



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita
Founded 1887

September 2019

From the President: The “With” Paradox

- Andrew Davis

I’ll start with a definition. A paradox is an apparent contradiction that conceals a significant truth. Without all three parts of this definition working together, however, it quickly crumbles into meaninglessness, so I’d like to hold up each part for quick consideration.

First, on the surface of any paradox, we find something not quite right. This means there must be at least two parts of the paradox which, *at first glance*, don’t seem to fit together. For those more annoyed than intrigued by paradox, this contradiction will elicit responses like, “That’s stupid,” “I don’t have time for this,” or “If you’re so smart, just tell me what you want me to know.” Those intrigued by the puzzle paradox lays out before them, however, tend to offer responses like, “Wait a minute,” “What about,” or “But what if we look at it this way?” In other words, a paradox asks us to change our point of view, and we either are or are not willing to do so.

Second, concealment implies an intention on the part of paradox makers to hide something that they consider valuable; so valuable, in fact, they would rather the value remain hidden than be misused or abused. There are, then, two implications of paradoxical concealment: paradox makers know *both* that the meaning they’re after isn’t for everyone *and* that they aren’t smart enough to know who is and isn’t ready to “get it.”

Third, paradox makers won’t go to the trouble of creating (or pointing out) a paradox unless there is a significant truth worth presenting and protecting. *Real* paradoxes can never be unpacked by teachers so that they are understood as easily as reading a menu at a fast food joint. Real paradoxes require careful excavation and time spent muddling through what one discovers under the surface before they can be understood, and they are never understood *en masse*, but one mind at a time, even when many people are trying to understand them simultaneously.

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

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

Ripples - LaRilla Combs

The Caring Committee is the arm of the church that acknowledges events in our members' and friend's lives such as illness, surgeries, and bereavements. We also acknowledge celebratory events such as birthdays, weddings, births and graduations.

Our best wishes to Fern and Herb Van Geison on their move to the Assisted Living area of Larkesfield Place.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped with Fred deWit's Memorial reception.

Several members of the Caring Committee helped with the lunch for the Inquirer's class Saturday, August 17. Thank you everyone!

Thanks to Anita Culp and Linda Jordan for arranging for the donations from the garden produce to go to the Caring Committee emergency fund.

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

Game Night in September - Jerette Preisser

You are invited to come out and play with us at Game Night, Saturday, **September 21**, at 6:30! Bring your friends, favorite board or card games, a sense of adventure, and a snack to share, and prepare for fun and fellowship. We look forward to playing with you!

Questions? Contact Jerette Preisser, 316-282-5810.

Bullet Points from the Board

- Andrew Davis

- ♥ The money raised from our First Sunday Lunch in September will be used to support the two students we sponsor in Haiti. Please join us right after the morning service for a Haitian themed meal: good food for a good cause.
- ♥ Charles Merrifield is the new chair of the Committee on Ministry (CoM), and Susan Hund-Milne and Holly Terrell have joined the committee for three-year terms.
- ♥ We will begin repairs to the damage caused by the July hailstorm to our roof, HVAC equipment, and stucco siding in September.
- ♥ Bruce Roby and Anita Culp have agreed to Co-Chair the Building and Grounds committee. Any proposals to make substantive additions/alterations to the building or grounds should start with this committee. Bruce (broby8@cox.net) will chair the Building half of the group and Anita (office@firstUU.net) will chair the Grounds half. Please contact them if you have concerns or are willing to help serve with them.
- ♥ We will sponsor a table at the Wichita Pride Festival on **September 29** from noon to 6:00 p.m. at the Mid-America All Indian Center. If you are interested in helping staff the table, please contact Andrew Davis at 519-9852 or andrewkurdavis1@gmail.com.
- ♥ Our Fall Indoor Garage Sale will be held over three days from **October 31 to November 2**. Please start identifying items you can donate, but do not bring items to the church until we let you know we are ready.

Pagan Circle: Artemis

- Anne Bailey

The First UU Pagan Circle will meet on the first Saturday, **September 7**, at 7:00. And we may have a surprise guest speaker. All are welcome, and you are encouraged to bring snack foods to share and drums and other rhythm instruments to join in our singing and chanting.

We will be talking about Artemis, the patron and protector of young girls and the twin sister of Apollo. (September 5 is her feast day.) The Artemis Program is an ongoing spaceflight program carried out by NASA with the goal of landing "the first woman and the next man" on the lunar south pole region by 2024.

Questions? Feel free to call Anne Bailey, 316-650-4905.

Social Action News

- Sharon Kniss

The Social Action Committee has been busy, even though it's been summer! We're excited to lead for the Sunday service on September 1 (incorporating the UUA Common Read, *Justice on Earth*, in the theme), as well as raise awareness at First Sunday lunch for our support efforts for students in Lambert, Haiti.

We're grateful that Joe Lozano is again organizing our collaborations with the Alternative Gift Fair, and a project will be chosen by the time this newsletter is released!

A few of us have also formed an ad-hoc committee to consider ways to continue to improve and build on First UU's "welcoming" nature. We want to improve and enhance our welcoming for the LGBTQIA community, but also for other marginalized groups and perspectives that may not be dominant, either in wider society, or in our services and activities. Please contact Sharon Kniss or Holger Meyer if you would like to join the group.

The Social Action committee has focused efforts on environmental justice, education needs in Haiti, criminal justice reform (expungement), and related activities over the last year. At our next meeting in September, we will consider what our priorities for 2019-2020 will be – if you have suggestions, let Sharon Kniss or any other committee member know.

Freethinker Humanist Group

- Charles Merrifield

The planning group held a meeting on August 15 to develop a rough schedule for the forthcoming year. Feel free to contact me if you have ideas to help with the planning of a meeting.

September 28: Gun Control

October 26: Panel Discussion on Immigration

November 23: Countermeasures to Avoid Extinction

January 25: Psychology of White Supremacy

February 29: Conspiracy Theories

March 28: Asian Philosophies and the Environment

April 25: Soul and Mind

May 30: Music and Humanism

September 2019

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

Delphine - Nancy Milner

Well, Del, you did not have to die to get my attention. I was looking forward to enjoying your stories and observations a while longer. But I know you were in pain and discomfort and were keenly aware of the failing of your body, but NOT your mind. You were sharp to the end, even curious about baseball. You like that. And you were not afraid to die. Your parting gift to me, your stories in poems, brings salty tears that wash my tired eyes. I enjoy your wit, like the literary lion getting caught with his puns down. I relish your observations of people trying to not look drunk as they order another. I share your grief at the silliness of people trying to be different but being the same as each other: Red Hats.

“Borrowing brains” defines our relationship for me. We mutually admire each other and feel so safe in loudly sharing unsocial thoughts. Then we peek around to see if anyone is leaving. This space we use to share our brains must be unusual because no one ever leaves or gives us frowning looks or points chastising fingers. We just giggle, sip our lattes, and go on with our train of thought, spoken loudly so we can hear each other. We talk about politics, agreeing wholly. We discuss our disparate histories and that of our UU church for clarification. And we talk about the needs of people we know and love.

Oh, I miss you so much! Ryan is not a substitute at all. He is a Libertarian. I know you find that to be hilarious. Don't gloat, you young-dead thing.

Love,
Nancy

How to Invite Friends and Family to First UU - Anita Culp, Membership Committee

During the last church year (July 2018 through June 2019), we had 32 cards filled out by visitors to the church. On the cards, visitors were asked how they heard about First UU Church. The top response (thirteen) answered “friend or relative.” (Seven said “webpage,” six saw the sign, five answered “other,” four heard of us through Facebook, and one found us in the phone book.)

So, telling friends about our church is an important way to connect with someone who may be seeking a new place. If you don't know how to answer people's questions about UUs, pick up our wall-display brochure “15 Unitarian Universalist Elevator Speeches,” and then come up with your own. Or take a “What Do Unitarian Universalists Believe?” wallet card from the counter in the church library to refer to or give out. You might even respond with “Google it!” and suggest UUA's website. You might open the door to what someone is looking for.

Services in September

- The Worship Committee

As we return from our summer travels and gather our congregation back together, each of us comes filled with expectations for ourselves and for our church. Our worship services for the month of September will explore the SoulMatters theme of “Expectation” from several perspectives as we seek clearer understanding of how we both shape and are shaped by the interconnected web of which we are all a part.

On **September 1**, our Social Action committee will lead the service. They will draw inspiration from the UU Common Read book, *Justice on Earth*. We will hear responses from members who read the book as well as stories of environmental justice locally (in Wichita) and globally (in Haiti). Please plan to stay after the service for First Sunday lunch which will include some Haitian flavors to honor our support of the Lambert community in Haiti.

Our service on **September 8** will be our annual Water Communion (or Gathering of the Waters): when we symbolize our coming together after a summer of traveling and rest; to celebrate all that is life-giving and that which has restored our spirits. Our Water Communion is a visible sign that, no matter where we go and for how long, the love of this community – and the warm and welcoming love from this community – draws us back in.

Dr. Bob Minor, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies, University of Kansas, will return to our pulpit on **September 15** to explore why people from dominant groups have difficulty recognizing the privileges they enjoy simply because of birth, and why they tend to automatically “go into anecdotal-justifying denial” when their privilege is pointed out. We hope you join us this Sunday to hear a dynamic presentation by Dr. Minor titled “Why Is the Idea of Privilege So Controversial?”

Andrew Davis and Eric Whetmore will present a duet titled “Windows of Expectation” on **September 22**. This promises to be a novel and interesting service in which Andrew (on words) and Eric (on piano) will converse about the power and possibilities – both good and bad – that follow from how we use expectations to frame the key moments of our lives.

On **September 29**, Jenny Findling will bring us “Expect Chaos,” a sermon by the Rev. Bill Sinkford of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Portland, Oregon. In this final offering on the theme of Expectation, we will explore the roles of reason and spiritual faith in how we respond to both personal and societal change and transitions.

Labor Day Party

You are cordially invited to bid farewell to summer with the UU Holiday Party Group when we celebrate Labor Day, Monday, September 2, at First UU Church. Gather at 5:30; dine at 6.

Please bring a covered dish for dinner, and join us for scintillating conversation, irresistible edibles, and laugh-out-loud games.

August Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, for the Membership Committee

The following members joined First UU Church during the month of September (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: Diane Wahto (28), Porter Marshall (24), Jamey Findling (15), Jenny Findling (15), Sheri Barnes (14), Linda Shriver (14), Charlie King (11), Deborah Burnham (6), Connie Pace (4), Eric Ford (4), and Kim Ford (4).

RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon

Well, our summer program is winding down. We have had a wonderful variety of activities led by some very generous congregation members. I would like to thank each of them here: Darien Patterson, Anne Bailey, Jennifer Musiji, Dania Laubach, Bonnie Till, Lara Pollock, Linda Jordan, Magda Garret, Mitch Kientz, Holly Terrill, Holger Meyer, Vivien Minshull-Ford, Millie Wheritt, Marcia Ellsworth, and Caroni Lombard. The lessons have been interesting, fun, and enjoyed by all in attendance. Thank you again for your time, talents, flexibility, and your willingness to share a bit of yourselves with our kids. I think these experiences are invaluable intergenerational opportunities for our church.

We will have one more "summer" lesson on **September 1st** and then begin our fall program on **September 8** with the Intergenerational Water Ceremony in the Sanctuary. This year, we will be incorporating the Religious Exploration Resources that accompany our congregation's adopted program, *Soul Matters*. September's focus will be on "Expectation". We will look at what water teaches us about navigating the currents of expectation, how we can handle the many expectations that come with new beginnings, how we can set ourselves free from expectations, and what we should expect of life.

Mark your calendars for our annual Fall Family Round-up on **October 13**. Details on that are coming soon. Also, parents be sure and keep an eye out for my "What's Happening in September in RE?" flyer coming to your e-mail boxes soon.

In the words from the 1966 song by the Happenings, "See you in September. See you when the summer's through."

Digerati Buchgemeinschaft

First UU Online Book club. We are currently reading N.K Jemmsin "[Stone Sky](#)." 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 discuss and select future books. You can find [us in Goodreads](#).

Presidents Letter, continued

Third, paradox makers won't go to the trouble of creating (or pointing out) a paradox unless there is a significant truth worth presenting and protecting. *Real* paradoxes can never be unpacked by teachers so that they are understood as easily as reading a menu at a fast food joint. Real paradoxes require careful excavation and time spent muddling through what one discovers under the surface before they can be understood, and they are never understood en masse, but one mind at a time, even when many people are trying to understand them simultaneously.

Which brings me to the paradox I'd invite you to consider today: with.

This much I know: on the surface, the word "with" suggests that two or more "I's" fade into "we," but when we dig deeper, we find that if the "I's" ever truly fade away, then so too does "we." "We" can't exist without at least two "I's" working together, but a person's "solitary-I" is never exactly the same as that same person's "we-I."

What I don't know, however, is how the distinction between the "solitary-I" and the "we-I" works for anyone but me. The paradoxical truth that "with" offers us is only found when we are working/playing/thinking/feeling alone-together – and it's never exactly the same for any two people. Because of this, the meaning of "with" cannot be explained, only experienced and reflected on until its meaning becomes clear one person at a time. So, here's to each of us individually becoming more by together muddling our way through "with."

September First Sunday Lunch

- Marcia Ellsworth

First UU supports two Haitian teenagers (Roudgina and Vincent) by paying their school fees each year in the amount of \$240 each. Since our Sunday service on **September 1** will be about Social Justice, we thought it appropriate that our first Sunday Lunch be a fundraiser for these students. Haitian themed cuisine will be featured.

If you have a favorite Haitian/Caribbean dish (vegan, vegetarian, or other) that you would like to donate, please bring it on the first. If you would like to step out of your comfort zone and try a new recipe, contact Marcia Ellsworth at mjellsworth@aol.com, or do your own research and bring something that speaks to your Haitian taste buds!

First Unitarian Universalist Church

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Eclectic Readers

- Anita Culp

Our September meeting will be one week early on Friday, **September 13**. Anita Culp has chosen any book or short story by Jack London.

London (1876-1916) was an American novelist, journalist, and social activist. A pioneer in the world of commercial magazine fiction, he was one of the first writers to become a worldwide celebrity and earn a large fortune from writing. He was also an innovator in the genre that would later become known as science fiction. His most famous works were books set in the Klondike Gold Rush as well as many short stories. London was a passionate advocate of unionization, socialism, and the rights of workers, and he wrote several powerful works dealing with these topics.

Come prepared to tell about the book or story you read and anything you learned about Jack London. Join us at 11:30 for a brown bag lunch; discussion starts at noon.