



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita
Founded 1887

August 2019

President's Letter: More How?

- Andrew Davis

It's easy to want more. It's even easy to know what we want more of. It's hard, however, to know how we want to make more happen, especially when it comes to our church.

We know that "more" never happens without change of some kind, but we also know that change is hard enough for individuals, let alone groups of people in a church. The thought of church-change can make us so tired we want to sit down and stare at our feet until the temptation to act passes. We aren't bad for thinking this way. We're just tired. After all, we've tried change before, and too often the hard work didn't seem to matter because none of the change lasted. It was impossible to have tried any harder than we did, but little came of the possibilities we imagined.

I know that I've lived through so many deaths of change like this that I've lost track of the exact number, but I also think I know what went wrong. We tried too hard. Now, I'm not arguing for not trying, but I am arguing for targeted trying that doesn't overwhelm any of us, which means everyone will have to try at least a little bit.

Our church is in a time of transition to a lay-led congregation, and when people ask me what that means, other than stating the obvious, I tend to say, "Whatever we want it to mean." We've begun to explore a new shared vision for our church community, and while it clearly offers us more ways to be ourselves, it says very little about how we might achieve this more, so I'd like to turn to chaos theory for help.

Chaos theory tells us that lasting, significant change in any system (and a church is a system) comes not from blowing up what is and starting over from scratch, but from making the smallest of changes in how the elements of that system relate to one another.

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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.

Ripples

- LaRilla Combs, for the Caring Committee

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.

Congratulations to Amanda Diggs who is graduating with a master's in library science from Emporia State University. Amanda is the daughter of members Marsha and Michael Diggs.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped with our beloved Del Smith's memorial reception. You all are greatly appreciated!

Pastoral Care: Did you know that pastoral care services are now available to our members? Since we do not have a minister, First UU is now what's called a "lay-led" congregation. While our caring congregation responds when members experience crises, there are times when a qualified minister is better able to assist. The Board has been concerned about how to meet pastoral care needs for some time, and at the June meeting, they finalized plans to hire a part-time pastoral care professional who can step in when congregants need such assistance. This part-time position is budgeted for up to four hours a week. At the end of six months, an assessment will be made to see what, if any, changes, need to be made.

The Board determined that the Caring Committee would be responsible for interviewing and hiring and over seeing this position. We are pleased that Joe Mohr has accepted our part-time Pastoral Care position. Joe has a background as a hospital chaplain and began serving as minister for St. Luke's Methodist Church on a part-time basis. Joe may attend some committee meetings, as appropriate, as well as meeting with congregants individually.

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

Bullet Points from the Board

- Andrew Davis

It has been suggested that we include a brief summary of Board Meeting proceedings in In Touch rather than just a copy of the agenda, so we will start with our meeting on July 17.

- We have changed the start time of our Board meetings to **6:00 p.m.** to help accommodate the schedule of Board Members. Remember, anyone can attend a Board meeting, and if you have a concern you would like us to address, please contact me at andrewkurtDavis1@gmail.com so that I can place your concern on the agenda.
- We wanted to remind members and friends of the church that Joe Mohr is available for pastoral care if needed. Contact Anita Culp at 684-3481 during church office hours for contact information.
- We had hail damage from the last storm and are working to fix it.
- Our new copier will be delivered soon, and with it will come much better print.
- The Board reviewed the content of the Shared Vision work that has so far been produced. Everyone agreed that the content is on point (with a little bit of editing still required), but we need some expertise that goes beyond the Board to create the visual presentation that will capture the big ideas and draw people into the actual language that participants in the Shared Vision workshop produced. We will create a process for congregational approval before anything is finalized.
- Sharon Kniss made a presentation to the Board several months ago on the need to create a Safe Congregation policy for our church. We are working on this and hope to have sample language to review at our next Board meeting.
- We are putting together a scheduled maintenance plan to help us better manage our resources. If you have any suggestions for this list, please send them at Andrew Davis.
- EcoFest Transition: As you know Marsha Ellsworth and Vivian Minshull-Ford have completed their five-year stint heading up EcoFest; therefore, it is time to find new leadership. We will be conducting a brief survey to determine the degree of support for continuing this program. If it is still there, we will identify new leadership to guide us as we move forward.

Pagan Circle

We meet again on Saturday, **August 3**, to celebrate Lamas or Lughnasadh – the first of three Pagan Harvest Festivals.

Our Sabat Celebration begins at 6:00 with a potluck feast and will be followed by an informal ritual beginning about 7:00. 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. Feel free to call Anne Bailey (650-4905) if you have questions

Update on Haiti Project

- LaRilla Combs, for the Social Action Committee

Blaise Roudgina and Vincent Kerventz, who live in the Lambert Community in Haiti, are attending the Lambert Secondary School this year through the sponsorship of First UU. The sponsorship pays for school expenses: tuition, school uniforms, and one meal a day. This educational opportunity for these youths has been made possible by the generous contributions of several First UU Congregants and the sales of the art of former member Mary Erickson. We recently received this thank you note from Sam Muyskens:

“Thank you so much for sponsoring a Haitian student. You are enabling children to become educated and have a chance to find purpose for living in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. I have been going back and forth to Haiti for 28 years. Today our Lambert Community School has graduated hundreds of students who are today working in the medical field, teaching in local schools, etc. We have a long way to go, but we have also come a long way. Thank you for helping us create a school and medical clinic [as the community keeps] working toward their goal of becoming a sustainable community in a very poor country.”

Migration Ministries Needs

Kendra Alison of St. Francis Migration Ministries gave a presentation to First UU on June 2, 2019. Migration Ministries are asking for items to help new-coming refugees make their homes more welcoming and safe, and to get them on their way to becoming independent. Because they are assisting many new clients, they have run out of many of the items they normally give them. They rely heavily on donations to set up and begin these new homes to launch a new life of safety, security, and freedom for each refugee family, and would be so thankful to have our support. They can use anything that is found in a household: clothes, kitchen items, basic tools, etc. The following are especially needed:

- towels
- basic tool kit
- bike lock or helmet
- \$10-\$20 Visa gift cards (for laundry machines that no longer take quarters)
- soccer balls
- iron/ironing board
- blenders, coffeemakers, and crockpots
- wallets

Please leave your donations in the box in the First UU Church foyer. Contact Lara Pollock at 316-619-2777 for questions or if you want her to pick up any items.

August 2019

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

Del's Impact

- Jana Rambo

The passing of Del Smith has hit many of us hard. For me, it's almost like a part of our foundation has fallen away, although Del would be the first one to deny that she occupied that role. I was struck by the number of people who spoke at her memorial service who said she had been a profound influence in their lives.

Del entered fully into whatever challenge she took on, which, I think, is why she had such an impact on so many people as well as organizations. She didn't do things halfway; she applied her considerable abilities to whatever activities her passion for social justice led her. At the same time, she didn't insist on having things done her way, and was careful to listen to others' opinions.

Over the past several years, part of my own aging process has led me to seek out role models among those who were further down the road than I. Del has been a primary person in this regard. Since her passing, I've become aware of a continuum developing in what I've observed.

As most of us know, Del's life was strongly influenced by her Buddhist faith. One of the most important aspects of this that I observed was her acceptance of change. Looking back, I recall her speaking of her first step, that I am aware of, in accepting the changes aging brings. She told me she had become aware that she tended to say "yes" every time she was asked to do something and that she was beginning to learn to say "no" to some requests. She realized she no longer had the energy to do as much as she had in the past, and she accepted the need to rest more and let others do what she had done previously.

Over the past two or three years, Del was even more aware of her health limitations, and began to withdraw from church activities. However, she didn't simply abandon her tasks; as much as possible, she recruited people to take over her responsibilities. Not only that, she shared with them how she had done things, so they had the benefit of her wisdom and experience.

The final step in Del's process of releasing her jobs, however, was to accept that those who took on her responsibilities would have their own way of doing things. She commented once that something wasn't the way she would have done it, but it was no longer for her to say how things should be done. She was conscious of the temptation to insist things be done her way, and she worked through her feelings about it so she could let go.

When the time came that she should no longer live alone, Del packed up her belongings with good grace (donating many to the church sale). She entered a new phase of her life, living with Jessi and Jenny, with joy and appreciation, and she felt safe and in a good place.

Lynn Kientz and I sat with Del on the day before she died. She was having symptoms that I hoped were a reaction to her medication, but Del knew otherwise. She quoted from the Buddhist words that were read at her service: "I am of the nature to have ill health; it is not possible to avoid ill health. I am of the nature to die; it is not possible to avoid death." She reminded herself (and us) that life is impermanent.

Del lived fully and died as she wanted – with no heroic measures taken to prolong her life, and in the presence of dear friends. I will cherish her example. Peace, joy, and equanimity...and thanks, Del.

Services in July

- Kay Davis for the Worship Committee

August worship calls us to examine the theme of “Sanctuary” as more than the traditional sacred space for worship. Our services this month will lead us to explore the deeper meanings of the word as we seek out truths about what “sanctuary” is and is not, what it can and cannot do, why we need it, and why it needs us. The central question we pose this month is, “What does it mean to be a People of Sanctuary?”

August 4: Doug Wilson explores the role of grace in helping us get through challenging times in his adaptation of the Rev. Gretchen Haley’s sermon, “Making Space for Grace” from the SoulMatters collection.

August 11: Kay Davis examines the meaning of sanctuary as it is illustrated in selected stories of immigrant experiences, poetry, and other sources in “We Are Called to Be a People of Sanctuary.”

Andrew Davis continues our exploration on **August 18**, sharing his answer to our central question in his most recent musing and writing, “Sanctuary as Sabbatical: Rest-Renew-Restart.”

August 25 brings a special treat for all of us as Lara Pollock brings us the first of a special sermon series called, “Greta Speaks.” Greta W. Crosby, Minister Emerita of First UU, dedicated over 40 years of service in the pulpit. In this series of presentations, her daughter, Lara, will share various selections from Greta’s literary legacy of letters, sermons and essays. In the first installment of “Greta Speaks,” Lara will share a quaint collection of letters Greta wrote as a sixteen-year-old foreign exchange student in Paris, France, from 1947 to 1948.

RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon

Summer Fundays are what we're having in RE with activities from composting to comics and cooking to crafts. Thanks to the many congregation members who are sharing themselves, their time and talents with our children.

We still have several Sundays left this summer to enjoy learning new information and skills. You might even pick up a new hobby. So, come join us. It's much more fun when U are there!

August Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, for the Membership Committee

The following members joined First UU Church during the month of August (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: LaRilla Combs (42), Anita Culp (9), and Thomas Vitkus (7).

Music Committee Notes

- Jana Rambo

The Music Committee continues to oversee the musical life of the church, both for services and outside of services. We are fortunate to have a new member, John Whitecrow. We would still like to have more members, so let us know if you can help.

We have been in contact with Roy Zimmerman, who will be back in this area in April. Unfortunately, the time he has open would be on a Wednesday evening; however, we hope to schedule a concert while he's here.

If you know of anyone who might be willing to give a concert at the church, please contact us.

Produce Exchange

- Linda Jordan

This season we are trying a new way to share the wonderful bounty of the garden. There is now a table in the Gathering Space designated as PRODUCE EXCHANGE. Please donate excess bounty from your garden by placing it in the aluminum pans on the table.

Please feel free to take what produce you can utilize and enjoy. If you can afford to make a cash donation, it will be gratefully received. Just place it in the designated container.

Thanks, and enjoy!

Digerati Buchgemeinschaft

First UU Online Book club. After a hiatus we are lining up to join in on the [Big Read](#) and read [Lab Girl](#) by Hope Jahren. The Big Read starts October 1st and runs through Nov. 15th.

Join us as we select an interim book. You can find [us in Goodreads](#).

Presidents Letter, continued

Too much effort inevitably leads to a rebound effect that returns us right to where we didn't want to be, doing what we didn't want to do, in ways we didn't want to do it. A tiny bit of effort, however, leads to just enough new space so that we can practice *how* we want to be more of what we want to be.

So, how should we do more by trying less? Gently, one tiny act at a time, with care for ourselves and others. Each of us needs to move at his or her own pace, taking plenty of breaks along the way so we don't tire ourselves out, like a butterfly stopping to rest on a flower, then flapping its wings once to change the world.

In chaos theory, chaos is simply complexity not yet understood. Feeling overwhelmed, then, only means that we haven't yet seen the new patterns that will emerge from new actions. And it isn't always leadership – in fact it usually isn't – that first sees the new patterns emerging.

So, here's my request: try doing more in our church in very small ways. You can do this more by yourself or with others, but whether alone or together, watch what happens, and think about what it means. And if you have a big "small more" you'd like to explore, bring enough other people into your action so that none of you wear yourselves out. If you need to go to a committee because that's where responsibility for the change you want to see lies, go there. If you need to go to the Board, go there.

But whatever you choose to do, remember that the changes that matter most are changes in how we relate to one another. This doesn't mean that any of us are doing relationships wrong. It means we may be stuck in old ways of doing relationships that keep lasting change from happening.

Let's go, then, and try gently.

First Unitarian Universalist Church

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Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

After enjoying a break during the month of July, we will meet again on Friday, **August 16**. Marcia Ellsworth has chosen *Never Let Me Go*, a book by Kazuo Ishiguro. Marcia Ellsworth will have copies from the library available at the church on **July 21**.

“From the Booker Prize-winning author of *The Remains of the Day* and *When We Were Orphans*, comes an unforgettable edge-of-your-seat mystery that is at once heartbreakingly tender and morally courageous about what it means to be human.... Hailsham seems like a pleasant English boarding school, far from the influences of the city. Its students are well tended and supported, trained in art and literature, and become just the sort of people the world wants them to be. But, curiously, they are taught nothing of the outside world and are allowed little contact with it.... Within the grounds of Hailsham, Kathy grows from schoolgirl to young woman, but it's only when she and her friends Ruth and Tommy leave the safe grounds of the school (as they always knew they would) that they realize the full truth of what Hailsham is” ([Goodreads](#)).

On **August 16**, join us at **11:30**. Bring your lunch. Discussion starts at noon.