



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

Presidents Letter

-Doug Wilson

Hi, Everyone!

I've had a challenging month. I had some changes in my personal life that added some stress to my life. Then I got a cold that went straight to my lungs and the bronchitis lasted nearly a month. It was very taxing, but I am grateful to be almost recovered.

Thanks so much to Andrew Davis and all the attendees at the Vision Workshop. The workshop was a little work and a lot of fun. I am optimistic, to quote Andrew's materials and Peter Senge who coined the term Shared Vision, that we will create "shared pictures of the future that foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance," and that our shared vision will be a more visible way for newcomers to connect, belong, and thus grow the congregation.

Our Welcoming Congregation status continues to be a topic I, and any who want to help, will be delving into soon. Please [read about it on the UUA website](#), and contact me if interested. The Welcoming Congregation designation addresses the depth and degree to which a congregation appeals to and is comfortable for the LGBTQ community.

Occasionally, at First UU, as conscious and open minded, etc., as we are, we have little glimpses of areas where we can improve in regard to our welcome-ness, our cooperation, in general. We have a fine line to balance when there are so many beliefs and backgrounds present.

Comments among ourselves about others should be very carefully worded and always kind. Please, I am not perfect, and have to watch myself too, but as an active member of church administration, I receive many anecdotes of instances where we fall short of loving, open, inclusiveness. Please be especially careful if you presume to say something on behalf of the entire congregation.

Last night while discussing one of these anecdotes at the board meeting, I retrieved the Covenant of Healthy Relations right off the wall and brought it into the library where we meet. I did so to be reminded of how helpful it can be if there is a dispute. What I came away with was how it outlines how we should be conducting ourselves ALL THE TIME! So, the board agreed to make sure we bring the Covenant out more and that we practice it more. And Andrew has agreed to incorporate it into one of his presentations in the near future.

Alright, see ya soon.

Love,
Doug

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.

Treasurer's Report: End of Year Gifts

- Anne Bailey

We have money in the bank and current bills are paid. We are under budget at this point in our fiscal year, and donations and fund raising are running close to what was budgeted.

Don't forget: There is just enough time for you to make a *tax-deductible gift to the church* before the end of the year. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Board of Trustees November Meeting Agenda

Following is the First UU Board of Trustees November 21, 2018, meeting agenda. If you would like more information about agenda items, you may refer to the minutes, which are usually kept on file in the church library.

"You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

Check in

Anyone willing to relieve Holger of minutes duties?

Agenda review and consent

October minutes review and consent

Reports:

1. Treasurer's report

2. President Elect's report

Continuing business:

1. Website redesign/changes

2. Anything I may have forgotten

New business:

1. Lay-Led Congregations Grant

2. R.E. new TV

3. Yogi letter

4. Any additional new business?

Adjourn

An Evening with Mr. Dickens

-Vivien Minshull-Ford

A Christmas Carol has been a holiday treat for 175 years. Written and published by Charles Dickens in 1843, his "Ghost Story of Christmas" was an instant hit in Victorian England. The first edition was completely sold out before Christmas Eve. Dickens himself had a second career reading his works in person for an adoring public, and *A Christmas Carol* was his most popular reading.

A modern Mr. Dickens, a Unitarian, will begin a new tour in a few weeks, and he has agreed to give a reading of his "Christmas Carol" at First UU on Friday, 14th December at 7:00 p.m. The reading will last about two hours, with an intermission. Mr. Dickens will be assisted by A.J.(Andy) Musick, who has performed several times for First Unitarian Universalist musical events during the 1980's and many theatre performances in Wichita. He also directs school productions of Shakespeare plays and teaches stage fighting.

Divided into Five Staves (chapters), the "Carol in Prose" tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a wealthy but lonely spiritually impoverished miser, as he encounters the Spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Future, who show him the events of Christmas in his own life that have separated him from humanity and diminished his understanding of the meaning of Christmas.

Fred, Scrooge's nephew says: "I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys."

Many consider Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* to be a fully secular, humanist tale, while others believe it is a Christian allegory. You will understand it in a new way through Mr. Dickens' reading as he brings to life Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim, and all the other characters of his creation.

Carols and songs of the holiday season, performed by Carol Neighbor and friends, will precede Mr. Dickens' reading. To conclude the evening, Ms. Neighbor and the celebrated author himself will lead congregational singing of "God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen."

Entrance will be \$10, \$5 for students. Festive refreshments will be served during the intermission. For information, call the First UU office at 316-684-3481, or Vivien Minshull-Ford at 316-683-9295.

Little Goats, Big Profits

-Joe Lozano

The Alternative Gift Fair turned out to be busy, and profitable too – in the space of six hours, we raised \$1600 for the “Pay it Forward with a Goat” program for the community of Gros Morne in Haiti.

Big thanks go out to all the First UU people who pitched in, really too many names to mention. Thanks to the crafty group who stitched all those little goats together so amazingly; without them, we surely would not have done as well. Plus, thanks to the folks who staffed the table, our design department (Bonnie & Marcia), and many more.

RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon

During November, we focused on the second principle, "Be kind in all you do." We explored examples of Acts of Kindness, and on our Community Service Sunday, the kids made Thanksgiving placemats, which I delivered to Senior Services to be included with some Meals on Wheels for Thanksgiving.

During December, our third principle, "We're free to learn together," will be the theme of lessons and activities. On the 2nd, we will have a lesson in the classroom. We will participate in the first half of the service on the 9th, and then do a follow-up lesson. December 16th will be a community service activity. And on the 23rd, the children will attend and participate in the entire service. There will be no RE on December 30.

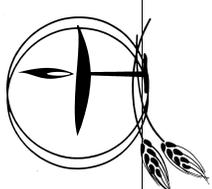
Wishing you much joy during this holiday season. I hope to see you at church. It is so much more fun when U are there!

Cheese, Chocolate, and Cheer: New Year's Eve Party

You are cordially invited to join the Holiday Party Group for yummy food and fun games on New Year's Eve, Monday, December 31, from 7 to 10 p.m., at First UU.

Please bring your favorite consumable from a cheese, chocolate, and/or cheer food group and help us ring in the New Year in style.

December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 7:00p Pagan Circle
2 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	3	4 6:00p Zen Friends 7:00p UU Craft Group	5 7:00p Committee on Ministry 7:00p Worship Committee	6	7	8 10:00a Caring Committee 6:30p UU Humanist Group Dinner and Meeting
9 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 10:00a Small Group Ministry 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council	10 6:00p Vegan Potluck	11 6:00p Zen Friends	12	13	14 7:00p An Evening with Mr. Dickens	15
16 9:30a Seeking Circle 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:20p Social Action Group 12:15p Christmas Potluck	17	18 6:00p Zen Friends 7:00p Membership Committee	19 4:00p UU Craft Group 7:00p Board of Trustees 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	20	21 11:30a Eclectic Readers	22
23 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 10:00a Small Group Ministry 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Music Committee	24 1:00p Movie Group	25 Office Closed	26 1:30p Newsletter Mailing	27	28	29
30 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service	31 7:00-10:00p New Year's Eve Party					



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, Charlie King, 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 – TBD

Custodian – Linda Jordan

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 – Debbie Wadman

Personnel – TBD

Program Development – TBD

Social Action – Sharon Kniss

UUA Denominational Liaison – Mike Diggs

Worship – Anne Welsbacher

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

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

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Jennifer Connelly, Charles Merrifield, and Nancy Milner

GROUP CONTACTS

Craft Group – 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

Services in December

- Annie Welsbacher

Many of our December services, focused as they are on caring for one another, reflect Unitarian Universalists' second, third, and sixth principles calling for compassion, acceptance, and community. Denise Jackson-Simon and our youth will join us for two services.

On December 2, Andrew Davis returns to the pulpit with "Celebrations." In his presentation, he will explore how the celebratory spirit we bring to the many holidays this season are about much more than just the story of each of the faith traditions they represent. This will be an interactive presentation in which we are all encouraged to think about and share what we celebrate and why it matters.

We welcome a representative from Hope, Inc., on December 9. This organization provides service for the families of people in prison. Denise and First UU youth will give us a lesson on the third principle, "Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations."

On December 16, Harold Schlechtweg, advocacy coordinator of the International Rescue Committee, will relay the critical status of refugees coming to Wichita for the first time. With him will be IRC In-Kind Donation Coordinator Zarin Shoity, who will describe how the congregation can help with a donation drive for urgent needs for refugees – in particular, winter clothing and hygiene items.

Our holiday service December 23 features Anne Bailey and our First UU youth. Most of us think about Christmas when December comes around. But most of the major religions have special festivities at the end of the year for all kinds of interesting reasons. We will learn about some of them in story and song during this service.

Finally, on December 30, we'll see the year out with Sarah Yost speaking on "Turning Anger into Fuel." Anger is an excellent catalyst but a terrible fuel for achieving what you really want – even if what you want is a better world for others. Sarah will offer advice on how we can be not only *better* people, but *happier* people, too. Happy New Year!

Ripples: The Gifts of Caring

- 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.

The Gifts of Caring: During this past year, First UU Caring Committee has been fortunate to have emergency funds to help some of our members and friends who experienced a crisis. We were able to help because of generous members and friends who contributed to the Caring Committee emergency fund. Thank you to everyone who contributed those funds. Those contributions were truly *gifts of caring* for our members and friends.

Our funds are almost depleted at this time, so we hope you will add the emergency fund to your holiday gift list as your *gift of caring at First UU*.

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

Even So:

The Sad Joy of Leaving, by Diane Wahto

Book Review by Suzanne Miller

At a poetry reading I attended several years ago, Diane Wahto began her portion of the program by reading from William Stafford's *Writing the Australian Crawl*, as I recall. So, I feel okay about opening this review similarly: William Stafford famously described his writing process as when being "receptive, careless of failure, a wonderful freedom comes. If something occurs to me, it is all right to accept it. It has one justification: it occurs to me. No one else can guide me. I must follow my own weak, wandering, diffident impulses." And then, "A strange bonus happens. At times, without my insisting on it, my writings become coherent.... They lead by themselves to new connections. Sometimes the language, even the syllables that happen along, may start a trend. ...At such

Continued on page 9

First UU Pagan Circle

We gather as always on the First Saturday, December 1, beginning at 7:00. Everyone is welcome; join us to share with each other what we are thankful in this season of celebration.

Bring your drums or other instruments; snack foods are always welcome. Call Anne Bailey (650-4905), Paula Peare (312-5235) or Linda Jordan (512-6652) if you have questions.

Even So, continued

times, I allow myself to be eloquent, or intentional, or for great swoops (Treacherous! Not to be trusted!) reasonable. But I do not insist on any of that; for I know that back of my activity there will be the coherence of my self, and that indulgence of my impulses will bring recurrent patterns and meanings again."

Words and phrases like "receptive," "freedom," "follow my own impulses," and "the coherence of my self" describe the work of poet Diane Wahto, longtime member of First UU, activist, teacher, and current Kansas Author's Club district 5 president. Wahto's recently published first full-length book of poetry, *The Sad Joy of Leaving* (Blue Cedar Press), is currently available at Watermark Books.

"Sad joy" is not "Schadenfreude" or "gloating." In Wahto's poems, it's the feeling of excitement in leaving home when "home" is a place that keeps you from being your whole self. She evokes this feeling in narrative and lyric poems that show departures from many homes – families of origin, lovers, marriages, children, religions, philosophies, and even seasons. In these poems, "sad joy" is alchemy, the transformation of base into precious metals.

These poems are not nostalgic. When remembering pasts as they were, Wahto counters with clear formulations of what they could have been or what she wishes could grow from them. In the poem "Sunday Dinner at Grandmother's House," for example, a three-act dramatic poem in which all the characters look or act ugly in some way, she ends with "I will be the most beautiful woman in the world." And a beautiful poem about visiting a family cemetery full of buried regret ("Through a Glass Darkly") ends with her message to the dead saying that she is alive: the sad joy of leaving the dead is grounded in the recognition of one's ongoing life.

The first three of the book's four sections are populated mostly with narrative poems – engaging stories, each containing an emotional twist, and many seasoned with the genius of wry wit. These stories are full of passion. Read slowly, they seem chapters of a story told in snapshots, frozen moments of peace and of foreboding. Sometimes the moments explode. In "The Yellow Dress," scenes of domestic violence with interventions by children, neighbors, and police are told in descriptions of things that protect – like the basement (from storms), a beautiful dress (from hatred), a bedroom (from exposure), a carpet (from stairs), shoes (from cold), uniforms and "guns upholstered in shiny leather" (from crime), and "his face a mask / of innocence and hurt pride" (from accusation).

Beyond the drama of the narrative poems, one almost misses the smaller lyrics, the song-like poems. Wahto writes, in "Rue," "I lost my voice the way my mother lost her self. / Incrementally, unnoticed until it was too late / to recover the luminous clarity of my song, / the undeniable force of her existence." However, the loss seems a gain in her transformation of the singing of hymns into the creation of lyric poems. Be sure to read "Sacrament," the title poem "The Sad Joy of Leaving," and all the final section of the book, "Leap of Faith" – wisdom lyrics that sing of hope, peace, a happy marriage, and, from ever the activist, motivation.

For a final inspirational word about the idea of sad joy, I'll quote from Wahto's poem "In Answer to W. B. Yeats": "Who advised 'Never give all the heart,' / ... / Even so, I say let the heart / go without reservation, despite the cost, / despite what one may find is lost /"

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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



Eclectic Readers: December 21

From Wikipedia: "*Bless Me, Ultima*, a coming-of-age novel by Rudolfo Anaya, has become the most widely read and critically acclaimed novel in the Chicano literary canon since its first publication in 1972. Teachers across disciplines in middle schools, high schools and universities have adopted it as a way to implement multicultural literature in their classes. The novel reflects Chicano culture of the 1940s in rural New Mexico. Anaya's use of Spanish, mystical depiction of the New Mexican landscape, use of cultural motifs such as *La Llorona*, and recounting of *curandera* folkways such as the gathering of medicinal herbs, gives readers a sense of the influence of indigenous cultural ways that are both authentic and distinct from the mainstream.

"*Bless Me, Ultima* is Anaya's best known work and was awarded the prestigious Premio Quinto Sol. In 2008, it was one of 12 classic American novels selected for The Big Read, a community-reading program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, and in 2009, it was the selected novel of the United States Academic Decathlon."

Friday, December 21: Brown bag lunch at 11:30. Discussion begins at noon. Del Smith, 316-612-0826.