



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

Letter from the President of the Congregation

- Doug Wilson

Hello Everyone!

As I type this, I am still president-elect. I am told Holly "passes the gavel" at the next board meeting which will follow G.A. So, this is kind of a pre-president's report!

When I think back on my year as president-elect, there were some interesting moments. Granted, Holly took the brunt of the blows, but there were some challenges. It turned out that those early setbacks were just preparing us for the resignation of our minister, yikes! Thanks again to the Worship Committee for continuing to invite and host wonderful presenters for the services.

It was thought by many that with losing our minister we would have some extra money, from what would have been his salary, for other projects during an interim. What occurred was different. For a while we didn't have trouble, and it was nice. But then as the new year dawned, pledges were tallied, and the budget prepared, it became apparent we can't afford a minister.

A half time, in the pulpit twice a month, UU minister earns \$29,000 plus about \$10,000 in benefits. We are having a serious wake up call. First UU has about 120 members and a few others who attend regularly. In order to pay our mortgage, utilities, employee salaries, insurance, UUA dues etc., we need approximately \$35 dollars from each member, averaged out, every week. OR we need to grow the congregation. If you were at the yearly meeting on June 17, you heard me address this issue. Growing the congregation substantially, will lessen the per person share of the bills, and simultaneously increase our income enough to afford a UU minister. Additionally, it will relieve those who are on multiple committees by increasing the number of potential volunteers and nominees.

How are we going to grow the congregation? I don't know! But I feel like this is a very important time for First UU. I feel like everyone can help with this and that it will indeed take everyone to do it. At a minimum, please begin thinking about how and what we can do. Please try to think about it a little every day. When you get specific ideas, take note, on paper or device, and share them with applicable committees. Examine the "100+ Ideas for Membership Growth" at <https://www.uua.org/growth/ideas> . We can explore those ideas and more.

I ran across a thought concerning form vs. function. Essentially, it states, a church can make all the changes it wants, but if they amount to nothing more than form, then nothing has changed much. The congregation is better off asking, "Are we reaching people, affecting people; are we fulfilling our mission?" I'm not implying we

Continued on page 2

In Touch

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

www.firstuu.net

Member
Unitarian Universalist
Association

President: Doug Wilson

Office Manger:

office@firstuu.net

(316) 684-3481

Anita Culp

M, Tu, & F: 9:30am - 2:00pm

W & Th: 1:00 - 5:00pm

Director of Religious
Exploration:

Denise Jackson-Simon

simontrio@aol.com

(316) 644-2022

Newsletter Staff

Copy Editor: Suzanne Miller

millerbuchhorn@gmail.com

Layout Editor:

Rolando Gomez

shadoe7@mac.com

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

Letter from the President of the Congregation, continued

aren't, or that we are broken, but I do wonder if the necessary changes are profound, not, for example, adding "visitor" markings to a few parking spaces.

I'm excited to get to work on this, admittedly a little more so than some of the other duties that come with being president, but I will do my best. What I lack in organization and computer savvy, I hope my life experiences, communication skills, and an appreciation for all the work so many other First UUs do, will help.

My heartfelt thanks to Holly for all the work she has done as President. I'm humbled to follow in her and the other presidents' footsteps.

Congratulations to Andrew Davis and the other new board members. I look forward to working with you!

First UU Flower Garden

- Anita Culp

The flower garden really put on a show this spring. The lack of moisture during winter was a concern but all our native and locally-adapted perennials came through just fine. Even the ones hidden in the soil that were underfoot of the ladders during the solar panel installation emerged to reclaim their spot. The daffodils and the irises were beautiful in early spring, but the tulips failed to come up. Maybe we'll try hyacinths this fall.

The very large pink quartz stone from Betty Hensley's home has come to bless our garden with its year-round beauty. The main flowers blooming now are orange butterfly milkweed, purple coneflower, white Shasta daisy, and purple wooly verbena. Native bees and flies are the main pollinators as I write this in mid-June. Hopefully, we'll see butterflies visit our flowers in July.

Meet the Worship Committee

- Annie Welsbacher

Because we are currently lay led, the worship committee brings speakers to the pulpit every single Sunday. Who are we, and what do we do?

We plan topics and speakers for three to six months in advance; shape the tone, approach, and elements of services; work with the music committee; shape policies affecting Sunday services; and see to the physical aspects of the worship space.

Many of us are relatively new to the committee, so we have learned our roles and duties together. Over the months, I've observed that we each have found a niche, contributing something both personal and valuable.

Anne Bailey loves research and history, so she likes to sink her teeth into services such as one honoring Lucetta Carter, a 19th-century First UU founder. Anne's also our go-to person for services on pagan and earth-centered spirituality.

Kay Davis is interested in many topics but especially passionate about youth and education. Her work also digs deep: she is thorough and relentless in ensuring that all people, readings, musical selections, and processes are clearly laid out and communicated.

Susan Hund-Milne takes great care with the individual elements in our services, always looking for fresh readings and approaches to them. She suggests and finds many speakers and topics. She also makes sure the physical space is comfortable, well-lit, and attractive.

Frank Jandl, our newest member, contributes a wealth of ideas in our brainstorming sessions. He has wisdom and expertise in areas that none of the rest of us do. The cogs in his nerdy engineer's brain are always turning, bringing fresh energy.

Thea Nietfeld is a UU minister emerita, and we are grateful for her help, particularly during our lay-led period. She is generous with her time preparing scripts and speaking in the pulpit. She provides insights on content, process, and appropriate UU policies. She is gifted at bringing First UU members into active roles in our services. Thea is a one-stop UU shop!

Jana Rambo's areas of interest reflect her background as a (now retired) social worker. Jana, with the longest committee tenure, is taking a leave of absence to devote more time to her other First UU work. Jana has contributed a wealth of speaker suggestions, especially in this post-ministerial year. (She provided three of the five Sunday service speakers from May 27 through June.)

As chair, I have the most glamorous job of all: I (try to) herd the cats for a few hours a month. I manage the agenda, track ideas, delegate, and liaise among people externally and internally. Occasionally, I also venture out of the trenches to prepare a script or present.

So that's what *we* do to bring Sundays to First UU. What do *you* do?

First, you help make the hour a meaningful one for all of us with your presence. You arrive on time; if late, you find a seat near the door for minimal distraction to other congregation members and the speaker. If you're early or on time, you join us right up near the front to enrich the experience for folks on both sides of the pulpit.

You tuck away those electronic toys to be truly present with

Continued on page 4

Water Ceremony

- Anne Welsbacher

Our annual water ceremony will be held during the September 9 Sunday morning service. When you travel this summer (or even if you stay home), bring a sample of water to place in the water chalice—and a story to share about where it came from or what it means to you.

Meet the Worship Committee, continued

us for the hour. You refrain from adding unplanned announcements during the service so that its arc and cadences play out as carefully planned.

Lastly, you join us! It's easier than you might fear, and it's more fun—and creative—than you might think.

If you have a great idea for a service, we'd love to hear about it. If you might want to present one yourself, we'd love to hear about it. If you know others with expertise or speaker skills, we'd love to hear about them.

The worship committee's work doesn't become a service until you're there to share it. Contact any of us to talk about how you can join in the fun.

Family Bingo Night!

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

"Clickety-Click, All the Sixes! Duck and Dive Twenty-Five" – google it!

First UU would like to have an evening of family Bingo tentatively planned for Friday, July 21. There will be fun and refreshments for all ages.

If you have any experience with setting up bingo, playing bingo, or bingo calling (US or UK style), please contact me, Vivien Minshull-Ford, at 316-683-9295.

Watch the Weekly Update for further details.

Music Committee Notes

- Jana Rambo


Save the date! Tom Neilson is coming back. He will do a concert Saturday, February 16, and a church service the next day. We want to start advertising soon in hopes of getting better attendance at the concert. If you have ideas about how we can best do this, please get in touch with the Music Committee.

We are beginning to contact people who might provide special music for our services. If you would like to play or sing, please let us know.

Pianist Eric Whetmore will be away during the month of August. Jenny Bowen and possibly others will fill in for him.

We would like to have a few more people who are familiar with the sound system in case Anne Bailey and Corey Swertfager are both away. Anne says the system is not complicated. Please get with her or Corey if you can help in this way. Thanks to Eric for volunteering.

July 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:45a Adult Reilig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	2	3 3:00p Membership Committee 6:30p Zen Friends 7:00p UU Craft Group	4 Office Closed 5:30p 4th July Potluck 7:00p Committee on Ministry	5	6	7 7:00p Pagan Circle Full Moon Celebration
8 9:45a Adult Reilig Explor 10:00a Small Group 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:30p Leadership Council	9 6:00p Vegan Potluck	10 6:30p Zen Friends	11	12	13	14 10:00a Caring Committee
15 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult Reilig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:20p Social Action Group	16	17 6:30p Zen Friends	18 4:00p UU Craft Group 7:00p Board of Trustees 7:00p Worship Committee 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	19	20 11:30a Eclectic Readers	21 9:30a Inquirer's Class 6:00p Bingo
22 9:45a Adult Reilig Explor 10:00a Small Group 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Music Committee	23 1:00p Movie Group	24 6:30p Zen Friends	25 1:30p Newsletter Mailing	26	27	28
29 9:45a Adult Reilig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	30	31 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— Doug Wilson
 President-Elect— Andrew Davis
 Board of Trustees— Jana Rambo, Holger Meyer, Joe Lozano, Lori Young, Masud Chand, Jayne Henry, and Linda Jordan
 Treasurer— 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— Charles Merrifield
 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— Anne Bailey
 Music— Jana Rambo
 Partner Church— Betty Hensley and Debbie Wadman
 Personnel— TBD
 Program Development— TBD
 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

Jennifer Connelly, Charles Merrifield, and Nancy Milner

GROUP CONTACTS

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

Spring Revival! EcoFest Wichita 2019

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

There won't be a fall EcoFest Wichita this year. Instead, EcoFest Wichita will be on Saturday, May 11, 2019, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Over the past four years, we have found that in September and October there are big craft fairs in and around Wichita, as well as Woofstock and Halloween events. Marcia Ellsworth and I have also met with the organizers of the EcoFest which takes place at the Belle Plaine Arboretum in October, a week or so after our event. Generally, we are in complete agreement that, given the importance of promoting sustainability and preservation of the environment, we really can't have too many ecofriendly events. If we move to a spring date, there should be much less confusion for the public about which event is which. We will also support each other's events through social media and other outlets.

Springtime – when people who are already planting their gardens have to deal with pests, watering issues, and other problems – would be a better time for a celebration of green living and learning new techniques. Among our advocates for the environment will be experts to demonstrate composting, pruning, careful use of water, and other skills. We can also offer plant cuttings, and seedlings to visitors.

Last year's EcoFest Wichita provided us with seed money for solar panels, and our church is now operating partially off the grid. We could not have achieved this without the participation of exceptional vendors, makers of crafts, artists, and advocates. The success of EcoFest also owes a huge debt of gratitude to First UU Church volunteers whose hard work, creativity, and problem solving made it all happen. In Spring, 2019, we will need your help again.

Marcia and I will begin work in late Summer or early fall, sending out vendor invitations and visiting fall sales and craft fairs. If you know any artist or maker of crafts who fits our repurposed, recycled, upcycled, found, natural ingredients or materials philosophy, please let us know, and please pick up their business cards.

There is one big need that we have, besides help from the congregation. We no longer have a communications team: we need people with publicity and promotion skills to work with the press, radio, TV, and our Facebook web page. There will be training and help for people who take on this chore. If any of you would like to help out in any of these areas, please contact Marcia Ellsworth at

Ripples

- 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 extend our most heartfelt condolences to Mary Erickson, whose husband, Alex, died June 7 after an extended illness.

We also extend our most heartfelt condolences to Frank Jandl, whose father recently died in an accident.

After receiving treatment for a recurring illness at Wesley Hospital, Lila Arnold is feeling much better. She is continuing rehab services at the Life Center on East Edgemoor and enjoys calls and visits.

Our emergency fund is low, as we have helped several people in crisis this last couple of months. We appreciate any donation made to our fund.

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

RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon

Join us for summer Sundays in Children's Religious Exploration when congregation members share their talents and hobbies. We have an exciting variety of activities lined up that you won't want to miss. Plus, it's a great time for an intergenerational experience!

Remember, it's much more fun when you are here!

Follow the Creativity Theme

- Suzanne Miller

On June 10, 2018, Miriam Overholt said that *creativity is not a competition*. Listen to her complete talk, "Legacy Camp," when it posts at <https://firstuu.net/sermons/>. For more on creativity, listen or re-listen to Rev. Michael Nelson, Thomas Vitkus, and two Poets and Poetry services on the same site.

Fourth of July Party

You are cordially invited to the UU Holiday Party Group *Fourth of July Party*. Come help us celebrate the 242nd anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Gather at First UU Church on Wednesday, July 4, at 5:30, and dine at 6. We'll enjoy a potluck dinner and then play games.

New Broom

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

Linda Jordan, newly elected to the Board of Trustees, likens her job as First UU church custodian to the myth of Sisyphus: “You push that rock up the hill and at the top there’s a moment of joy before it goes rolling down again.” She admits that the cleaning job does seem massive at the outset, but she likes its flexibility.

As for having a system, Linda says that she “just goes with the flow.” At the beginning of the week, she cleans areas that don’t get much use, like the Zen room, and works on the parts that get most use, like the bathrooms and kitchen, at the end of the week. When Linda completes the clean, she can look around and have a good sense of accomplishment. Additionally, she finds the job quite relaxing. “It’s good exercise, and it gives me a strong sense of accomplishment,” she says. “What job can offer more?”

One moment of triumph came when Linda was confronted with the mystery device which measures the distance between rows of chairs in the sanctuary. “It had no instructions, and my first effort put the rows too close together,” says Linda. “But I tried placing it on the floor – and it worked.”

While most of us don’t see anything of this important part of church maintenance, it takes stamina, skill, and ingenuity, and from all accounts, Linda is doing a great job.

Pagan Circle – Special Movie Night

- Anne Bailey

The Pagan Circle at First UU will meet on Saturday, July 7, at 7:00 to watch a video of *Mother Wove the Morning* – a one-woman play written and performed by Carol Lynn Pearson, in which sixteen women from history speak their lives: a paleolithic woman, a Gnostic woman, a medieval witch, a Shaker deaconess, and others. Their dramatic stories show that the human family has always longed for its Mother in Heaven, has often exiled her, and is now inviting her to come home.

All are welcome, feel free to bring snacks to share at this special movie night.

Save the date! August 4 we will be having potluck feast before our Lughnasadh celebration.

Call Anne Bailey (650-4905), Linda Jordan (512-6652), or Paula Peare (312-5235) if you have questions.

FIRST UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

7202 E. 21st St. N.
Wichita, KS 67206
www.firstuu.net



Eclectic Readers

- Del Smith

Eclectic Readers book club meets at 11:30, Friday, July 20, at First UU. A novel by the popular Alexander McCall Smith is our choice— *Trains and Lovers*. We welcome the return of a book by this popular writer. His *La's Orchestra Saves the World* was well received by the Readers in 2011. Some reviewers think *Trains and Lovers* his best book yet.

[The publisher's description of *Trains and Lovers*](#): "In this surprising and poignant story, four strangers meet on a journey from Edinburgh to London. Each has a tale to tell: for Hugh, a brief encounter on a railway platform leads to an impulsive and possibly dangerous decision; Kay recounts the long journey back to her childhood home in Australia and the love that was there; David remembers a teenage friendship that shaded into love; and Andrew makes a discovery that art and people may not be what they seem to be at first glance.

"Love may come to us, then, in very different guises, and be unexpected too, but loving others, as one of the characters in this tale observes, is the good thing we do in our lives."

Brown bag lunch at 11:30; discussion begins around noon. All are welcome.