



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA
FOUNDED 1887

Solar Panels: First UU Is Letting the Sunshine In! Green Sanctuary Committee

We have had a great start to our goal of becoming the first carbon-neutral church in Kansas, to saving on our energy bills, and to living up to our Seventh Principle! Twenty-six solar panels, with 320 watts each, were ordered on December 13. They are on their way to our building and should be here by the time you read this article! Kent Rowe, Holger Meyer, and volunteers from the Flint Hills Renewable Energy and Efficiency Cooperative will install our panels as soon as possible, depending on the weather. Our panels will provide almost half our energy needs for years to come.

Our congregation's response has been terrific. Many thanks to all who have already been able to donate. At this writing, we have raised about \$8,000 but still need about \$2,500 to complete paying for this part of the project before moving on to our second phase.

The Green Sanctuary Group has coordinated the fund raising and ordering, but it will take the entire congregation to make solar at First UU a reality. If you haven't already, please consider being a part of "Letting the Sunshine In" at First UU.

There are many ways you can help support UU solar panels and invest in the future: write a check, donate cash, use PayPal, or make a pledge for later this year. Contact either the church office, Marcia Ellsworth, or Vivien Minshull-Ford to donate. Every little bit helps! As a church, we are committed to doing our part for the environment. Yes! Yes, we can!

RE Corner

Denise Jackson-Simon DRE

Happy New Year. I hope this finds you all rested, happy, and peaceful.

We will begin the year with our annual Burning Bowl ceremony in our January 7 Way Cool Sunday School. It is a great time to let go of the old unwanted habits and behaviors, and to welcome a fresh start.

I am presently deciding how best to continue with lessons and activities for our Religious Exploration program in the new year. We have had very low attendance, and planning for unknown numbers and ages has proven quite challenging. It is my intention to provide the most meaningful, enjoyable experience possible for those who attend. I will continue to strive to do this to the best of my ability.

We do not have a Religious Exploration Committee, as such, at this time. It is my hope that some folks will step up and join, so that as more children and youth attend regularly, we will be able to provide age appropriate lessons. Please consider giving a little of yourself to this extremely important group of people in the church—our youth!

In Touch

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

www.firstuu.net

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

Art at Home

Marcia Ellsworth

If you would like to have one or two of Hermine Greywall's beautiful paintings hanging in your house to enjoy daily, we want to make this possible for everyone. As part of our on-going fund-raising efforts, Hermine's paintings will be available for rent or rent-to-buy for a small monthly fee. Just find a painting that you have been admiring that is hanging at the church, then talk to Vivien Minshull-Ford or Marcia Ellsworth and make arrangements. Rent levels can be negotiated but will start at \$10 monthly. If you rent one, get it home and decide you love it, the rent payments can be applied to the purchase. The only painting not available is the one on the south wall of the sanctuary close to the pulpit, but others need a good home where they can be appreciated!

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.

Our heartfelt condolences to Holger Meyer and his daughters Alexandra and Naomi on the passing of Holger's mother who lived Germany.

Our healing thoughts to Marsha Diggs who is recovering at home after undergoing knee surgery a few weeks ago, and to Millie Wherritt who is in Wesley Hospital but is feeling stronger and hoping to return home soon.

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

**“Go Now in Peace”—
First Unitarian Universalist Church Bids Farewell to Rev. David Carter
Del Smith**

Rev. David Carter will carry a First UU “signature” quilt with him to New York City when he moves into the Bhakti Center to live as an unpaid spiritual worker. Members of the congregation signed the back of the quilt—which was prepared by Bonnie Till*—with messages of love, support, and best wishes on this next leg of his journey. The front of the quilt is a map of the world, appropriate since he has traveled widely. Lower Manhattan can be quite chilly in winter, so our gift is practical as well as symbolic.

Additionally, three church members—Corey Swertfager, Vivien Minshull-Ford, and Mary Erickson—have been invited to comment on Rev. Carter’s tenure (2009-2017), his impact on future congregational life, and on their personal experiences with him.

Vivien, a friend of the church for years, said “David Carter’s sermons made me want to join the church.” Admitting herself as not always a good listener, she says she found herself always listening. “His broad intellect, his learning, his ability to swing effortlessly from W.B. Yeats or William Blake to the poetry of Rumi or the wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita, brought us all kinds of spiritual exploration. For me his referencing of sacred texts is also entirely in keeping with UU respect for all religions and the universality of spiritual expression.”

That ability to be at ease with a myriad of topics is part of his very being. Corey put it this way: “His aura emanates a spiritual ease that allows people near him to comfortably converse on topics grand and small.” He also noted Rev. Carter’s previous work as a hospice chaplain, which provided “a compassionate place for those on their way out of this world and for those left behind.”

All noted his impact on our work in social justice. Vivien was quite specific: “David built in us a growing awareness of the systemic racism in America. Even though he is leaving, our social action committee is pressing on where we can do some good: a program which will assist people convicted of qualifying minor crimes and misdemeanors to achieve expungement of their records.”

Mary and Corey particularly noted his ability to connect, not only to people directly needing justice, but to many within and outside First UU. Mary, who is a relatively new member of Unitarian Universalism, observed “the aura of love and giving among attendees and members. David Carter has been a major influence on retaining and fostering these attributes.”



Movie Group 2018 Selections

Del Smith

First Unitarian Universalist Church's Movie Group meets at 2 p.m. on the fourth Mondays of each month, normally too late to announce the Movie of the Month. We are taking this opportunity to change that for the first two months of 2018.

January 22: *The Graduate*, Mike Nichols' seminal 1967 satire which brought stardom to the unknown Dustin Hoffman and earned Nichols his first and only Oscar. Anne Bailey will introduce the movie and facilitate the discussion.

February 26: *Equity* is the first female-dominated film which deals with the greed-is-good financial shenanigans on Wall Street. Not only is the story and cast female-centric, but women call the shots behind the camera as well. Introduction and discussion by Vivien Minshull-Ford.

Members of the group select the movies, all of which fall into the general category of critically acclaimed and seldom if ever seen in a local theatre, at least not in recent years. A sampling of 2017 offerings: *Dr. Strangelove*, *An Inconvenient Truth* (original), *The Hidden Blade* (Japanese), *Children of Heaven* (Iran), and *Cave of the Yellow Dog* (Mongolian). All movies have subtitles, including English language—for the hearing impaired.

Announcements of the choices are made on Facebook and ListSrvs, and are sent by email to a core group of movie buff regulars. If you would like to be added to that core group list, let Del Smith know, wichitadel@aol.com.

New Member Class

People interested in learning more about First UU or becoming members are invited to attend an Inquirer's Class on Saturday, January 20, from 9:30 to 2:00. Lunch will be provided. To register, contact the church office at 316-684-3481 or office@firstuu.net. If you require child care, let the office know at least 72 hours prior to class.

New Year's Eve Party

The UU Holiday Party Group invites you to celebrate New Year's Eve with Cheese, Chocolate and Cheer from 7 to 10 p.m. on Sunday, December 31, at First UU Church. Bring your favorite cheese, chocolate, or cheer, and we will play games and ring out the old year in style!

Poetry: January 7

Thea Nietfeld

Poetry can inspire the writer and the listener/reader with pin-point insights and fresh metaphors. We will hear congregational poets read or offer original work on Sunday, January 7. Be inspired by the poetry of Lila Arnold, Mary Erickson, Suzanne Miller, Vivien Minshull-Ford, Del Smith, Jean Vaughn, and Diane Wahto.

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.

January 2018

January 2018

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



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— Holly Terrill
 President-Elect—Doug Wilson
 Board of Trustees—Kathleen McGee, Bonnie Till, Anne Welsbacher, Jana Rambo, Holger Meyer, Joe Lozano, and Lori Young
 Treasurer (interim)—Anne Bailey

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—TBD
 Chalice Book Store—Joe Lozano
 Communications—Anne Welsbacher
 Custodian—Durell Gilmore
 EcoFest—Marcia Ellsworth and Vivien Minshull-Ford
 Finance—Corey Swertfager
 Financial Commitment—TBD
 Fundraising—Marcia Ellsworth and Vivien Minshull-Ford
 Green Sanctuary—Linda Jordan
 Hospitality—TBD
 Kitchen Mavens—TBD
 Librarian—Nancy Milner
 Marketing—TBA
 Membership—Bonnie Till
 Music—Jana Rambo
 Partner Church—Betty Hensley and Debbie Wadman
 Personnel—TBD
 Program Development—Amy Geyer
 Social Action—Sharon Kniss
 UUA Denominational Liaison—Mike Diggs
 Worship—Anne Welsbacher

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Charles Merrifield, chair; LaRilla Combs, Linda Jordan, Paula Peare, Rachel Rutledge, and Frank Ruf

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Peter Ninemire, Vivien Minshull-Ford, and Rolando Gomez

GROUP CONTACTS

Craft Night—Anita Culp
 Digerati Buchgemeinschaft—Rolando Gomez
 Eclectic Readers—Del Smith
 Fourth Monday Movie Group—TBA
 Garden Group—Anita Culp and Linda Jordan
 Humanist Group—Charles Merrifield
 Occasional Book Club—Amy Geyer
 Pagan Group—Anne Bailey Linda Jordan, and Paula Peare
 Writers Group—Amy Geyer
 Zen Friends of Wichita—Bob Feleppa and Vivien Minshull-Ford

Go In Peace, continued from page 3

Mary also knows Rev. Carter as Hladini Shakti, as he is her guru, “unequivocally the most valuable person I’ve met during this life time.” Mary, at 5 feet, 9 inches tall, emphasized that he is “small in stature, with a giant spirit.”

Corey, a former congregation president concerned about finances and congregational growth, noted that David’s meditation classes brought new people into the building and that his distillation to the essence of the mantra made meditation accessible to us. Those who stuck with it achieved a sense of wellbeing. Corey also reminds us that the meditation classes added hundreds of dollars to our coffers.

David has been the only person Vivien knows with whom she could discuss 60s British rock and folk music, including Robin Williamson, whose music Rev. Carter used in his December 10 sermon. Donovan, another Scottish singer, was familiar to Vivien, especially from a time she heard him rehearsing in the studio of the television station where she worked in the 60s. David Carter’s take on Donovan’s music gave Vivien a whole new perspective not only on the singer but on her own life at the time. Donovan’s “Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth” was used by our retired minister to illustrate a Seventh Principle point in a sermon.

“I think there are many in the congregation who, like me, will very much miss David Carter’s many faceted and unique contributions to the church and its life,” Vivien concluded.

As we say farewell to the minister, our wish is found in the words of a parting hymn embroidered on the “signature” quilt: “Go now in Peace. / May the Spirit of Love surround you everywhere you may go. / Go now in peace.”

**Bonnie’s organizing of the farewell gift is fitting. Bonnie was elected president to fill out a board term of about five months when the church underwent a period of reorganization in 2013-14. The reorganization and revitalization came after a yearlong series of workshops led by Thea Nietfeld which resulted in the Covenant of Healthy Relations. The Covenant, which is now posted on the church-entry wall, was adopted by the congregation in 2016.*

Music Committee Notes

Jana Rambo

We are continuing our search for a new pianist. Resumes have not come in as quickly as we expected, but we are determined to find the best person for the needs of the congregation.

We are also continuing our contacts with some singer-songwriters about doing concerts at First UU. One is scheduled for March; another is interested in coming in November, but no definite date has been set.

At present the music committee has only three members: myself, Anne Bailey, and Corey Swertfager. If you would like to be a part of the committee, please get in touch with one of us.

Pagan Circle to Meet on Each First Saturday

In the New Year, the First UU Wichita Pagan Circle will be meeting on the first Saturday each month, and we will be celebrating various events in the Pagan Calendar. Please pick up a printed schedule the next time you are at the Church.

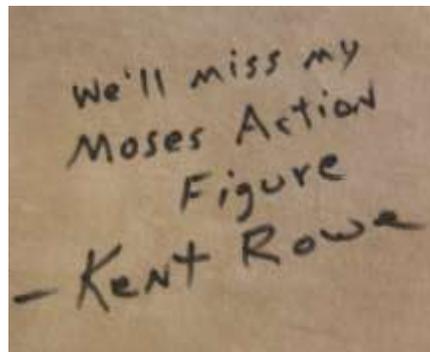
We will be meeting on Saturday, January 6, 2018, which is only a few days after the first Full Moon in January, which will happen on January 1. You are welcome to bring drums or other instruments and join us for singing, drumming, possibly a craft project, and, for sure, friendly talk. It all starts at 7:00. Snack foods are also welcome but not required.

Questions? Call Anne Bailey (316-650-4905), Linda Jordan (316-512-6652) or Paula Peare (316-312-5235).



Have You Signed the Quilt Yet?
Bonnie Till

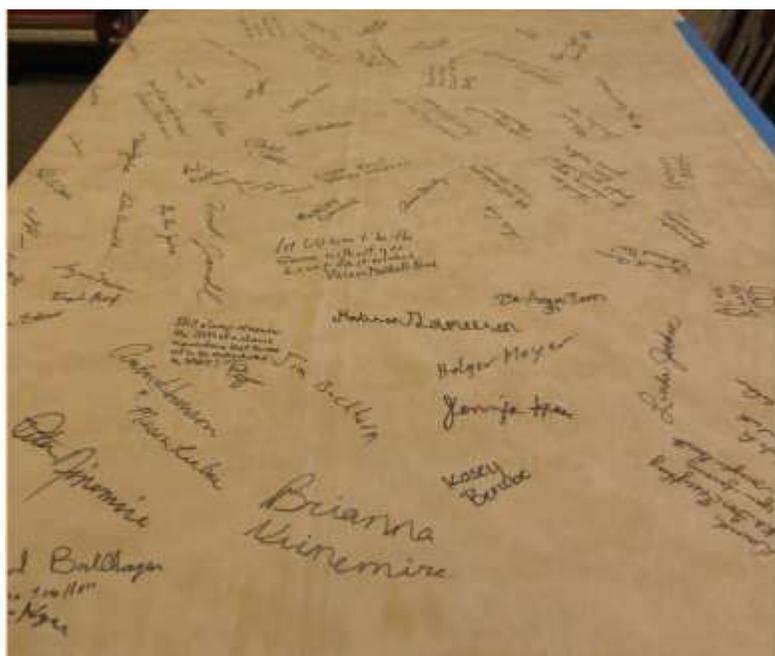
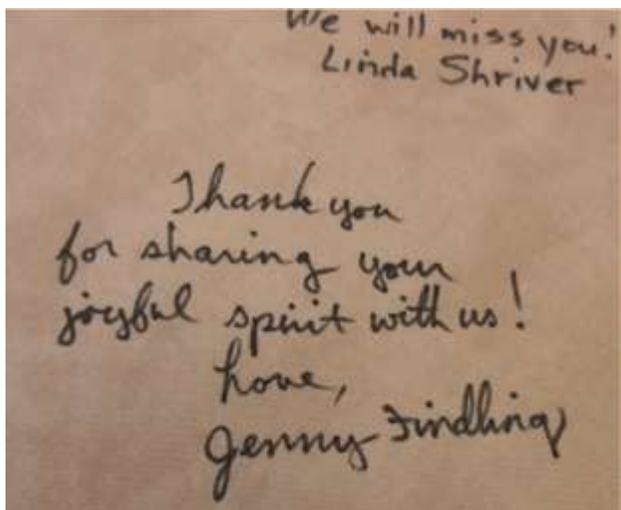
What quilt? No, I haven't signed it. How, where, do I sign it? What quilt?



The congregation is presenting Rev. Carter with a quilt signed by all of us as a gift of love and remembrance of his time with us. The quilt will be on display at the church and available for signing every Sunday in January.

Bonnie Till is the keeper of the quilt. If you find you can't sign the quilt on a Sunday, please contact Bonnie, at 316-644-4043 or bect@cox.net, for other options.

For heaven's sake don't miss out on signing!



FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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Eclectic Readers

11:30 a.m., Friday, January 19: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini is the Readers' selection to start off the New Year. *The Guardian's* review: "Anyone whose heart strings were pulled by Khaled Hosseini's first, hugely successful novel, *The Kite Runner*, should be more than satisfied with this follow-up. Hosseini is skilled at telling a certain kind of story, in which events that may seem unbearable—violence, misery and abuse—are made readable. He doesn't gloss over the horrors his characters live through, but something about his direct, explanatory style and the sense that you are moving towards a redemptive ending makes the whole narrative, for all its tragedies, slip down rather easily."

Conversation and brown bag lunch, followed by discussion starting at approximately 12 noon. Del Smith, 316-612-0826.

Digerati Buchgemeinschaft

Come join the Digerati! We are an online book club. Join us in plotting, er, planning, our next literary conquest! 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.