



# In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

## President's Reports

- Corey Swertfager, President

For many people, their first First UU experience is at one of our Sunday services. Our services include a wonderful variety of presentations, speakers, service leaders, readings, and music, all quietly coordinated by a handful of dedicated volunteers in our Worship Committee. It takes a great deal of time and talent to ensure that week after week everything is in place to entice newcomers and to keep people coming back for more.

For years, Marsha Diggs has devoted her passion and expertise as the Worship Committee Chair. As a past President of the Congregation and as a leader in countless First UU committees, Marsha has inspired us with her dedication and wisdom. To better attend to her health, Marsha resigned from the Worship Committee in January. Thank you, Marsha, for your many years of service and support. Effective immediately, Annie Welsbacher is the new Chair. Welcome, Annie. And thank you, Anne Bailey, Jana Rambo, Roxanne McKenzie, Susan Hund-Milne, and Amanda Diggs for all the time you've devoted to make our services great.

Beyond Sunday services, there are plenty of ways to experience and be a part of the First UU community. Check elsewhere in this newsletter – the calendar insert, Margi's Social Action Report, Del's next installment of her "What Makes First UU First UU?" series, and various other articles and sidebars – for a sampling of what's happening. As our Director of Religious Exploration Denise Jackson-Simon says, it's much more fun when you are there!

## Building the Beloved Community: February 4th, 2017

- Margi Ault-Duell, Social Action Coordinator

Courageous love can transform the world! Let's prepare ourselves for collaborative activism, ground ourselves in UU Principles and traditions, and build skills to confront systemic oppression. This all-day event convenes Unitarian Universalists and friends from across Kansas to engage in learning, reflection, and creative strategizing together.

The event is on **Saturday, February 4**, from **9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence, 1263 N. 1100 Rd., Lawrence, Kansas. Breakfast, snacks, and coffee are provided. Register by January 25 for lunch and/or childcare. Bring your own lunch if you register after January 25 or for walk-in registration. You can register through the event Facebook page, or contact Margi Ault-Duell: [socialaction@firstuu.net](mailto:socialaction@firstuu.net) or (520) 396-0633. Carpooling options are available.

In this polarized sociopolitical climate in Kansas, working for social justice can feel like a lonely, never-ending effort. So many Kansans are harmed by state policies, institutional practices, and individual prejudices that perpetuate injustices. As people of conscience seeking the transformation of our world, we can easily burn out trying to do everything or feel overwhelmed by not knowing where to start. And in the meantime, we sometimes do more harm than good if we fail to examine our own hearts. How can we ground our activism in our spirituality? How can we build relationships of trust and accountability with other communities? How have privilege and marginalization shaped our

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# In Touch

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[www.firstuu.net](http://www.firstuu.net)  
 Member  
 Unitarian Universalist Association

Minister: Rev. David Carter  
[minister@firstuu.net](mailto:minister@firstuu.net)  
 (316) 684-3481  
 Wed.: 3 PM – 6 PM

President: Corey Swertfager

Office Manger:  
[office@firstuu.net](mailto:office@firstuu.net)  
 (316) 684-3481  
 Anita Culp  
 Mon., Tue., & Fri.: 9:30am – 2:00pm  
 Wed. & Thr.: 1:00 – 5:00pm

Director of Religious Exploration:  
 Denise Jackson-Simon  
[simontrio@aol.com](mailto:simontrio@aol.com)  
 (316) 644-2022

Webmaster: Jack Regehr  
[web@firstuu.net](mailto:web@firstuu.net)

Newsletter Staff  
 Copy Editor: Suzanne Miller  
[millerbuchhorn@gmail.com](mailto:millerbuchhorn@gmail.com)

Layout Editor:  
 Rolando Gomez  
[shadoe7@mac.com](mailto:shadoe7@mac.com)  
 The deadline for In Touch and for the monthly calendar is the third Wednesday of each month.

## Ecofest Is Back!

- Marcia Ellsworth and Vivien Minshull-Ford

Thanks to the marvelous support from our church members and friends, we had our third successful EcoFest and are now gearing up for our fourth year. Each year we hope to refine the process and increase the quality of this festival that demonstrates our UU values, educates the public about environmental concerns, brings in significant funding, provides entertainment, and brings our congregants a feeling of true community.

This coming year we are discussing how we can emphasize environmental justice even more. We are hoping to attract vendors who are as interested in promoting green living as they are in selling their crafts and products, whose focus is demonstrating the use of natural and organic ingredients, re-purposed, recycled, up-cycled materials, as well as found objects.

EcoFest 2016 at First UU hosted 15 local advocacy groups, 14 vendors, 5 artists, and about 300 visitors. In addition, over 100 lunches were served, and our UU members hosted 11 booths. Thanks to the many, many volunteers, including Maddie Terrill, who contributed their time and energies to this now annual event, our church made about \$3,000 that helped to support our Social Justice Programs and general building expenses.

If you would like to be a part of EcoFest 2017, mark your calendars now! It will be held on the fourth Saturday, September 23, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., which is a few weeks earlier than in past years. Volunteers are needed for the steering committee, for advertising, and for organizing booths. Of course, help is needed the day of in all areas. In addition, if we have enough environmentally focused art submitted, we will host another Friday Evening Art Crawl in our building on August 26, 2017.

### *Building a Beloved Community, continued*

experiences and our complex identities? What creative strategies can we use to foster the deep-rooted changes we want to see in our state? We'll explore these and other questions together as we dream and scheme for social justice in our state.

## Peace Conference and Film

Bethel College is hosting the Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship Conference, February 10-12. The conference is a student-led conference for students, but keynote speeches are open to the public. The theme is "Uniting for Social Change," and keynote speakers will present brief "deep-dives" in the areas of environmental justice, racial justice, and LGBTQIA concerns within the larger theme. Conference information can be found at [bethelks.edu/icpf](http://bethelks.edu/icpf).

KIPCOR (Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution) Film Series presents "Do Not Resist" in the Luyken Fine Arts Center at 3 p.m. on February 19. "Do Not Resist" is an urgent and powerful exploration of the rapid militarization of the police in the United States. This documentary explores the militarization of local police departments – in their tactics, training, and acquisition of equipment – since 9/11. With unprecedented access to police conventions, equipment expos, and officers themselves, filmmaker Craig Atkinson, the son of a SWAT team member, has crafted an eye-popping nonpartisan look at the changing face of law enforcement in America. Following the film, talkback session panelists include members of the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office. The event is free and open to the public.

Contact Sharon Kniss, [316-831-7447](tel:316-831-7447) or [sharonkniss@gmail.com](mailto:sharonkniss@gmail.com), for more information about either of these events.

## Caring Committee

- LaRilla Combs

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. We thought you'd like to know:

- We are saddened that **Brenda Orsmy passed away January 9, 2017**. Brenda was an active member in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In addition to attending Church Services, Brenda participated in the Singles Group and was a member of the Caring Committee.
- We have Good News! **T.J. Edmonds is showing good improvement after suffering a brain aneurysm on New Year's Day**. T.J. was the husband of the late church member David Brewer.
- Thanks to all our church members and friends who have participated in marches and rallies standing for equal rights for all.

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

## Keepers

- Mary Erickson

I want to keep the memory of grandpa's gnarled hand as it curled around mine all those years ago. Let the sounds of cicada at dusk and the lingering echo of coyote's call remain always on edges of my mind.

And oh, may I never lose the feeling of first love's awkward kiss.

I want to hold tightly thoughts of trickling waters weaving their way through Colorado mountain passes and joyful memories of sudden summer rains falling softly on my skin,

Let me ever cling to sights of sunbeams, especially those that dance on crystal rocks. Hopefully, I'll never lose visions of valleys blue with columbines and vividness of yellow fields of sunflowers;

But above all, I hope to hold forever wonder at the softness of baby's dimpled skin, the image of sweetness of that first smile.

## Too Late for Valentine's Party

The UU Holiday Party Group will celebrate Too Late for Valentine's on Saturday, February 18, at First UU Church. We will gather at 5:30 p.m. and dine at 6. Please join us for scintillating conversation, irresistible edibles, and a laugh-out-loud game of Apples to Apples. Bring a covered dish for dinner. We will be happy to see you no matter what you would like to bring. If you are looking for guidance, rumor has it that No-way V-day can be celebrated with bacon. Also, February is Canned Food Month, Great American Pie Month, National Cherry Month, and National Grapefruit Month. Further, February 18 is National Drink Wine Day. Or, if you don't mind jumping the gun, the 19<sup>th</sup> is National Chocolate Mint Day, and the 20<sup>th</sup> is Cherry Pie Day.

# February 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 7:00p Committee on Ministry	2	3	4 6:00p Candlemas Potluck and Ritual
<b>5</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	<b>6</b> 6:30p Meditation Class	<b>7</b> 6:30p Zen Friends 7:00p UU Craft Night	<b>8</b> 7:00p Worship Committee	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 2:00p Membership Committee	<b>11</b> 10:00a Caring Committee
<b>12</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:30p Leadership Council	<b>13</b> 6:30p Meditation Class 7:00p Music Committee	<b>14</b> 6:30p Zen Friends	<b>15</b> 7:00p Board of Trustees 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	<b>16</b> 7:00p Green Sanctuary Committee	<b>17</b> 11:30a Eclectic Readers Group	<b>18</b> 5:30p Too Late For Valentine's Potluck
<b>19</b> 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	<b>20</b> 6:30p Meditation Class 6:30p Writer's Group	<b>21</b> 6:30p Zen Friends	<b>22</b> 1:30p Newsletter Mailing 7:00p Social Action Group	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 5:30p Final Friday Art Crawl	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	<b>27</b> 2:00p Movie Group 6:30p Meditation Class	<b>28</b> 6:30p Zen Friends				

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 - Charles Merrifield

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Adult RE - Frank Ruf
Aesthetics - TBD
Building & Grounds - TBD
Caring - LaRilla Combs and Jana Rambo
Chalice Lighters Ambassador - Bonnie Till
Children's RE - Wendy Haynie-Coxby
Chalice Book Store - Nancy Milner
Communications - Anne Welsbacher
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
Hospitality - TBD
Kitchen Mavens - TBD
Librarian - Nancy Milner
Membership - Bonnie Till
Music - Jana Rambo
Partner Church - Betty Hensley and Debbie Wadman
Personnel - TBD
Social Action - Margi Ault-Duell
UUA Denominational Liaison - Mike Diggs
Worship - Anne Welsbacher

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 Jordon
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

## It's Easy to Be Green!

- Marcia Ellsworth, Green Sanctuary Committee Member

Green living and climate change are two things that Unitarian Universalists feel strongly about. This concern is consistent with our seventh principle, "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." Our church is an active example of our concern for the environment. Our building has many green features including buffalo grass, water saving toilets, LED light bulbs, on demand water heater, and so on. Other examples of our dedication to the earth include having a festival each year to promote a healthy and sustainable earth, painting a mural on our wall that depicts the seventh principle, and applying for a candidacy to be certified by our Unitarian Universalist Association as a Green Sanctuary.

Since our congregation is known for its commitment to the environment, it would be interesting to share thoughts and ideas of the things we as individuals do to live green. Here are examples of the little things Charles and I do at our house; it is not much, but it is a beginning:

- We have changed to LED bulbs,
- drive cars that get decent mileage,
- recycle with Waste Connections,
- have two rain barrels,
- and try to buy local fruits and vegetables.
- We use the county recycling guide for items we want to get rid of but don't know what to do with (paint, appliances, medication, etc.): <http://sedgwickcounty.org/environment/recyclingguide.asp>.
- Also, our Aunt Fern never goes out to eat without a container from home for her leftovers.

I am certain that many of you are "part of change" in your daily lives. If you have acted in your daily routines to save and protect resources, please share your ideas. What are you doing to promote sustainability? Do you have a favorite earth friendly website that you visit? Do you have hints that will help us all? Is there a magazine that is helpful? Where do you shop? Let us know. Send me an email, [mjelsworth@aol.com](mailto:mjelsworth@aol.com), or a letter, or just tell a Green Sanctuary Committee member at church, and it will be shared in our upcoming newsletters. This column will be an interactive resource where we can inspire each other to make a difference.

Additionally, new members are needed for the Green Sanctuary Committee. If you are interested, please contact the co-chairs: Linda Jordan, [ljordan50@cox.net](mailto:ljordan50@cox.net), or Ned Lakin, [nedlak@msn.com](mailto:nedlak@msn.com).

## Music Committee Notes

- Jana Rambo

The Music Committee did not meet in December. We are in the process of going through the church's music files from previous choirs and selecting what we want the choir to perform. We anticipate being able to perform every other month.

We continue to need more committee members, as well as more people in the choir. Practices will be held on Sunday mornings before church. Please contact Jana Rambo, 992-5528, if you would like to participate.

## First UU Pagans

Please join us on Saturday, February 4, as we gather to celebrate Imbolc – this ancient festival 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.

The celebration will begin at 6 p.m. with a potluck feast followed by an informal ritual about 7. Please call Anne Bailey, 650-4905, Kathy Hull 204-9956, or Linda Jordan 512-6652 for further information.

At the present time, we are not meeting at the Full Moon. Our next celebration will be Beltane in early May.

## RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon

Happy New Year! We began the year with our annual "Burning Bowl" ceremony where we let go of those attitudes and behaviors that do not serve us well. We then made an entry in our new journals with affirmations to begin the year fresh and positive. As old behaviors try to creep in, we will be reminded of the smoke that took them away and will continue to work toward being the best person we can be.

An exploration of Buddhism is next up in our study of World Religions, holy days, and holidays. The teens will also work on a community service project for the church in February. We only have three or four Sundays to look at each of the main religions, so it's most beneficial if children and youth can attend as frequently as possible. Of course, we are happy to see you whenever you show up. Remember, it's much more fun when YOU are there!

## Say What?

- Anita Culp

Does the bottom of your cash register receipt say "*At your request Dillons is donating to First Unitarian Universalist Church*"? If not, you are missing out on a super easy way to earn money for First UU. To help First UU, go to [www.dillons.com/communityrewards](http://www.dillons.com/communityrewards), fill in your information, and select "First Unitarian Universalist Church" (no. 10162). That's it.

The more you shop at Dillons, the more they donate to First UU. During the last quarter, the church received \$462 from Dillions as a result of 55 households who selected First UU as a recipient.

For those of you who have already registered your card for Dillons to donate to First UU Church: good news! You no longer need to re-register every year. Call Anita at the church office at 684-3481 if you have questions.

## What Makes First UU First UU?

- Del Smith

Governance/congregational polity! Big yawn? Or opportunity for shared ministry in service to our community of liberal religious seekers?

Meetings required by our by-laws\* exemplify how we share responsibility for our liberal faith tradition's future in South Central Kansas through our direct participation. We apply our First Unitarian Universalist Covenant of Healthy Relations\* as well as the UUA's Fifth Principle, "the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and society at large." (The required Mid-Year meeting was postponed from January 15 [ice storm] to January 29. The Annual meeting will be in June. There are, of course, other meetings and gatherings important to the health of the church; these two are mandated. Voting members are the ultimate decision-makers on all church business.)

The Transparency section of our Covenant particularly speaks to governance: "Transparency: open and candid decision making with free access to all." We carry out this agreement in two ways:

- Make official decisions through the democratic process according to church by-laws.
- Maximize sharing of congregational information.

The all-congregation survey taken last year revealed that most of our members grew up in another faith tradition, including some which emphasize conformity and boundaries. Such members are probably pleasantly surprised at the last line of our Covenant in the Honesty section: "Agree to respectfully disagree when consensus cannot be reached."

One member with no formal church background said he looks to our governing body to figure out what needs to be done and who will make it happen.

- The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility to set policy (based upon broad congregational input), to work with the minister and staff to make congregational life rich and rewarding and to take the lead in "figuring out what needs to be done." The Board delegates as necessary the responsibility for seeing that the work gets done by committees, task forces, working groups, whatever it takes. Some work is on-going; some is one-and-done.
  - Are you aware that all members are welcome to attend board meetings? If 7 pm on the third Wednesday of the month is not possible, then read the minutes of Board meetings which are kept in a clearly labeled notebook on the computer desk in the Library.
  - Two important things to know about how things work at First UU: 1) Concerns about administrative matters should be addressed to a member of the board. 2) Concerns about other matters should be addressed to the Committee on Ministry. Talk to Charles Merrifield, Chair, or use the suggestion box on the information table by the office.
- The Leadership Council—committee chairpersons and other leaders—meets once a month to coordinate activities, toss out ideas for programs, and cheer each other on in service to the community. All members are welcome to attend, 12:15 pm, second Sundays in the Library.

**How does one get involved?** Let a member of the Board or Nominating Committee know you are interested in serving on the Board, a Committee, or a short-term task. They'll steer you in the right direction. Board members are President Corey Swertfager, President-Elect Holly Terrill, and members Mike Diggs, Nancy Milner, Kathleen McGee, Bonnie Till, Anne Welsbacher, Jana Rambo, and Doug Wilson. Nominating Committee members are Susan Hund-Milne, Linda Jordan, and Del Smith.

\*A copy of the By-Laws may be obtained from Anita Culp, Office Manager. A large, framed copy of the Covenant of Healthy Relations is at the front entrance of our building. You may request a print copy from Anita.

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FIRST UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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7202 E. 21<sup>st</sup> St. N.  
Wichita, KS 67206  
[www.firstuu.net](http://www.firstuu.net)



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### Eclectic Readers

11:30 am, Friday, February 17: *Half Broke Horses* by Jeannette Walls: A true-life novel about Lily Casey Smith (the author's grandmother) who at age six helped her father break horses, at age fifteen left home to teach in a frontier town, and later as a wife and mother ran a vast ranch in Arizona. She survived tornadoes, droughts, floods, the Great Depression, and the most heartbreaking personal tragedy, but despite a life of hardscrabble drudgery, she remained a woman of indomitable spirit. Bring your lunch at 11:30, and join us for a lively discussion. Del Smith, [316-612-0826](tel:316-612-0826).

### Digerati Buchgemeinschaft

Come join the Digerati! We are an online book club. Join us to choose March'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](mailto:shadoe7@mac.com), for questions on how to join.