



# In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA  
FOUNDED 1887

## President's Report

- Corey Swertfager

July has been a busy month, both inside and outside of First UU:

- The Humanist group met at the church and voted to make the group an official part of First UU.
- Roy Zimmerman came to, as he put it, "entertain the troops" with his songs and humor. Thanks to Anne Bailey, Del Smith, and all those that made the concert a splendid success.
- Our Jumble Sale overflowed with goodies and people and netted the church close to \$3,000! Special thanks to Marcia Ellsworth, who spearheaded the sale. Look for her article inside to learn about all the folks that worked countless hours to make it happen.
- A neighborhood power outage triggered a loss of office email for a few days. Thanks to Jack Regehr for helping to resurrect the email system. Extra thanks to Anita Culp who, upon hearing that the email system was at last working, came in at 10:00 that Saturday night to send out the Weekly Update email.
- At the end of one of the Jumble Sale days, the hot water heater's life came to a dramatic end, causing the building to be evacuated due to the heater's release of dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. Many thanks to Charles Merrifield and Anita for researching and working with plumbers to find out the best repair/replacement options.

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## Social Action Report

- Margi Ault-Duell

### **Just Mercy Book Discussions August 24 and 28:**

This summer we'll be reading and discussing the UUA's Common Read, *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. Thanks to a donation by our President Corey Swertfager, we have copies of the book available to the congregation at First UU. **Get yours now** for a suggested donation of \$14 or whatever you can pay! To pick up a copy, contact Margi Ault-Duell at [socialaction@firstuu.net](mailto:socialaction@firstuu.net) or 520-396-0633.

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. 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 (Wednesday, August 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!

**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 social action coordinator Margi Ault-Duell at [socialaction@firstuu.net](mailto:socialaction@firstuu.net) or at (520) 396-0633.

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# In Touch

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

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

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

## Congregation

- Lila Arnold

If I could fly I would be  
at St. Pelican's Church by the Sea  
and never worry about a thing  
Heaven, Hell, or what tomorrow would bring.  
With avian friends I'd wait for Big P.  
to pass out the loaves and fishes to me.  
Then freed from creed, I'd take to the sky  
if I could fly, if I could only fly.

## What Makes First UU First UU?

"Shared ministry" is the work that individuals do through their volunteerism for the mission and vision of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita. Corey Swertfager's dual mantras, "Connect the Dots" and "Just Say Yes," coming together intentionally are ways of sharing the ministry (see July *In Touch*, "Message from Incoming President"). The Worship Committee was highlighted in this column last month. Numerous others are doing shared ministry through committee and programs, other ways of "coming together intentionally." Just examine the calendar in this newsletter, then look on the other side. You'll find the "Who's Who @ First UU," the names of officers, Board of Trustees, committee chairpersons and interest group contacts.

Wow! How to keep up with everything! That's where the Communications Team comes into the picture. Our ministry begins with this **monthly newsletter**, edited by Suzanne Miller and Rolando Gomez, content provided by many. Deadline is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month.

But there's so much more. Here's a brief introduction to the other ways we try to communicate everything to everybody. **Order of Service:** Anita Culp, office manager, creates these announcements and guides to the weekly service that are distributed each Sunday. Deadline for content is Wednesday. **Weekly Update:** Anita Culp emails these weekly announcements. Deadline for content is Wednesday. **Yahoo Lists:** WichitaExclusive is moderated by Charles Merrifield (church matters only). If you want to join this closed list, see Charles. The other list is open and is moderated by David and Christine Heinsohn, who live at a distance. To join, send a request to [1st-uu-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:1st-uu-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). **Website:** Jack Regehr is the webmaster for [firstuu.net](http://firstuu.net) which includes links to the public [Facebook](#) page, [Amazon \(First UU gets a cut when accessing](#)

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*Presidents Report -Continued*

- Several First UU folks were key players in #ShowSomeMercy, the response to Operation Save America's weeklong protests of abortion providers to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Summer of Mercy". Del Smith, Margi Ault-Duell, and I were in the planning meetings from the start, representing First UU as part of the coalition that also included Trust Women, Planned Parenthood, Peggy Bowman Second Chance Fund, Wichita NOW, and WITCON (Wichita Transgender Community Network). First UU sponsored and had a table at the #ShowSomeMercy Repro Rally in Old Town Square. Several UU's joined the crowd of close to 200 pro-choice advocates. I worked with duVergne Gaines, Feminist Majority Foundation, to organize legal observers to watch over South Wind Women's Center, as well as the homes of Julie Burkhart and one of the clinic's doctors. Del did an outstanding job of quickly organizing people to provide home hospitality and home legal observers. She also did her communication magic to spread the word about the rally and other events that week. Nearly half the legal observation team was made up of members of First UU – too many to name, but much thanks to you all! Margi arranged for people to create blogs about choice: two excellent blogs have been posted to [firstuu.net/about/blog](http://firstuu.net/about/blog) by Del and Annie Welsbacher, with another one in the works by yours truly.

Traditionally, each new board schedules a day-long retreat to get to know each other and to brainstorm ideas. Rather than trying to find one day where everyone is available, we are instead injecting some mini retreats into our board meetings. For the next few months, we'll be discussing *Just Say Yes! Unleashing People for Ministry* by Robert Schnase. Though the book is aimed at Christians to help grow their ministries, Schnase provides a great deal of information that can help us cultivate our own crop of UU ministries. If we find the book helpful, we could workshop the book with others in the congregation.

*What Makes First UU First UU? - Continued*

[Amazon through that link](#)), [PayPal](#), plus a link to our new [EcoFest website: ecofestwichita.org](http://ecofestwichita.org). **Blog:** Margi Ault-Duell, social justice coordinator, has created a First UU blog, complete with guidelines and a variety of contributors: [firstuu.net/about/blog/](http://firstuu.net/about/blog/).

**Facebook:** First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita has 700 followers on its public Facebook page. Our private Facebook group is for members only. If you are a member of the church and have questions about the private group, please talk to Corey Swertfager or Del Smith. **Twitter:** We post regular announcements about events and issues at [uuict](https://twitter.com/uuict). **Instagram:** Our address is [firstuuict](https://www.instagram.com/firstuuict). **Google Drive:** Corey has started populating a First UU Google Drive folder that church leaders can utilize for collaboration. For increased transparency, documents can also be shared for viewing by anyone. Stay tuned for some Google Drive workshops that Corey will facilitate.

Current members of the Communications Team are Corey Swertfager, interim coordinator; Del Smith; Suzanne Miller; Rolando Gomez; Jack Regehr; Holly Terrill; and Margi Ault-Duell, ex officio. **NOTE: We are seeking a permanent coordinator**, someone who believes as we do that the most enlightened messages and the most exciting programs don't promote themselves. We're also looking for someone who has a knack for creating and distributing press releases. We're here to spread the word!

## The Origin and Evolution of Earth

- Frank Ruf

Beginning on August 14, the Sunday Adult Religious Exploration group will view and discuss a new course: *The Origin and Evolution of Earth: From the Big Bang to the Future of Human Existence*. It's a 48-lecture series that follows the development of the solar system, with its central Sun and eight major planets, from a swirling nebula of dust and gas 4.567 billion years ago. We will learn how and why other planets differ from Earth.

We will also learn how, for the past 4 billion years, life and minerals have coevolved in astonishing ways. This course tours the epic, intertwined sweep of life and rocks, with such dramatic innovations as the rise of algae that produce oxygen by photosynthesis, the evolution of complex cells with nuclei, the near extinction of life during episodes of extreme cold, the emergence of multicellular animals and plants, the gradual transformation of the land to an emerald planet, and ultimately to the modern world that is being shaped in part by human activities.

For more information, contact Frank Ruf, 316-650-3842, FDRUF93@hotmail.com.

## 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!

## A Jumble Success

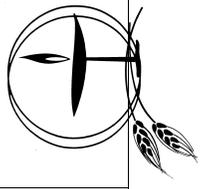
- Marcia Ellsworth

Our first Jumble Sale was a great success, thanks to many, many donations from members and friends of our congregation. Our expectations were exceeded, and we were able to take in a little over 3,000 needed dollars. Thanks to all the volunteers who worked long hours selling, pricing, and displaying a huge variety of things. Also, thanks to our many members who donated items for the sale. As you know, one person's trash is another person's treasure. So, please don't throw away useable items at your house – find a large box, and start saving your unwanted treasures in preparation for next year's sale. Speaking for myself, it was fun to see so many Wichitans coming through our doors, and most leaving with a bargain and a smile.

### *Social Action Report - Continued*

**Black Lives Matter: Solidarity and Love:** Wichitans did something remarkable last month! Local folks participated in a Black Lives Matter march on Tuesday, July 12, with another march planned for Sunday, July 17. On Wednesday, July 13, members of the ICT Urban Professionals and other community members met with Police Chief Gordon Ramsay to present their demands. The Chief agreed to meet these demands for 1) cultural competency training; 2) support for independent prosecutors; 3) an independent citizens' review board; and 4) more support for community policing. Our congregation seeks to walk in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and other racial justice work. We'll continue to participate in both local and statewide efforts to learn about and support this work. If you'd like to get involved, please contact Margi Ault-Duell, our social action coordinator, at [socialaction@firstuu.net](mailto:socialaction@firstuu.net) or at (520) 396-0633.

# August 2016

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

**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)

**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

Aesthetics - TBD

Buildings/Grounds – TBD

Caring – Jana Rambo and LaRilla Combs

Chalice Lighters Ambassador – Bonnie Till

Children's RE – Wendy Haynie-Coxby

Communications – Corey Swertfager

Custodian - Durell Gilmore

EcoFest – Marcia Ellsworth and Vivien Minshull-Ford

Ethical Eating - TBD

Finance - Charles Merrifield

Financial Commitment – TBD

Fundraising – TBD

Green Sanctuary - Linda Jordan and Ned Lakin

Kitchen Mavens – TBD

Membership – Bonnie Till

Music – Jana Rambo

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

Charles Merrifield, chair; LaRilla Combs, Linda Jordan, Sandy Roberts, Rachel Rutledge, Frank Ruf, and Rev. David Carter, ex officio

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Susan Hund-Milne, Linda Jordan, and Del Smith

**GROUP CONTACTS**

Craft Night – Anita Culp

Digerati Buchgemeinschaft – Rolando Gomez

Eclectic Readers – Del Smith

Fourth Monday Movie Group – TBA

Fourth Monday Writers Group – Amy Geyer

Garden Group – Anita Culp and Linda Jordan

Humanist Group – Charles Merrifield

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

### The Winter of Tamal's Appearance

Today the river is swollen  
That was so long dry.

Holding him in my arms,  
From my balcony window,  
I watch the river's burden race  
Beneath skies empty of color,  
Thoughtless of the naked trees, while  
On either bank  
Snows still pile.

The white heron  
Beats wings against the whiter wind,  
Its flight shaky and odd,  
A frenzied Ouija bird divining  
The wind's indomitable strength.

But my newborn Tamal sees  
Nothing, nor has he need;  
He hears me breathe, feels my pounding heart,  
My arms.

## Environmental Justice: Be Part of the Change

- Marcia Ellsworth & Bonnie Till

*EcoFest Wichita—Saturday, October 8, 2016*

It is time to put EcoFest Wichita 2016 on your calendar! Our third year to host this 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 Wichita a bigger success than last year. Plan to be part of the crew and join in the festivities from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Saturday, October 8.

This will be our day to shine and let Wichita know 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.

There will be a wide variety of activities 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. Unique works of environmental art will be on display and available for purchase. Children can make earth-friendly craft projects while parents shop and explore educational booths. In addition, lunch will be available.

If you haven't already, please join the fun by signing up as a volunteer. There are lots of ways to help before, during, and after the event. Many hands make for light work. Plus, we get to know one another better when we work together on a project.

In addition to volunteering, we hope everyone will donate something for the bake sale, so start thinking about which ones of your special treats you'd like to share.

Join this worthwhile project and be sure to let your friends and neighbors know about EcoFest Wichita – Saturday, October 8.



### **Full Moon Celebration**

We will gather on Friday, August 19, at 7:00 to celebrate the turning of the wheel as we do every month near the time of the full moon. All are welcome to join in our singing, chanting and maybe even a little dancing. Call Kathy Hull 204-9956 or Linda Jordan 513-6652 for further details.

## A Blank Sheet of Paper: A Poem in Free Verse for Free Women

by Diane Wahto

(Written for and read at the July 9, 2016, Repro Rally in Wichita)

Epigraph from Katha Pollitt's book *Pro*, which if you haven't read, you should: "'At [a] meeting radical feminist activist Lucinda Cisler, head of New Yorkers for Repeal of Abortion Laws]...held up a piece of paper representing the ideal abortion law. It was blank.'"

Lawmakers etch their restrictions on sovereign bodies,  
obliterate women out of existence, into servitude.  
Lawmakers scribble laws, sentence women to a word  
web of confinement. Lawmakers in marble halls  
of statehouses, pillared halls of Washington, raise  
their voices in pious tones, invoke a fantasy god  
of their own devising as justification for their laws.  
Lawmakers spout platitudes of concern for women,  
their safety, their health, then doodle laws to bring  
harm upon women. Lawmakers pray to their gods  
to end abortion, lawmakers who would punish  
providers, lawmakers who send their daughters  
to accommodating doctors, doctors who would  
never utter the word "abortion," who instead  
say, "D &C." A woman will say "abortion,"  
will say the law of her own conscience will  
guide her, a law not written anywhere  
but in her sovereign being. A law  
on a blank piece of paper, a law  
written by each woman who will  
decide how she must fulfill her destiny.

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## FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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### Eclectic Readers

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. In anticipation of the August congregational book discussions (Wednesday, August 24, 7-8:30 p.m. and after Sunday service on August 28), several members of the group will also read Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy*

### Occasional Book Club

It's heating up outside, so the Occasional Book Club has decided to read Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. We highly recommend you make sure your version was published after 1980 and includes the Author's Afterward. Why? Because from 1967 until 1979 this famous book was published with 75 modified passages that were not approved by the author! Join us on Saturday, August 27, at 2:30 p.m. in the church library to find out the details of this ironic situation! All are welcome. Contact Amy Geyer with any questions at [316-440-3097](tel:316-440-3097) or [amy@inannasjourney.com](mailto:amy@inannasjourney.com).

### Digerati Buchgemeinschaft

Come join the Digerati! We are an online book club. Currently looking at what to read in August. 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>