worship Committee's choice of readings and other elements of the Sunday service reflects UU's common purposes and principles. (Other lay members of the committee are Marsha Diggs, Amanda Diggs, Magda Garrett, and Roxanne McKenzie.)

The Worship Committee's work is highly visible and continuing. Other ways of serving the congregation can be a one-off task or very far behind the scenes. It matters not. All are doing shared ministry. We are what makes First UU First UU.

Another committee will be featured in the next "What Makes First UU First UU" column.

## Roy Zimmerman Concert, Sunday, July 10, 3-4 P.M.

- Del Smith

*This Machine* is a 90-minute program by Roy Zimmerman with hilarious original songs. The title is a reference to Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, and also a recognition that songwriting does good work in this old world. "Sometimes I think satire is the most hopeful and heartfelt form of expression," says Roy, "because in calling out the world's absurdities and laughing in their face, I'm affirming the real possibility of change."

Roy is well known outside the UU Concert Circuit. His songs have been heard on HBO and Showtime. He's shared stages with Bill Maher, Robin Williams, Ellen DeGeneres, John Oliver, Kate Clinton, and George Carlin. He's been profiled on NPR's *All Things Considered* and is a featured blogger for *The Huffington Post*. Links to his work will be featured on Facebook.

Roy last visited First UU in 2014. Let's give him a royal welcome back and invite all our friends to join in the fun. Admission? \$15.00 (or, as Roy says, "pay what you can").

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FIRST UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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## Eclectic Readers

July: No meeting.

Friday, August 19, 11:30 a.m.: Geraldine Brooks' *People of the Book* (2008) is based on the true story of the Sarajevo Haggadah's survival through five centuries, through the heroic efforts of people as imagined by the author. The novel's heroine, a rare book expert, takes us back into history, into wars, inquisitions, and family tragedies. Readers of the novel will be interested in checking out the known facts about the Sarajevo Haggadah on the internet. Brown bag lunch, with a typically lively discussion starting at about noon.

### Digerati Buchgemeinschaft

Come join the Digerati! We are an online book club. We are reading Oliver Sacks' *An Anthropologist on Mars: Seven Paradoxical Tales* and talking about our **July Book** now. We are also going to participate in the Wichita wide Big Read in October. Discussions will take place at Goodreads. You can join us at <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/177877-digerati-buchgemeinschaft>