



In Touch

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF WICHITA

FOUNDED 1887

Presidents Letter

-Doug Wilson

Hi, Everyone.

It's occurring to me that I'm roughly half way through my term as president. It's been interesting! At times it's challenging. At other times I feel comfortable. Sometimes I actually get quite nervous about what needs to be done or is about to occur. One thing for sure is I have had lots of assistance from a variety of people. I believe I can name every president of the five-plus years I have been involved with First UU.

Help often comes from other people, not necessarily past presidents. I love it when people come to me eager to help and ask, "Which committee should I attend to implement the ideas I have for this and the suggestions I have for that?" So cool! It's a great idea to know not just that we need changes or fixes but to work towards exactly what those changes might entail. It can be work, but it's often a little fun and definitely rewarding.

So here's to six more months of tackling all of our challenges together. Head to head, hand in hand, heart to heart (that's a lot of H's;!).

Thanks,
Doug

Death with Dignity Law

- Sherry Skillwoman

A fledgling group in Wichita is working toward proposed legislation for Kansas to have a Death with Dignity law. This would provide Kansans the legal option for a compassionate death through medical assistance or rational self-deliverance, as covered by Dr. Charles Gessert in his [January 6, 2019, presentation at First UU.](#)

If you would like to help develop a resolution to submit in the next legislative session, we would love to have more people. Meetings are monthly at the new downtown library. Please email humboldtgrrl@yahoo.com or call me at 316-943-3954.

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.

Betty Hensley Memorial Playground

- Marcia Ellsworth

Most of our congregation knew and loved Betty Hensley who passed away last spring. She was a talented and dedicated longtime member of this church and well known in Wichita for her collection of flutes and as a flautist. Bill and Dana Hensley, and two of Betty's other children, are giving the church \$24,000 in her name for a playground/learning center. They have stipulated that the playground emphasize the environmental focus of the church, have a musical theme, and be known as the Betty Hensley Memorial Playground. This is an exciting project and a generous contribution to our church.

Some preliminary ideas have already been floated around to create a one of a kind safe space for kids of all ages to expand their knowledge about the environment, music, and theater through imaginative and physical play while celebrating Betty's love for the Unitarian Universalist Community. Some of the proposed elements include a stage, musical play instruments, a small raised garden for children to plant vegetables, and climbing equipment.

Planning will begin the first part of February. If you have questions, would like to look at the current plan, have an interest in helping to plan or build this structure, or are interested in being a part of this project to enhance our religious education program, please talk with, call, or text Marcia Ellsworth (316-208-3083, mjelsworth@aol.com).

80th Birthday Recorder Recital February 24

Carol Neighbor, now in her 80th year, has been madly in love with the recorder for almost six decades. On **Sunday, February 24, 3 p.m.**, at First UU Church, Carol and friends will celebrate that love.

The program will show recorder playing in several settings and in differing styles of music from the Renaissance and Baroque, to modern times, and from consort settings, to sonata, to jazz and folk. Susan Mayo, Emily Baldrige, Dolores Granger, and Greg Golding will be among those musicians performing with Carol in recital.

Refreshments will be served. Money offerings will benefit the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita.

If Winter Comes...

- Lila Arnold

Sliding down November's dark trough to the deep murk of December
the official first of day of winter,
this shortest day, this solstice,
comes.

Our souls know this pit,
this harbinger of despair,
this long obsidian night.

Still, put an ear to the cold ground
hear the slightest burbling sound
of sap readying to rise
teased out by the tiniest increase
in light that will lead us all
to summer
again.

Bags of Blessings

First UU Church is again participating in the community-wide hygiene distribution for those in need. The Bags of Blessings box in the Fellowship Hall has been filling for months with contributions.

We still need the following by our **Sunday, February 24, deadline:**

- chapstick/lip balm,
- emery boards or nail clippers,
- shaving cream,
- Band-aids (3),
- Kleenex, and
- white socks.

For more information or to donate, contact Lynn Vouthilak at 620-200-4990 or redschmidt@sbcglobal.net.

February Cherry Party

The Holiday Party Group invites you to help us celebrate National Cherry Month on **Saturday, February 9**, at the First UU Church. Please bring a dish to share (with or without cherries). We will gather at 5:30, enjoy a potluck dinner at 6, and then play games.

According to sources, February is National Cherry Month because George Washington was born in February, and he famously chopped (or didn't chop) down that cherry tree.

It is not difficult to find dessert recipes with cherries. In case you wish to bring a non-dessert cherry dish, you can find recipes online for spicy cherry glazed chicken, apple cherry pork chops, slow-cooker cherry pork chops, dried cherry couscous salad, seared pork with figs, quinoa-dried cherry salad, and shrimp salad with dried cherries.

RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon

Thank you to all congregation folks who donated to our fundraiser for Rainbows United. We raised almost \$120 and will be able to purchase several multi-cultural books for special needs children. The UU kids and I appreciate you!

In **February**, our focus is on the 5th principle, "All people need a voice." The kids will participate in the first half of the **first and third Sunday's** services and return to the classroom for follow up lessons. **February 10** we will have a "Love" celebration and activity with Valentine's Day around the corner. And on the **24th**, it will be a lesson in the classroom.

We have enjoyed several new visitors over the past couple of months. We certainly hope they will come again. It is always great to see lots of kids showing up on Sundays. Please try to make UU part of your week. It is much more fun when U are there!

to see you at church. It is so much more fun when U are there!

First UU Pagan Circle

Join us for our monthly gathering on **Saturday, February 2**, as we celebrate Imbolc with a potluck feast beginning at 6:00 followed by informal ritual at about 7:00.

Imbolc or Imbolg, also called Brigid's Day, is a Gaelic traditional festival marking the beginning of spring. Most commonly it is held on the 1st or 2nd of February, or about halfway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. Historically, it was widely observed throughout Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man.

Please bring a generous dish to share. Coffee and tea will be available. Everyone is welcome. Feel free to call Anne Bailey (650-4905), Linda Jordan (512-6652) or Paula Peare (312-6235) if you have questions.

Board of Trustees January Meeting Agenda

Following is the First UU Board of Trustees January 16, 2019, 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.

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”
Dr. Seuss

Call to order

Check in

Agenda review

Approve December Minutes

Reports:

1. Finance Report

2. Crafting and adopting sexual abuse/offender protocols for the church – Sharon Kniss

3. President Elect's Report

4. President's Report

Continuing business:

1. Web Page; Hire Web page manager?

2. Pastoral Care

3. Vision Work, and do we need separate meetings?

New business:

1. UUA Statement of Conscience “Democracy Corrupted” vote

2. Wedding smudging

3. Lynn Kietz acknowledgement/training

4. What have I overlooked?

Adjournment





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 February

- Annie Welsbacher

Change is in the air, from our state's new governing leadership, to the season (whatever that means in Kansas). It's in our pulpit, too, as we turn away from winter with a presentation about the traditional pagan spring festival and welcome two out-of-town speakers from within our UU tradition. Andrew Davis provides us with continuity to keep us grounded amidst the change.

On **February 3**, Linda Jordan will talk about Imbolc (or Candlemas), which is also called Brigid's Day. This Gaelic traditional festival marks the beginning of spring. Most commonly, it is held on the first or second day of February, about halfway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. Historically, it was widely observed throughout Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man, and this year it will be celebrated by our local Pagan Circle on February 2.

On **February 10**, Andrew Davis returns to the pulpit. Check the website and watch weekly "Update" newsletters for more about his presentation.

On **February 17**, Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan joins us from the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka, where she has served as minister since 2014. She speaks on "Building Trust from the Inside Out." Oglesby-Dunegan quotes from the Soul Matters program found at the UUA website: "Facing our fears takes a whole lot of self-trust. Getting over self-doubt can seem an impossible hurdle. That's why some advise us to simply 'Jump!' 'Take a leap of faith,' we're told. 'Go all in!' But what if the secret path to overcoming our fears and believing in ourselves is not one big leap, but instead a bunch of baby steps?" Rev. Sarah invites us to practice facing our fears and doubts in order to build trust we can share and embody.

The month closes out on **February 24** with guest presenter Dr. Mtangulizi Sanyika speaking on "Black Power and Liberal Religion in the 1960s: Lessons for the Future." This year marks the 50th anniversary of what became known as the "Exodus Walkout" of black UU members (and their allies) from the denomination's General Assembly to protest perceived racism. Sanyika was a leader of the black empowerment struggle against racism within the UU church and society during that era. He was also the architect of a new spiritual paradigm known as Black Humanism, which emphasizes the centrality of black agency in the black and human liberation project. He will speak about these and related issues. Stay after the service for a brief talkback with Sanyika and special visitors from the Wichita community.

Note: At 3 p.m. on Sunday, **February 24**, a special all-recorder concert in the classical music concert series will celebrate Carol Neighbor's 80th birthday.

In addition to Sunday's service, Sanyika also will speak at the Humanists Meeting on Saturday evening, **February 23**. (See related article in this issue.) Join us for this special weekend with

EcoFest Wichita 2019 Update

- Marcia Ellsworth and Vivien Minshull-Ford

EcoFest Wichita 2019 will be on **Sunday, May 5**, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. As an observance of Maytime and the environment, our festival will take the place of the Sunday service.

May 5th is close to Earth Day, May Day or Beltane, the time in ancient Celtic and pagan lore when cows were driven out to pasture, and special rituals took place to protect cattle, crops, and people, and to promote growth.

We are expecting that, with the change of season, there will be added opportunities for environmental advocacy and horticultural education. On Thursday, January 17, we met with advocates like Citizens Climate Lobby and The Ark River Coalition for input on more effective ways to promote environmental aims.

We really need helpers to fill in a multitude of tasks in the months leading up to EcoFest. Some of the ways that you can participate are

- planning,
- setting up and cleaning up on the day of the event and the day after,
- being part of the committee to organize booths,
- working with volunteers,
- helping with traffic,
- being part of the communications team, and
- preparing flyers and posters.

We will be having a general planning meeting on **Thursday, January 31**, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the church. Members of the congregation are welcome to attend. Please consider what you would like to do.

If you have suggestions for EcoFest activities or know possible vendors or advocates who would be perfect for our event, please let us know: Marcia Ellsworth (316-208-3083, mjelsworth@aol.com) or Vivien Minshull-Ford (316-683-9295, vminshull@gmail.com).

Dr. Mtangulizi Sanyika at First UU February 23-24

- Charles Merrifield

Dr. Mtangulizi Sanyika will be the speaker at the Humanist Meeting at First UU on the evening of **February 23**. He will also speak at the First UU Sunday morning service on **February 24**.

Dr. Sanyika retired several years ago after a career teaching at several Ivy League universities. In the late 1960s, he rose to influence in the Unitarian Universalist Association as a leader of the Black Affairs Council (BAC). In 2017, he [addressed the UUA General Assembly](#) for BLUU (Black Lives of Unitarian Universalists). Dr. Sanyika was a friend of Chester Lewis, who was a member of our congregation and a leader in the NAACP.

Editor's note: You may enjoy hearing Dr Sanyika talk about his New Orleans/Houston "retirement" in the short online Prism documentary ["Two Cities: A Portrait of Dr. Mtangulizi Sanyika."](#)

Music Committee Notes

- Jana Rambo

The Music Committee met on December 23 for our usual monthly meeting. We have not had a lot of activity lately, but we have one concert set with others in the works. If you know anyone who might like to give a concert at First UU, please let us know.

Our services have been enhanced lately by the music of John White Crow. Thanks to John for sharing the music of his tradition.

If you play an instrument, sing, or do other musical things and would like to share your skills in a service, please contact the Music Committee!

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

7202 E. 21st St. N.
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Eclectic Readers

At our February meeting, we will discuss Carlos Eire's *Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy*.

"At the start of the nineteen-sixties, an operation called Pedro Pan flew more than fourteen thousand Cuban children out of the country, without their parents, and deposited them in Miami. Eire, now a professor of history and religion at Yale, was one of them. His deeply moving memoir describes his life before Castro, among the aristocracy of old Cuba – his father, a judge, believed himself to be the reincarnation of Louis XVI – and, later, in America, where he turned from a child of privilege into a Lost Boy. Eire's tone is so urgent and so vividly personal (he is even nostalgic about Havana's beautiful blue clouds of DDT) that his unsparing indictments of practically everyone concerned, including himself, seem all the more remarkable." -[The New Yorker](#)

11:30 a.m., **February 15**: brown bag lunch, followed by discussion. Del Smith, 316-612-0826.