



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita
Founded 1887

October 2019

From the President: More Precision

- Andrew Davis

On the last day of August, while Kay and I were gliding down the escalator at one of the malls here in town, I joked that “Christmas was just around the corner.” The universe must have overheard me because as soon as we slid back onto solid ground and took two steps to the right, we saw the first of this year’s commercial Christmas decorations rise up before us: a tableau of small and large trees bedecked with shiny balls and intricate ornaments hovering over perfectly wrapped presents strategically scattered beneath them.

Granted, it was a tasteful attempt to ignore the calendar, but it was a chronological bungle that has haunted me ever since, as if the universe were seeking revenge for the sarcasm I let slip from my lips. Or maybe not.

Maybe, it was nothing more than a display put up by a minimum wage employee, who neither knew nor cared that I existed and just wanted to keep his or her job. Maybe, just maybe, I’m not as important as I’d like to think I am, and the only connection between that Christmas display and me is what I make up so I can feel better about myself.

Since I do like making up stories, and I am no more or less important than anyone else, the odds are good it’s all in my head. Still, I think I should have the right to be at least a little annoyed by crass exploitation for exploitation’s sake, and my annoyance has nothing to do with crossing some creedal line in the sand. I am of the persuasion that religious holidays are what we make them, no more or less. Christmas in August, then, isn’t a theological conundrum for me, though I understand why it might be to some. What concerns me is a much smaller and yet more difficult problem to solve: precision. Christmas in August is sloppy living, plain and simple.

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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 - Linda Jordan

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.

The Caring Committee is pleased to announce the addition of a new member: Magda Garrett. She has agreed to apply her skills to the role of memorial event coordinator. Welcome, Magda! We would be happy to welcome others to this committee.

The Caring Committee gratefully thanks all of those participating in the produce exchange. The generosity of those donating the bounty of their gardens and the generosity of donations from those taking the produce has allowed us to financially assist two congregation members this month.

Following the most recent Inquirers' Class, First UU has one new member, Roberta Hickman, and a renewed returning member, Sherry Skillwoman. Welcome! Anyone interested in the next class may contact Anne Bailey at 650-4905.

Our pastoral care person, Joe Mohr, has been meeting with congregation members, but still has some time available. If you would like to meet with him, contact him directly at 580-729-0781.

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

Wichita Alternative Gift Market

The 25th Annual Wichita Alternative Gift Market on Saturday, **November 9**, 2019, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., will be at a new location – First Presbyterian Church, 525 N Broadway. This market features charitable gifts starting at only \$1.00, fair-trade crafts and foods, café lunch, and more. Childcare and children's activities will be available. Admission is free.

The community-wide market is hosted by dozens of local groups. This will be the second year in a row that First UU is participating with a booth to raise funds for an agricultural project in Haiti. Volunteers organized by the Social Action Committee will create and provide complimentary cards and ornaments to shoppers who donate tax-deductible gifts to the charity in honor of their loved ones.

Bullet Points from the Board

- Andrew Davis

- We still need someone(s) to take over leadership of EcoFest from Marcia Ellsworth and Vivian Minshull-Ford. They have done great work for several years, but others can do great work as well. Stay tuned for more information about how you can help lead us into a new phase of our efforts to intentionally care for the interdependent web by sharing both leadership and the load.
- We have been invited by the UU Fellowship in Salina to participate in building a website to support Lay Led Congregations in the area. If you have any suggestions/questions/ requests for this project, please send them to Andrew Davis at andrewkurdavis1@gmail.com.
- Joe Mohr, our pastoral care provider, still has hours available if you need support of some kind. Please contact him directly at 580-729-0781 if you would like to meet with him.
- Communication is always difficult—especially when we think it isn't. . . . As the Social Action Committee was looking for ways to participate in this year's Pride Festival, they asked me to take a request to the Board for help. I thought I understood what they wanted, and marched forward with misinformation. I should have double-checked to make sure I understood their request. . . . I'll try to correctly represent any request that comes my way, but the best way to ensure that the Board addresses an issue you want them to consider (instead of an issue we *think* you want us to consider) is to either write it out in detail or *even better* come to the Board and speak to your concern. We know everyone's busy, but we want to get it right.

Betty Hensley Memorial Playground or "Betty's Place" Update

- Marcia Ellsworth

If you are wondering what happened to the plans for a First UU play area for our kids, it is still in progress and should be happening very soon. Watch for a cedar and wrought iron fence to go up sometime in the next month on the south side of the building. After the fence and stage are in, work will begin to landscape and divide the space into musical, play, and learning centers.

The committee's goal is to provide a safe space for kids of all ages to expand their knowledge about the environment, music, and theater through imaginative and physical nature play. Some of the proposed elements include a stage, musical play instruments, a small raised garden for children to plant vegetables, and climbing equipment made from reused or natural products.

This is an exciting project made possible by the family of our late, long time member, Betty Hensley. If you have an interest in helping to plan or create and work on this venture, please talk to Marcia or Bruce. We need rocks, tree stumps, natural pieces of wood, old tires, and reused wood. Please let someone on the committee know if you have a source or contact for these items. The current committee consists of Sandy Roberts, Linda Jordan, Thong Vouthilak, Susan Hund-Milne, Bruce Roby, and Marcia Ellsworth.

Compost ICT - Vivien Minshull-Ford

Effective immediately – we are taking an environmentally-sound step for First UU.

Compost ICT will be collecting one bucket of kitchen waste, including meal leftovers – yes, even bones – each week on Monday and turning it into useful compost. The service is \$55 per quarter. We are set up and funded for six months to see how we like it.

Let us know what you think,
Marcia and Vivien.

Holiday Party Group and Game Night Group present 50th Anniversary of Woodstock A quiet music festival with potluck dinner and games

Bring your favorite music to share. We'll bring some from 1969. We'd love to see you in your love beads or your hippie threads. Bring a dish to share. Bring your favorite game or play one of ours.

This festival will be held on Saturday, October 12, at First UU Church. Gather at 5. Dine at 5:30. Games at 6:30.

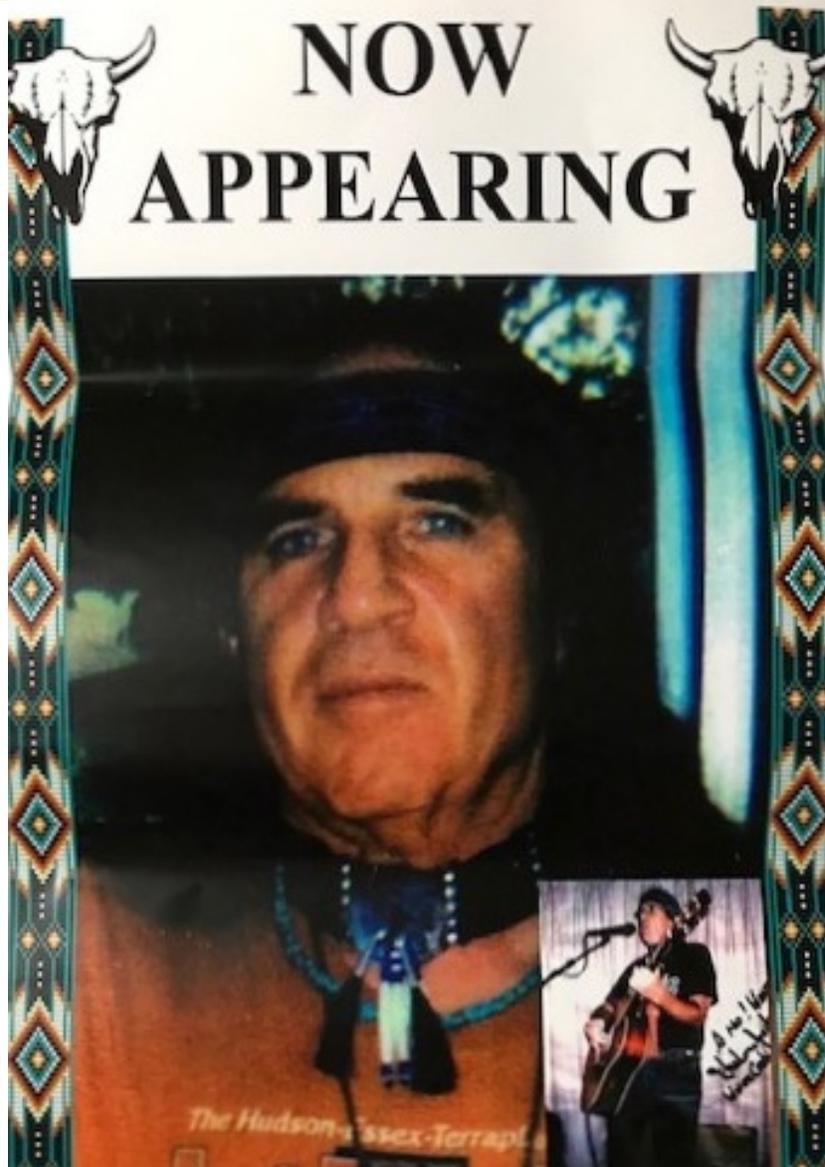
Humanist Meeting - Charles Merrifield

Dale Green and Shannon Halbur from Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America will be the guest speakers at our **September 28** meeting of the Freethinker Humanists. We will have snacks and hors d'oeuvres served at 6:30 pm. The formal discussion will begin at 7:00. We will meet at the First Unitarian Universalist Church at 7202 E. 21st.

Childcare can be provided if you let us know at least a day ahead. If you can bring food to share, please let us know. RSVP preferred, but not required.

October 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 7:00p UU Craft Night	2 7:00p Committee on Ministry	3	4	5 7:00p Pagan Circle
6 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	7 6:30p Zen Friends	8	9 7:00p Membership Committee	10	11	12 10:00a Caring Committee 5:00p Holiday Potluck 6:30p Game Night
13 9:45a Adult Relig Exp 10:00a Small Group 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Fall Family Roundup	14 4:00p Worship Committee 6:00p Vegan Potluck 6:30p Zen Friends	15	16 6:00p Board of Trustees 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	17	18 11:30a Eclectic Readers	19 10:00a Inquirer's Class 7:00p John White Crow Concert
20 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:20p Social Action Group	21 6:30p Zen Friends	22	23 1:30p Newsletter Mailing	24	25	26 6:30p UU Humanist Group
27 9:45a Adult Relig Explor 10:00a Small Group 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Music Committee	28 1:00p Movie Group 6:30p Zen Friends	29	30	31		



Vocal, Guitar, and Native Flute

John White Crow

in concert

Saturday, October 19, 7:00 PM

First UU Church, 7202 E. 21st

Services in October

- The Worship Committee

Our October worship theme of “Belonging” asks us to explore not just where we can find belonging, but how we can become belonging for others. Belonging always comes with obligations and occasional blindsides. When we receive a generous welcome, we sometimes fail to notice the cost of belonging and ways in which open doors don’t work the same for everyone. We might have been let in, but some “inner circles” soon enlist their members in keeping others out. We are encouraged this month to consider the true blessings of belonging which are that we get to participate in expanding it and to grow into a mature understanding that adult belonging is a lifetime of work that has to be actively chosen, received and renewed. In keeping with the theme of “Belonging,” we hope you will join us for the following services.

On **October 6**, Sigrid Trombley will draw on a sermon titled “Safe and Profoundly Unsound” by Rev. Victoria E. Safford in which we are asked to consider what kind of relationship we want our children to have with liberty, and what kind of relationship we intend to have with it ourselves. Safford asks how far we should be prepared to go to ensure that the way of life we say we value continues to exist. What is our responsibility in exchange for the gift of citizenship in this democratic republic?

Holly Terrill will present the Rev. Alison W. Eskildsen’s “A Place of Belonging” on **October 13**. This sermon encourages us to examine the role of privilege and associated behaviors and practices of Unitarian Universalist congregations that serve to either include or exclude those who differ from the majority.

On **October 20**, in his sermon “The Story of We,” Andrew Davis will explore the intended and unintended consequences of our pursuit of belonging.

Finally, on **October 27**, Linda Jordan will speak on Samhain, the Gaelic harvest festival observed on October 31 or November 1. Halfway between the autumn equinox and the winter solstice, Samhain marks the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter or the “darker half” of the year. It is still celebrated as a cultural festival by some (though it has mostly been replaced by Halloween) and, since the 20th century, has been celebrated as a religious festival by Celtic neopagans and Wiccans.

Changes in Landscape

- Anita Culp, Building and Grounds Committee

You may have noticed the juniper shrub row next to the handicap parking is gone. The Garden Group has tried for many years to eradicate the Bermuda grass that invaded the junipers. We tried precision point chemical application, a new product that supposedly killed Bermuda grass without harming junipers, and we tried pulling the grass by hand. All were epic failures.

So the Garden Group has decided to take that planting strip down to bare earth and start over. The junipers have been removed. The next step is to kill the Bermuda grass growing in the landscape fabric so the fabric can be removed. We try to avoid using chemicals on our flower beds, but we feel this is an appropriate and limited use.

Since fall is now upon us, this process will probably take until July of next year to complete. So please bear with us until we can get flowers or shrubs back in this planting area and enact a plan to control future grass invasion.

October Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, for the Membership Committee

The following members joined First UU Church during the month of October (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 (23), Jamey Findling (15), Jenny Findling (15), Sheri Barnes (14), Linda Shriver (13), Charlie King (11), Deborah Burnham (6), Connie Pace (4), Eric Ford (4), and Kim Ford (4).

RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon

In September, we began lessons and activities from the Soul Matters program, as we explored what it means to be a People of Expectation. This month, the focus will be on Belonging: What History We Belong To; Belonging to Yourself; How to Set Ourselves Free When We Feel We Don't Belong; and How We Belong to the Earth, God, and the Universe.

We will begin in the main service on October 6 and 20 with follow up activities in the classroom. On October 27, the children will meet for a lesson in the classroom.

Our Fall Family Round-up will be on **October 13**. The children will have a short lesson, then begin preparations for the celebration. At **noon**, the congregation is invited to share soup and then join in the creation of steppingstones and an art piece for our new outdoor space. This will be a wonderful intergenerational experience and will give everyone an opportunity to help beautify the area.

So, please, mark your calendars for this annual event. We hope everyone will plan to join us.

Pagan Circle at First UU Church

We gather again on the First Saturday in October, the 5th, at 7:00. Join us as we celebrate Mabon (a bit late) with song, chants and simple dances.

Please feel free to bring rhythm instruments to add to our music and to bring your favorite snack foods. Questions? Call Anne Bailey at 316-650-4905.

The UU Green Wave

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

Coming in Spring 2020: EcoFest will be back.

Details of the date, new green operatives, and other plans will appear in our next *In Touch!*

Presidents Letter, continued

What I want for and from us – and by us I not only mean members of First UU, but citizens of our city, our state, our country, and the world at large – is more precision in our thinking, speaking, and doing. I want us to think through the effects of our thoughts, our speech, and our actions because anyone who chooses to remain oblivious to the effects resulting from sloppy living gives themselves permission to believe they are immune to the criticism they would inflict on others. Not only is such sloppiness horribly egocentric, it encourages a willful ignorance that can be damaging to those who don't have the power to stand against it.

I am not arguing that we stop responding critically to misbehavior, to injustice, to hate, or even to pet peeves that if appropriately challenged might make the world a little more livable. I, for one, fully intend to risk the wrath of the universe whenever I see Christmas decorations so early in the year, even if my stand is nothing more than practice for the stands I know I'll have to take against more egregious harms that are sure to come. I hope you, too, will stay critically engaged with a world that too often lacks justice and encourages the irresponsible trampling of truth and meaning. Let's all just try to be a little more precise in how we think, speak, and act on our criticism.

Digerati Buchgemeinschaft

First UU Online Book club. 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. See the Eclectic Readers article for how to get a free copy.

Join us as we discuss and select future books. You can find [us in Goodreads](#).

Our Fall Garage Sale

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

It's time to get ready for our upcoming First UU garage sale Thursday, **November 14** (9-5), Friday, **November 15** (9-5), and Saturday, **November 16** (9-1). We will be accepting donations of items on Sunday, **November 10**; Monday, **November 11**; and Tuesday, **November 12**, by appointment, and on Wednesday, **November 13** – set up and pricing day – from 9 to 5.

Please bring clean, usable items before the sale begins: kitchen gadgets and utensils, any kind of tool, Christmas ornaments, toys, clothing in very good condition, small furniture, antiques, and decorative items. If you will be bringing boxes of collectibles which have spent a long time in your basement or garage, they may have gathered hitchhikers: please inspect containers before you donate them: we had several spiders visit our last garage sale!

If you can donate your time to arrange and price donations, or be available to work on sale days, please let either Vivien (683-9295) or Marcia (208-3083). It takes a big crew to go through the donations, figure out where each item can be displayed, and attach prices. It's usually a lot of fun, and there will be pizza and other treats. The biggest crowds of bargain hunters usually come on Thursday and Saturday morning.

First Unitarian Universalist Church

7202 E. 21st
Wichita, KS 67206

www.firstuu.net

Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

We will be taking part once again in the NEA Big Read: Wichita. This year's book *Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren invites us to explore the beauty of nature and science. *Lab Girl* is a memoir that tells the story of a young woman who finds friendship in odd places, battles bipolar disorder, perseveres through setbacks, relishes hard-earned triumphs, and becomes a respected scientist and passionate observer of the natural world. Free copies will be available at the Kickoff Party at the Advanced Learning Library (711 West Second) from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, September 28. Copies are available to purchase at local bookstores and online retailers. Used copies are also available online and possibly in local used bookstores.

Join us for a lively discussion on Friday, **October 18**. Bring your lunch at 11:30. Discussion starts at noon.