



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA
FOUNDED 1887

President's Report

Holly Terrill

Hey there. I know it's only been a couple of weeks, but I already feel like so much has happened. Meetings, emails, phone calls, even planning for our future...I definitely haven't found my footing yet; however, I sure do feel like a lot has already been accomplished. I'm excited to be working in close contact with Reverend Carter as we work together with the congregation this year to create a shared vision for our church. It means so much to me that I'm in a place where I feel like I belong.

I'm overwhelmed, and I occasionally run around like a chicken missing its head, but I suppose that's what makes this position meaningful. If it was easy, everyone would do it. If it was easy, it would lose some of its value. If it was easy, would it be worth it? I don't think so. Everything worth doing has its difficulties and being a facilitator and a manager and a mediator and...and...and it is not easy.

I know it sounds like I'm being all hum-drum, as if Marvin, the Paranoid Android, from *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* has taken over for me. That isn't it at all. I am actually quite happy and very pleased with life, the universe, and everything at the moment—but if I don't express my feelings, then I'm not being genuine, and no one wants to feel like their leader isn't genuine.

Although, my being pleased with my life at the moment doesn't mean that there isn't pain

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RE Corner

Denise Jackson-Simon, DRE

It's hard to believe that we are half-way through the summer. There have been all kinds of fun activities facilitated by congregation members. The "rock dots" activity led by Marcia Ellsworth was very cool. If you missed it, there will be more chances to paint a rock or two for selling at EcoFest Wichita in September.

Coming up we'll be cooking and playing with remote control vehicles and more, so you won't want to miss.

We are still in need of RE team members to join for the Fall. Please consider sharing your time and energy with the children and/or youth. We need YOU! Contact me, Denise Jackson Simon, DRE, at church, or call me, 316-945-7622, if you're interested in giving it a try. You'll be glad you did!

and suffering all over the place. I can appreciate how fortunate I am and do my part to work alongside my family, friends, and colleagues to help make the world a better place for others. As Douglas Adams famously stated, "I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I've ended up where I needed to be."

In Touch

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www.firstuu.net

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

Treasurer's Report

Corey Swertfager

I am thrilled to report that First UU ended the 2016-17 church year in the black! Thank you all for coming together to make it happen by donating your time, talent, and treasure. Special thanks to Charles Merrifield, who served as treasurer and was instrumental in our financial turnaround.

Anne Bailey has been a steady force on the First UU Finance Committee for many years, serving as treasurer for several of those years. Anne has agreed to serve as the committee chair. She has shown great patience while showing me the ropes of First UU treasurership.

It's a team effort to keep the money flowing into and out of our various accounts. Jack Regehr counts and categorizes the money taken in each Sunday. Anita Culp enters those totals, as well as other funds and bills that come in during the week, into our QuickBooks accounting system and into our PowerChurch membership/stewardship tracking system. She also deposits funds into the bank. The treasurer then pays bills and people, reconciles accounts, and prepares reports for the board and the congregation. The Finance Committee prepares budgets and makes adjustments as needed, consulting with the board and the congregation when those adjustments are major.

One of the things I'd like to do as treasurer in the coming months is to incorporate in-kind donations into our financial reports. In-kind donations are goods and services donated to First UU that avert the church's need to come up with the money to pay for them, such as donating food for First Sunday Lunches, goods for our sales, and childcare and music for our Sunday services. There were several thousands of dollars worth of in-kind donations in the past year which helped us get into the black. Thank you for that!

EcoFest Goal for Solar Panel Fund

Bonnie Till



Saturday, September 23—EcoFest Wichita 2017—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. This year, the goal is to establish a fund for making the church energy-independent by purchasing and installing solar panels. In June, the board voted to set aside \$1,000 from EcoFest Wichita profits toward this goal. The total cost of buying and installing solar panels is estimated to be \$6,000.

Our fourth year to host this unique family-friendly living-green festival for the community is just around the corner. 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 on display and available for purchase; earth-friendly craft projects for children to make while parents shop and explore the art and educational booths; and, to sustain all who attend, a delicious and hearty lunch for sale: soup with all the fixings.

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 to join in the festivities from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Saturday, September 23. **If you haven't already, please join the fun by signing up to help *before, during, and after* the event.** One very easy and useful way to help with EcoFest Wichita is to **start putting aside items for the garage sale.** How easy is that! You get to recycle items and the church profits. To volunteer or to donate, contact Marcia Ellsworth (316-208-3083), Vivien Minshull-Ford (316-371-1949), or Bonnie Till (316-644-4043).

Put EcoFest Wichita 2017 on your calendar! And, it is not too early to remind your friends and neighbors about EcoFest Wichita. Encourage them to mark Saturday, September 23, on their calendars, and encourage them to make a day of it.

New to Sunday Services: “Did You Know?”

Annie Welsbacher

What does the committee on ministry do? What’s the difference between the treasurer, the finance committee, and the financial commitment committee? What’s with this new marketing committee, and how come we need it when we already have a communications team?

For that matter, why do we have so many committees? Perhaps, as you read this, you are thinking, “I just joined the church—I’m not ready to join a committee, too.” Or perhaps your thoughts are more like this: “I’m happy to help out, but I hate committee meetings.”

When it comes to First UU “committees,” one size definitely does not fit all. Under our church’s big, loose, umbrella title of “committee” run many different breeds of Unitarian cats, each working in ways that best suit the duties they take on. Some of our “committees” don’t even hold monthly meetings; others are busy for a few weeks or months, then go into hibernation for the rest of the year.

Beginning soon, First UU committee chairs will offer brief “Did You Know?” segments during some of our Sunday services to explain what their teams do, how they do it, and how you can help.

If you chair a committee or ad hoc group and have not yet been contacted about contributing, please contact Annie Welsbacher, chair of the worship committee, at awelsbacher@gmail.com.

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

Congratulations to Carrie and Brandon Horton and their daughter Anastasia on the June 24 birth of their new baby daughter and sister Guinevere Victoria.

Best wishes for a quick recovery to Millie Cherryholmes who had knee surgery July 18.

We’re so happy for the good news that Susan Hund-Milne’s new treatment is working well.

August Social Action Meeting Date

The next social action meeting will be during First Sunday Lunch on August 6 at 12:30. (This will NOT be our regular time, but we had to change for August.) Questions? Contact: Sharon Kniss, 316-831-7447.

Lammas Celebration

Our Lammas celebration of the first harvest will be Saturday, August 5. We will begin at 6 p.m. with a potluck feast which will be followed by an informal ritual at about 7. Please bring a generous dish to share. Coffee and tea will be available. You are encouraged to bring drums or other rhythm instruments. All are welcome. Call Anne Bailey (316-650-4905) or Linda Jordan (316-512-6652) if you have questions.

Thanks, Anita

Thanks to Anita Culp, Office Manager, for stepping up to format *In Touch* this month. Rolando Gomez’s work involves travel and long hours, and he was unable to do the formatting for this issue.

August 2017

August 2017

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

What Makes First UU First UU?

Del Smith and Vivien Minshull-Ford

Committees and governing bodies are essential to getting the work of the church done. But there is another aspect to our shared ministry, and that is extending connections and finding fellowship in groups which are not part of the organizational structure of First UU. A quick glance at the monthly calendar and you'll find such groups as Craft Night, Zen Friends, Writers Groups, Party Group, Book Clubs, and a Movie Group.

How do such groups get started? Here's one story in two voices.

Del Smith: So why did I go to my Fairmount Neighborhood Association friend, Vivien Minshull-Ford, and practically beg her to join with me in starting a movie group at 1501 Fairmount?

For purely selfish reasons, I assure you! I sorely missed the movies I was accustomed to seeing in SoCal at the run-down Art Theatre on 4th Street in Long Beach, California, or at the fancier, artsier theatres in Orange County. Oh, sure, I could find videos at Blockbuster, or at the public library, but I wanted to talk to somebody about Pedro Almodovar's attitude toward women in his garishly colored films. Or the "little" movies without a name actor that knocked my socks off. Some of those movies made it to DoDah at that movie house on the westside, but their run was over in just a few days.

I knew Vivien was regarded as the local cinema expert, along with Ol' Flick Erickson. I needed someone with the credibility to convince our UU folks that spending an evening watching a movie could be an aesthetically rewarding, even educational while being entertaining, evening. To my delight, Vivien agreed, with

one caveat. She wanted nothing to do with publicizing the movies. A perfect arrangement, because my middle name is Promotion!

And so it began!

Vivien Minshull-Ford: The chance to choose the movies I wanted? An avid film fan since the age of 5 and veteran of several film program committees, this was an offer I couldn't refuse. Our goal was to show films with critical acclaim which had never made it to Wichita or had only graced a Wichita theater for a week or so before moving on to another movie mecca, like Ponca City. We started our program on the safe side, showing *Lost in Translation*. Our next offering was *Afterlife*, a humorous Japanese allegory about dying. We showed films in several foreign languages. "Oh dear, do we have to read another movie?" asked Mahesh and Hermine Greywall, two of our most faithful film buffs. Other frequent audience members included Mike Dixon, Helen Mastroly, Maggie Brewer, Joe Brewer, and Anne Bailey, who would say, "Vivien, yet again, you have shown us a really strange movie!" Once or twice, I would trudge back across Fairmount Street to my house with my cherished film choice under my arm and tell my husband how hard UUs were to please.

One of our greatest supporters was Carolyn Brown, our minister, though one afternoon she asked me what the movie of the month was. I told her it was called *Dirty Pretty Things* (a wonderful film about human organ trafficking in a London hotel, starring Audrey Tatou). "Ugh!" said Carolyn. Shortly after, she handed me a UUA list of ecumenically suitable films—which

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What Makes First UU First UU?

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included such gems as *Jesus of Montreal* and *Strangers in Good Company*, as well as other films we had either shown or were thinking of showing. There were requests from the audience, too, and guest presenters: Jenny Findling showed *Ponette* and Charles Hankins introduced *Brother from Another Planet*.

We battled audio glitches and moved the speakers around to improve the sound. Brent Weeks and Carolyn Brown's husband worked tirelessly to keep the equipment working and the soundtracks audible. After we moved to the new building, during a showing of Jim Jarmusch's *Mystery Train*, about the Japanese Elvis fans making the journey of a lifetime to visit Memphis, the English subtitles were visible, but the Japanese subtitles slid off the bottom of the screen, never to be seen again. Del had my back, whatever the reception of a film was, and I gradually toughened up and learned

that a profound silence or a muffled "Humph!" at the end of a film like *Russian Ark* did not mean that our UU audience didn't like it: they were just thinking!

Yes, there were a few real bombs, but we did show some terrific films—most memorably, the Norwegian film *Elling*, the post-Berlin Wall film *Goodbye Lenin*, and Werner Herzog's Antarctica documentary, *Encounters at the End of the World*. Our program is still going, once a month, in the Zen room on Anne Bailey's donated TV/DVD player. We take turns choosing films which range from Hollywood classics to recent releases like Denzel Washington's *Fences* or my choice earlier this year, *The Clouds of Sils Maria*, which was met with, "Yet again, Vivien, you have shown us a very strange movie!"

Music Committee Notes

Jana Rambo

The Music Committee is looking into having a concert by Tom Neilson in March. We'll send updates as we have more information, but if you're interested, his website is <http://tomneilsonmusic.com.hostbaby.com/index/>. He is a singer-songwriter in the folk genre, with a focus on social issues, but a great sense of humor as well.

Thanks to everyone who worked to bring about the concert by Scott Smith and Richard & Karen Crowson. It was an outstanding performance as well as a gift to our church.

The choir will resume practicing in September for a performance that month. Practice is at 10:00 on Sunday mornings. We continue to need more members, especially male voices. Please consider joining us.

FIRST UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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Eclectic Readers

11:30 a.m., Friday, August 18: Eclectic Readers selected *Maus* by Art Spiegelman for discussion. The graphic novel has been called a memoir, biography, history, fiction, autobiography, or a mix of genres. It depicts Spiegelman interviewing his father about his experiences as a Holocaust survivor, and in 1992 it won the Pulitzer Prize. *Maus* was serialized from 1980 to 1991 and published by Pantheon Books in 1991. It was one of the first graphic novels to receive significant academic attention in the English-speaking world.

We've kept a record of our choices since 2007, and "eclectic" indeed reflects our reading choices. But *Maus* is our first graphic novel. Join us for a brown bag lunch at 11:30, followed by our usual lively discussion of the book. Contact: Del Smith, 316-612-0826.

Digerati Buchgemeinschaft

Come join the Digerati! We are an online book club. For August, we are reading *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller. We are discussing what to read in September (theme seems to be fantasy). For October, we will join the Wichita Library Big Read and read *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir* by Kalia Yang. 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, if you have questions about how to join.