



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

Ring in the New

- Corey Swertfager, President

As we begin a new year, we reflect on what happened in the past year and look forward to new possibilities in the new one. From within First UU to within the state capitol, from the personal to the political, 2017 begins with several opportunities to cultivate happiness and to build stronger connections with others (taking place at First UU unless otherwise noted):

- January 7, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.: **Breakfast for the Soul.** Rest and recharge from the hectic holiday season. Learn how to feed your soul with meditation as you enjoy the best breakfast (with vegan, vegetarian, and omnivore options) in Wichita! This is a family friendly event with special activities for kids. You'll also have a chance to win a seat in Rev. Carter's Meditation Class (raffle tickets available prior to and during the event). Breakfast is a mere \$7 for adults, \$3 for children.
- January 11, 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m., State Capitol, Topeka: **Kansas People's Agenda Rally & Mobilization.** Imagine 1,000+ people in our State Capitol all together setting the agenda for the 2017 Legislative session! We need to raise the heat! This is an inclusive effort of Black, Brown, White, Muslim, Christian, LGBTQAI, Union, Democrat, Republican, Green, Teachers, Clergy, Students, and more...so much is at stake. It's time to rise! Over 100 people and many organizations from around the state began planning this fall to build a coalition of people to stand in the capitol as a united front. WE NEED YOU TO JOIN US! See Margi Ault-Duell's Social Action Report for more info.
- January 14, noon-3 p.m.: **Eco Justice 2.** In December, about a dozen of us met to discuss

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Social Action Report

- Margi Ault-Duell, Social Action Coordinator

Kansas People's Agenda: Topeka Mobilization, January 11, 2017: Please visit the Facebook event page "Kansas People's Agenda 2017" for details and to register. If you have trouble registering, contact Margi. You can also contact one of the members of the organizing team by e-mail at: kspeoplesagenda@gmail.com. If you'd like to carpool from Wichita, please contact Margi at: socialaction@firstuu.net or 520-396-0633. Please arrive by 9:30 a.m. If you are unable to attend but want to act, let Margi know that you'd like to participate in a coordinated effort to make phone calls and write letters to legislators.

The focus issues that were chosen by a broad-based collaborative effort are Racial & Indigenous Justice; Economic Justice; Adequate & Equitable Public Education; Healthcare Access; Anti-Corruption Policy; Environmental Stewardship & Sustainable Agriculture; Criminal Justice Reform; Gender Equity; Responsible Gun Policy; LGBTQ Rights; Voting Rights; Immigrant Rights; Infrastructure Investment; Protection of Children; and Religious Freedom.

Our Place in the Web of Life: Our second Green Sanctuary workshop will take place at First UU from **12-3 p.m. on Saturday, January 14.** This workshop will dig deeply into the specific sources and impacts of the resources we consume here in Wichita: water, air, energy, waste, and food. Where do these resources come from to get to Wichita? Where do the waste- or by-products go? Who is impacted along the way? Even if you missed the first workshop, you are invited to attend the second, to learn more about how our local community can be active around EcoJustice

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In Touch

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Social Action Report, continued

issues. **Light snacks will be served, and you're invited to bring your lunch (no lunch provided).**

Building the Beloved Community: A UU Social Justice Conference:

Don't miss the second annual *Building the Beloved Community* conference on **Saturday, February 4**, from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence, south of Lawrence off US 59. This all-day event convenes Unitarian Universalists and friends from across Kansas to engage in learning, reflection, and creative strategizing together on social justice. The registration fee is on an income-based sliding scale. Breakfast, snacks, coffee, and lunch are provided. Carpooling and overnight homestay options are available. For more information or to register, please contact either Margi Ault-Duell, Social Justice Organizer, socialaction@firstuu.net, (520) 396-0633 or Rev. Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka, sarah.oglesby@uufft.org, 720-339-6779.

Snow Days

- Anita Culp, Office Manager

Snow season is here. When the weather is bad, the President makes the decision on canceling services based on whether it is safe for congregants to be out driving and on the weather forecast for Saturday night. One-quarter inch of ice may be worse than six inches of snow. The President tries to make the decision no later than mid-Saturday afternoon so there is time to get the word out to congregants. This sometimes means the weather improves Saturday night but the decision was already made.

Closings are posted on Facebook and ListServe, and the three local TV stations are notified: KWCH (broadcast channel 12), KAKE (broadcast channel 10), and KSN (broadcast channel 3). Of those three, KWCH is the most reliable as they use an automated system, and the message goes on their crawl line within a few minutes of notification. Look for "First Unitarian Universalist – Wichita" on the crawl line. If you don't have a TV, feel free to contact Anita Culp at her home telephone number, 744-2840.

As for when we do have church services after a snow storm, the church has a snow-plowing contract for the parking lot for snowfall amounts over two inches. The company is good about getting the job done before the Sunday service. As always, the decision is yours about venturing out in bad weather. We want you to be safe.

Ring in the new, continued

how to put our seventh UU Principle—respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part—into action. Deeper discussions will continue in this second session. See Margi's Social Action Report for details.

- January 23 thru March 27, 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.: **Meditation Class.** Rev. David Carter's popular meditation class is returning, revitalized and ready to rejuvenate body, mind, and soul. This ten-week class will occur Monday evenings, starting January 23. See Rev. Carter's write-up to learn more about the class. Register [online](#) or call the church office, 316-684-3481. \$120 per person, \$100 if paid before January 23, group discounts and sliding scale available. Child care available upon request.
- February 4, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., UU Congregation of Lawrence: **Building Beloved Community: A UU Social Justice Conference.** Putting our UU faith into action can be both exhilarating and exhausting. Come learn how we can ground our activism in our UU heritage and spirituality—and take care of ourselves, too. Non-UU members are also very welcome. See Margi's write-up about it.

And that's not all! Discover more First UU happenings in this newsletter, in our Sunday orders of service, on Facebook ([First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita](#)), and in our Weekly Update emails (to be added to our email list, contact Anita Culp, office@firstuu.net, 316-684-3481).

Kick Off the New Year with Meditation Classes

- Rev. David Carter

Say hello to 2017! With the start of the New Year, First UU will again host a meditation class for beginners and intermediate practitioners. Ten weekly classes will be offered, Monday evenings from 6:30 till 8 p.m., beginning on Monday, January 23, and ending on Monday, March 27.

Students will explore the basics, intricacies, and subtleties of the art and science of meditation. In each class, there will be a group meditation, followed by discussion, questions, and answers. It will be a rewarding experience for everyone.

Exciting as our shared adventure will be, it is nothing new. For thousands of years, countless seekers of truth and meaning have experienced that, properly understood and applied, meditation techniques provide a host of skillful means for experiencing the greatest pleasures life offers. And for the last several decades and more, numerous peer-reviewed scientific studies conducted under rigorous standards at top universities around the world have more than substantiated the traditional claims made for meditation's many benefits. It works!

The spiritual practices you will learn are amazing, running a gamut from enjoyable, relaxing, invigorating, liberating, and enlightening. You will learn to discover your own "way." Come join us. And bring a friend, or friends.

The rate is \$120, or \$100 if paid before January 23; group discounts and sliding scale are available. Child care is available upon request. All proceeds go to the church. For more information and to sign up, contact the church office at 316-684-3481.

Rev. Carter undertook formal study of Far Eastern philosophy and religion in 1967. In 1972, he graduated from Maharishi International University in Fiuggi Fonte, Italy, and for more than a decade taught yoga philosophy and spiritual practice in and around New York. In 1984, he met distinguished Vaishnava polymath, His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami, and began extensive training with him in the U.S. and India. Carter was ordained by Goswami as a Gaudiya Vaishnava priest in 1989 and then completed undergraduate work in Philosophy and Religion at Southwestern College, Kansas, followed by graduate work at the Graduate Theological Union, Starr King School for the Ministry, in Berkeley, California.

A Call to Action for the Planet–But Let’s Just Start Local

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

Every time we drive past our mural dedicated to consideration of our place in the Web of Life, do we consider how we can restore the planet and create healthy living environments for all communities? How difficult is it to connect effectively with these issues? Following the election, there is enough uncertainty about the future of the environment to warrant a serious look at issues which may not receive priority in the next administration.

On Saturday, December 10, our social action coordinator Margi Ault-Duell and Green Sanctuary co-chairs Linda Jordan and Ned Lakin convened the first Green Sanctuary all-day workshop as part of our Green Sanctuary certification process. The thrust of the workshop, attended by thirteen congregation members, was to instill new awareness and implement a plan of action for First UU to be part of the EcoJustice grassroots movement.

Following a showing of *The Story of Stuff*, an eye-opening animated documentary (available on YouTube) about the technology-business-consumer cycle which grips our world, we assessed our relationship to the environment, discussed a survey to find out what members of the congregation do to recycle and promote sustainable living, and discussed further steps to promote environmental awareness. Beginning with elements most vital to human life in our immediate environment – air, water, food, waste, energy, and land – we selected ones we would like to investigate for the next workshop at First UU from 12-3 p.m. on Saturday, January 14.

If you would like to be part of teams investigating the history, status, methods, problems, safeguards, or sources of any of these issues, please contact Margi at 1-520-396-0633, Ned Lakin at 316-214-0968, or Linda Jordan at 316-512-6652. We would particularly like some of our younger church members to take part in this project, and we look forward to working with you.

First Sunday Lunch on New Year’s Day

- Bonnie Till

For the first day of 2017 and the first First Sunday Potluck Lunch of the year, the kitchen crew’s proposed menu is hot hearty soup, homemade bread, and, of course, sides and desserts.

Plan to join in the fun on this first day of 2017 and warm yourself with a hot meal and the friendship of our community.

First UU Pagans

Our next meeting will be Saturday, February 4, as we gather to celebrate Imbolc. The ancient festival of Imbolc is a time of light within winter, life out of the cold, and a celebration of Brigid, Goddess of healing, crafting, and inspiration. Brigid is an ancient goddess who has reached out and touched the hearts of many people today.

Join us as we connect to Brigid through our hands and our hearts through meditations and rituals. We will begin at 6 p.m. with a potluck feast, followed by informal ritual about 7. Please call Anne Bailey, 650-4905, Kathy Hull 204-9956, or Linda Jordan 512-6652 for further information.

January 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	2 Office Closed	3 6:30p Zen Friends 7:00p UU Craft Night	4 7:00p Committee on Ministry	5	6	7 8:00a - 1:00p Breakfast For The Soul
8 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council	9 7:00p Music Committee	10 6:30p Zen Friends	11 7:00p Worship Committee	12	13 2:00p Membership Committee	14 10:00a Caring Committee 12:00p Green Sanctuary Workshop
15 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Midyear Congregational Meeting	16 6:30p Writers Group	17 6:30p Zen Friends	18 7:00p Board of Trustees 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	19 7:00p Green Sanctuary Committee	20 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group	21 9:30a Membership Class
22 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	23 2:00p Movie Group 6:30p Meditation Class	24 6:30p Zen Friends	25 1:30p Newsletter Mailing 7:00p Social Action Group	26	27	28 6:30p UU Humanist Group
29 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	30 6:30p Meditation Class	31 6:30p Zen Friends				

What Makes First UU First UU?

- Del Smith

January follows hard upon a time traditionally associated with giving, a time of caring and compassion extended to family and friends, and often to the wider community. Caring and compassion does not begin and end with the holiday season at First UU. Our ministry has expanded in several directions as we live the Principles of Unitarian Universalism.

Some projects are seasonal, such as December's "Mitten Tree" decorated with warm winter clothing destined for InterFaith Ministry's Operation Holiday, our tradition for many years. Additionally, "Because We Care," a fund to help families during the holiday season was started in December 2016. In February, we contribute to the annual Bags of Blessings, described in Marcia Ellsworth's article in this issue. The kids in Religious Exploration Classes help assemble the Bags of Blessings and are involved in other projects throughout the year.

In 2013, the congregation decided to make the Food Bank a year-round project, rather than a special occasion linked to the holiday season. A new year-round project is the "adoption" of two Haitian students, Blaise Roudgina, 9th grade, and Vincent Kervantz, 8th grade. Our Social Justice Team, on behalf of the congregation, acted after learning from Dagny Casteli of Global Faith in Action that children in Haiti must rely upon sponsors if they are to get any kind of education. Photos and information about Blaise and Vincent are displayed at church. Several members of the congregation are also sponsoring students in Haiti.

Other projects are situational, a prime example being the winter clothing, camping gear and bottled water collected to support the Standing Rock water defenders near the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline through tribal lands in North Dakota. Reverend Carter has a discretionary fund that he uses as situations arise, usually funded by a second collection plate at a worship service or two. The Caring Committee also occasionally solicits funds to help people who need assistance to purchase food or gas.

First UU has a history of sponsoring community events as funds permit. Through individual donations, we sponsored the Trust Women Gala in November. Plans are in the making for sponsoring Pridefest next year and to have a table at the event and an ad in the Pridefest guide, in addition to our parade participation.

Every member and friend – from the youngest to the oldest, the spryest to the less abled – can take part in some way in our outreach ministry. Many show up at rallies and community activities wearing their green First UU shirts, living the motto, "Be the change you wish to see" in the world. These congregation-wide and individual acts of caring and compassion, honoring the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and acceptance and respect for others reflects First UU values – not just during the holidays, but all year long. As President Corey reminded us in his December column, our Principles "stand strong as a beacon to guide our steps.... Let us shine that light with grace, determination, and compassion."

Minister's Musings

- Rev. David Carter

Mother

I want again
The buttery warm cornbread
You baked back then
For the boy I was, Mother,
When the only fat thing
Was the salt moon

Looming like a luscious cashew
In the sky alive with peeping stars.

But you tend to the incomparably beautiful One
Far away in Florida sun
While I shelter from the arctic blasts whistling down
The Kansas cold.

Knowing that what I want wants what Time
Is careless of, I'd weep, but for

Sweet memory's salt fragrance
Resurrecting a melted yellow buttery sun
And boyhood's hurdy-gurdy
Of ravenous stars,

And, sweeter still, the Beloved's promise!

**Outside My Window on a Cold
January Day**

- Jean Vaughn

At dawn tiny white snow butterflies
Drift lazily to the ground
While three does cross the field,
Browsing, watching,
Finally disappearing into the ravine.

By noon the wind
Drives the snow like bullets;
Trees and tall grass
Hold a weight of white.
Sparrows take refuge in the hedge.

Night brings clear sky.
Snow stars on the ground reflect the moonlight.
The cold is piercing.

I pull a quilt across my back
And remember my father saying:
"I feel sorry for wild animals on nights like this."

Chalice Bookstore Update

- Del Smith

Have you visited the Chalice Bookstore lately? If you have, you'll know that there's a nice selection of mysteries and a shelf of fiction for sale. But the non-fiction offerings are slim. Please consider donating books (fiction and non-fiction) that you genuinely recommend to your UU friends. Leave them on the table inside the library door.

You may have boxes (and boxes) of books to donate. If you can store them at home until a spring garage sale at First UU that would be wonderful! If you don't have the space, let us know and we'll look for storage space here at church and arrange delivery. Joe Lozano is a welcome addition to the UU Book Sale Team!

The Chalice Bookstore is self-service. Prices are posted on the table. Money goes into the plastic box.

Our Valentine for Those in Need

- Marcia Ellsworth

For February, it's Bags of Blessings from the heart! There is still over a month to start collecting travel-sized hygiene items for the Bags of Blessing 2017. This social action campaign is a collaborative effort among individuals, groups, businesses, and congregations to meet hygiene needs in our community. Each year, Partners for Wichita coordinates this project. Last year, about 2,000 bags of blessings were collected and given out to shelters and assistance centers in the greater Wichita area. Our congregation has been very generous in the past. Last year, First UU collected about 50 bags for the cause.

If you can help, there will be a box for your items in the gathering space until Sunday, February 9. Fill one or more ziplock **gallon-sized** bags with the following items, or bring un-bagged individual items for our young people to bag. *Please bring only new, small/travel size, non-fragrant items for people of all ages.*

Each gallon sized bag should contain one of each of the following: soap, bar or liquid; lotion; razor; shaving cream; shampoo/conditioner; toothpaste; toothbrush; deodorant; comb; Chapstick/lip balm; washcloth; Kleenex/tissues; emery board or clippers; Band-Aids/bandages (3); and white socks.

If you have questions, contact Marcia Ellsworth 316-208-3083 (mjelsworth@aol.com) or Margi Ault-Duell (520) 396-0633 (margi.marie@gmail.com).

Together we make a difference!

RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon, DRE

Happy New Year. Wendy, Holly, and I look forward to continuing our exploration of the world's main religions with the children and youth of UU. So far, we have learned a bit about Judaism and Hinduism. We will kick off the new year on January 8 with our annual Burning Bowl ceremony, and then we will begin lessons on Buddhism. We hope to see you all at church. Remember, it is much more fun when you are there!

Inquirer Class: A Class for Current and Prospective Members

Want to learn more about the UU denomination? Interested in learning more about First UU of Wichita? Considering becoming a member of First UU? Then an Inquirer Class is for you.

Our next class is from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 21. **First UU 101** at 9:30 covers the history of our church and denomination. **First UU 102** at 12:30 covers the meaning and opportunities of membership. Lunch will be provided by the Caring Committee.

To register for class, please contact Bonnie Till at 722-8208 or bect@cox.net. *Need child care? Let Bonnie know at least 3 days prior to class.*

Caring Committee

- Larilla Combs

The Caring Committee is the arm of the Church that acknowledges events in our members' and friends' lives such as illnesses, surgeries, and bereavements. We also acknowledge celebratory events such as birthdays, weddings, births and graduations.

We thought you'd like to know: Landen Schmidt got the tree out of storage, set it up, and arranged the lights. Marsha Ellsworth added colorful ribbon and sparkly red clothes pins, and the RE children decorated it with their beautiful handmade ornaments. Then, last of all, generous members and friends adorned it with mittens, hats, and scarfs, until the Mitten Tree glowed!

And a special thank you to Del Smith who got the Mitten Tree "ball rolling" and to Landen Schmidt, who took the donated mittens, hats, scarfs and other items to Interfaith Ministries for Operation Holiday! Thank you one and all!

Our heartfelt condolences ... to the Kim and Eric Ford family; Eric's grandmother passed away Thanksgiving Day...and to Brandi Frey, on the death of her close friend, Lizzy.

What touches one of us affects us all. In caring for one another we are cared for.

Raising UUs

- Jamey Findling

Trust Kids: Being raised in a UU church was a liberating experience for me. I was encouraged to question, explore, dissent. I wasn't told what to wear, or what to think. I felt accepted, and I intuitively grasped that the acceptance was genuine and unconditional – no strings attached. Looking back, the word that comes to mind is trust.

Trusting your kids is hard. We naturally want the best for our kids, and it's painful to see them make mistakes. In fact, I think it is more painful for us than it is for them. Do you know how anticipation can make an experience seem so much worse than it really is? As a kid I dreaded going to the doctor to get a shot. But in reality the unpleasantness was about 98% anticipation and 2% actual pain.

Watching our kids make mistakes is like that: we see the pain coming long before they feel it, so we get the 98% that is the anticipation, and they get the 2% that is the actual pain. But the pain is important. The painful shot delivers the vaccine; the painful consequence delivers the life lesson. We need to remember this so that we can trust our kids enough to let them make mistakes.

The adults who led our youth groups and chaperoned our overnights must have known this. To be clear, they kept us safe: they didn't let us make the kind of mistakes that were really serious. But they didn't try to protect us from the scrapes and bruises of growing up, either. And for that, I will always be grateful.

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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Eclectic Readers

11:30 a.m., Friday, January 20: Barbara Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible* created a lot of buzz and recommendations as "must reads" when published in 1998. Will it stand the test of time? We'll find out. The story is told by the wife and daughters of an evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959 and unfolds over three decades in postcolonial Africa. The family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction is set against the Congo's fight for independence from Belgium. (Eclectic Reader's April choice, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, is included in Kingsolver's bibliography of reference material for the book.) All are invited to join us for a brown bag lunch and spirited discussion. Contact: Del Smith, [316-612-0826](tel:316-612-0826).

Digerati Buchgemeinschaft

Come join the Digerati! We are an online book club. For January we are reading Clifford D Simak, *Way Station*. This is a Hugo Award winner from 1964 and I thought it would be nice to start 2017 with a positive thinking read. Join us to choose February's book. Discussions will take place at Goodreads. You can join us at <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/177877-digerati-buchgemeinschaft>. Contact Rolando Gomez, shadoe7@mac.com, for questions on how to join.