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January 2020

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# In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of  
Wichita  
Founded 1887

## More Wholeness: Presidents Letter

- Andrew Davis

They tell me it's time to think about New Year's resolutions. To be honest, I've never understood who "they" is or why one day was a better portent of stronger resolve than any other, so focusing on the new year for successful change has always seemed a bit silly to me. Of course, such skepticism may also be a good reason why I shouldn't be in charge of traditions.

I've always found beauty and hope in the randomness others sometimes find ugly and terrifying. I've been told this is because my standards are screwy, because I'm willing to settle for good enough when I should demand more, and (as my mother pointed out on more than one occasion) because I just don't finish things. I'd like to think I'm both guilty and not guilty of all charges.

I'm okay being flawed like this as long as I don't fall into the trap of using my flaws as an excuse to harm others. And having such clearly defined flaws that are so clearly pointed out does make it easier for me to notice when I finally get around to doing something right. It's not that I'm embracing the bargain that countless students have suggested to both me and my wife – I'll be glad to meet your standards, if you'll be glad to lower them, but clear-eyed self-assessment tells me that I should at least try to see their point: they felt pulled into pieces by the demands of their parents, their friends, their beliefs, their goals, and authority figures of all types, not the least of which was me. I suppose it is hard to feel whole when you look down and see yourself scattered across the floor.

But the question that seems to have bubbled up to the surface of my consciousness after nearly sixty years of trying to wake up is not "How do I want to be better?" but "How can I be more whole?"

*Continued on page 4*

# In Touch

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

[www.firstuu.net](http://www.firstuu.net)

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

## Leadership Council Notes 8 December 2019

Lynn Kientz for Small Groups: There may be leadership changes.

Joe Lozano for Social Action: Now co-chaired by Joe and Janelle, working on coordinating what the focus for the next semester will be. Smart Justice meeting by ACLU is along what we want to do. There will be a play on indigenous justice. First UU may cosponsor if desired.

Nancy Milner for Worship Committee: Several months of services are planned.

Jana Rambo for Caring Committee: Frank does not have transportation currently. His car will get fixed. Madison's grandmother is asking again for help with expenses around Christmas.

Jana Rambo for Music Committee: Host for visiting musicians in February still needed. Looking for a new chair. Carol was helping with that in the past. Now more people are needed.

Marcia Ellsworth for Fundraising: Three paintings were sold during the last artist exhibit. The garage sale made almost \$4,000.

We need to follow up on Committee Fair online.

Ecofest: LaRilla, Lara, Grant, Kitchen mavens, Holger, Kent. Next week: Table after service to recruit and start actually organizing.

## Parking at Church

- Andrew Davis

On a Sunday morning, we often have two - five cars parked in the front driveway off of 21<sup>st</sup> Street even when there are empty spaces in the lot. It is best to avoid parking in the driveway as the driveway is meant to be kept clear so that fire trucks can access the building if need be. We try to make sure the back gate is open, giving free access to Bainbridge Street for safe overflow parking. So next time you come to church and are tempted to park in the front driveway, take an extra minute to cruise through the parking lot and look for an empty space. Or better yet, park on Bainbridge if you are healthy enough to walk the extra few steps and the closer spots could go to someone who has trouble walking. Thank you.

## The Entertainer

- Del Smith

I entertain words of all sorts.

Some sneak into my knuckles and wait to pop out on paper.  
Others come to the doorway and properly ring the bell.  
They leave a calling card when I am not receiving words.

I entertain words of all sorts.

I serve up repartee laced with a smidgen of tonic  
I spill the slop of sorrow.  
I repulse myself with rhetoric.  
I set the table with rage and watch anger spill over.

Some days drift by without a word coming my way.

Refreshments grow stale in my attic-mind.  
I promise fidelity to strict definition and structure.  
I make obscene paths to nuance and meaning.  
I imagine that another poet is dallying with my words.

I entertain words of all sorts.

I fill up on frivolous phrases with a twist of tartness.  
I amuse with idle insolence.  
I invite words to stay for a beer and a pretzel.  
I serve platters of puns, slices of satire.

Some days the words pound at the door and come through windows.

They pile themselves into corners and get under the bed.  
I will make use of them.

I entertain words.

*More Wholeness, continued*

Or to say it another way, how can I avoid breaking myself into fragments so small they can't be put back together again?

Like most people I know, I've been broken too many times to count, and like most people (with the help of more friends, family, co-workers, and even strangers than I can count) I've figured out a way to put myself back together not just so I could go on, but so I could go on stronger and more together than I was before.

None of us are ever the same today as we were yesterday unless we stop growing, but if we let our growth to break ourselves into ever smaller fragments then growth is too painful to bear. We can, however, strive to be true to our ever-evolving vision of our best selves, even as we break and mend, grow and change. It's how we move past fragmenting resolutions and into habits of wholeness — and that's a new beginning worth thinking about.

## Smart Justice Lobby Day

All are invited to join the action on Smart Justice Lobby Day! The ACLU will provide a charter bus to Topeka leaving Wichita on **Jan 27, 2020, at 7:00 am**, light breakfast and lunch included. Lobby Day will then begin with a gathering and training at 10 am at the State Capitol. We will visit with our state legislators in support of the Smart Justice Act. Watch for more information soon on making our voices heard! For more information contact Janelle Patterson or Joe Lozano.



**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)

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**Who's Who @ First UU**

**FIRST UU OFFICERS & BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

President— Andrew Davis

President-Elect— Holger Meyer

Board of Trustees—Joe Lozano, Rolando Gomez, Masud Chand, Jayne Henry, Linda Jordan, Vivien Minshull-Ford, and Kent Rowe

Treasurer—Anne Bailey

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Adult RE—Frank Ruf

Aesthetics—Kay Davis

Building & Grounds—Bruce Roby (Bldg) and Anita Culp (Grnds)

Caring—LaRilla Combs and Jana Rambo

Chalice Lighters Ambassador—Bonnie Till

Children's RE—TBD

Chalice Book Store—Joe Lozano

Communications—TBD

EcoFest—TBD

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—TBD

COMMITTEE ON **MINISTRY**—Charles Merrifield, Chair: LaRilla Combs, Paula Peare, , Susan Hund-Milne, Will Jordan, and Jennifer Hess

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**—Jennifer Connelly, Charles Merrifield, and Nancy Milner

**GROUP CONTACTS**

Craft Group—Judy Wherritt

Digerati Buchgemeinschaft—Rolando Gomez

Eclectic Readers—Anne Bailey

Fourth Monday Movie Group—Vivien Minshull-Ford

Garden Group—Anita Culp and Linda Jordan

Humanist Group—Charles Merrifield

Occasional Book Club—Judy Wherritt

Pagan Group—Anne Bailey, Linda Jordan, and Paula Peare

Zen Friends of Wichita—Bob Feleppa and Vivien Minshull-Ford

**STAFF**

Custodian—Linda Jordan

Office Manager—Anita Culp

Pastoral Care—Joe Mohr

Director of Children's Religious Education—Denise Jackson-Simon

# January 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
RE = Religious Exploration			1 7:00p Committee on Ministry	2	3	4 7:00p Pagan Circle
<b>5</b> 9:45a Adult RE 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	<b>6</b> 6:30p Zen Friends 7:00p Church Growth Meeting	<b>7</b> 7:00p UU Craft Group	<b>8</b> 7:00p Membership Committee	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 10:00a Caring Committee 12:00p SOAR Meeting
<b>12</b> 9:45a Adult RE 10:00a Small Group 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council	<b>13</b> 4:00p Worship Committee 6:00p Vegan Potluck 6:30p Zen Friends	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 6:00p Board of Trustees 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 11:30a Eclectic Readers	<b>18</b> 6:30p Game Night
<b>19</b> 9:45a Adult RE 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:20p Social Action Group	<b>20</b> Office Closed for MLK Day 6:30p Zen Friends	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 1:30p Newsletter Mailing	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 6:30p UU Humanists
<b>26</b> 9:45a Adult RE 10:00a Small Group 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p MicYear Congregational Meeting	<b>27</b> 1:00p Movie Group 6:30p Zen Friends	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	

## What does it Mean to be a People of Integrity?

### Worship Services for January

The Worship Committee

Charles Bukowski asks, “Can you remember who you were, before the world told you who you should be?” During this month of new beginnings, we consider what it means to be a people of integrity – both as individuals and as Unitarian Universalists. We all know the usual advice about building character and being honest with ourselves and others. We’re inundated with suggestions about how we need to strive to be better, to be more. But sometimes we need just the opposite. We need to clear a path through all the well-meaning advice and “self-help” clutter we’ve acquired about “fixing” ourselves. We need to be still and listen for the call of our inner voices beckoning us home, encouraging us to reclaim the freedom to be our true selves.

**1/5:** In keeping with this month’s theme Corey Swertfager presents an original talk, “To Be, or Not to Be, True to Thine Own Self” in which he considers a series of important questions including: What does it mean to live a life of integrity? How do we determine which values to use as the foundation for such a life? Where does the practice of personal integrity fit in with our Unitarian Universalist principles? How can living with integrity strengthen our connection with others and help us to be creative, joyful, and whole?

**1/12:** Join us for “A Parable on Privilege.” Debbie Wadman draws from writings on wealth and inequality by Robert Reich and Peter Edelman in concert with “A Parable on Privilege,” a homily by DeReau K. Farrar to examine how privilege and power are frequently “used to stifle the lives of those who have none.”

**1/19:** Andrew Davis will respond to this month’s theme of being a people of integrity from an existential perspective. Our culture pulls us in so many directions that fragmentation seems to be the norm we don’t necessarily like, but can’t seem to escape. His original work, “Leaning into Wholeness” explores the significance of not just our choices, but how we go about making them, as a guide to living lives of integrity.

**1/26:** Lara Pollock continues her series, “Greta Speaks” in which she will share sermons written by her mother, Greta Crosby, minister emerita of First UU, during her ministerial career that spanned five decades. Lara will read a selection from each decade beginning with one of Greta’s first sermons from 1959, delivered at Hull Chapel, First Unitarian Church in Chicago, Illinois, while she attended Meadville Theological School. In her sermon entitled “Mobile Deity” Greta describes a number of ways that we might offer welcome and hospitality to people in all walks of life.

## January Anniversaries

Anita Culp, Membership Committee

The following members joined First UU Church during the month of January (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: Sally Ross (50), Kent Olmstead (40), Anne Bailey (35), Marcia Ellsworth (17), Corey Swertfager (13), Anne Welsbacher (13), Frank Ruf (11), Kent Rowe (10), and Linda Jordan (9).



*September 2019 Water Ceremony, pictured: Bonnie Till, Laura Pollock. -Photo by Rolando Gomez*

## First UU Pagan Circle

- Anne Bailey

We meet once again on the first Saturday of the new year, **January 4, 2020, at 7:00**. We will be talking about how we celebrated in December, which Holiday's we celebrated and what our plans are for the new year. All are welcome, bring snack foods if you wish, drums and other instruments to join in song and chant. Please feel free to call Anne Bailey - 316-650-4905 - if you have questions about our group.

## Bullet Points from the Board

- Ecofest Wichita 2020 is gathering momentum. Several volunteers have signed up for the bake sale, lunch preparation, media, taking money, sending out invitations to vendors or advocates and other niches not yet decided. We need more committed Ecofesters before we can say it's a definite Go. Ecofest has become our strongest outreach for 1st UU into the community. and it can only get better. Contact Vivien Minshull-Ford if you are interested in helping.
- On Saturday, **January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 from 2:00 – 4:00 PM**, The Society of Alternative Resources (SOAR) will be meeting at our church to engage in networking and brainstorming for a sustainable future. SOAR is a perfect fit with the environmental stewardship we seek to nurture through our Ecofest tradition. You are welcome to attend to hear what representatives from environmental groups have to say on topics such as savings to the community through green living, the value of native plants for the environment, and funding opportunities for a green future.
- The Board will be finalizing the budget for the next fiscal year at our meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup>, so that the congregation can vote on it at our Congregational meeting **on January 19<sup>th</sup>**. Please plan to attend.
- Joe Mohr is still available to work with congregants who need pastoral care. If you would like to meet with him, please contact him directly at (580) 729-0781.

## New Year's Eve with Cheese, Chocolate and Cheer Party

UU Holiday Party Group

The UU Holiday Party Group invites you to celebrate New Year's Eve with Cheese, Chocolate and Cheer! Bring your favorite cheese, chocolate, or cheer, and we will play laugh-out-loud games. Help us ring out the old year in style!

New Year's Eve: **Tuesday, December 31, 2019 from 7p – 10 p** at First UU Church

## First Unitarian Universalist Church

7202 E. 21st  
Wichita, KS 67206

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*www.firstuu.net*

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## Haruki Murakami The Eclectic Book Group

Our discussion on January 17th will be about Haruki Murakami; a Japanese writer whose books and stories have been bestsellers in Japan as well as internationally. His work has been translated into 50 languages and has sold millions of copies outside his native country. His work has received numerous awards, including the World Fantasy Award, the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award, the Franz Kafka Prize, and the Jerusalem Prize.

Murakami's most notable works include *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1982), *Norwegian Wood* (1987), *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1994–95), *Kafka on the Shore* (2002), and *1Q84* (2009–10). His fiction, sometimes criticized by Japan's literary establishment as un-Japanese was influenced by Western writers from Chandler to Vonnegut. It is frequently surrealistic and melancholic or fatalistic, marked by a Kafkaesque rendition of the "recurrent themes of alienation and loneliness". Steven Poole from *The Guardian* praised Murakami as, "among the world's greatest living novelists" for his works and achievements.