



Annual Congregational Meeting
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita
June 14, 2020

Meeting Agenda

1. Opening Remarks

2. Election of new members to the Board of Trustees and Nominating Committee and affirmation of Presidents-Elect.

Candidates are: (Biographies of the nominees were sent with your Annual Meeting notice letter.)

Board of Trustees for 3-year Terms: (vote for 2):

Ned Lakin	Caroni Lombard
Rachel Rutledge	Bonnie Till

Nominating Committee: (vote for 3)

Anne Bailey	John (Will) Jordan	Lynn Kientz
Joe Lozano	Vivien Minshull-Ford	

Presidents- Elect: (affirm/not affirm)

Billie Knighton and Kirk Mitchell

3. Leadership and Committee Reports

4. Review and Vote on the 2020-2021 Church Budget

Leadership and Committee Reports

Building and Grounds Committee

The window in the Children's RE classroom was converted to a door leading to the new Betty's Place playground. The construction of Betty' Place is covered by the Playground Committee's report.

A hail storm in June 2019 damaged some of the church and insurance covered all but the \$1,000 deductible. The flat roof and solar array did not receive any damage. The HVACs on the roof were damaged and repaired. The special insulated stucco (EFIS) covering the walls was damaged and repaired and repainted giving the church a fresh look. The contractor did their best to avoid damaging the mural but it could use some touchup. The shingled sloped roof was damaged and replaced by a contractor who credited the church \$1,000 to cover our deductible.

Building and grounds contracted projects included:

- altering the solar panel system to meet Evergy's standards,
- installing a security camera system covering all four sides of the church and parking lot,
- repairing cracks in the parking lot and 21st Street driveway, resealing the pavement, restriping the parking spaces including converting three noncompliant ADA spaces to regular spaces and creating two new ADA spaces in the middle of the lot,
- replacing a faulty thermostat for the classrooms,
- repairing the electronic sign,
- straightening the leaning post on the back-driveway gate, and
- trimming large trees on the east side of the property to remove hazards to grass mowing.

Minor repairs to the building were done by handyman Bruce Roby including installing gravity-fed paper towel dispensers in restrooms. Volunteers painted the foyer walls on which art is hung. Additional shelves for the storage room were donated for storage of janitorial supplies and church records which freed up existing storage shelves for general church use.

The church building was closed from mid-March through April and will remain closed through June in response to COVID-19. It has been a trial getting a floor stand hand sanitizer dispenser and sanitizer product, but we have obtained a dispenser and product and will rig a floor stand until the backordered stand arrives. Sanitizer and some cleaning products remain scarce.

Planned projects for next fiscal year include finishing Betty's Place, repainting the metal exit doors, replacing a flickering parking lot light, and replanting the landscape on the west side of the parking lot.

Anita Culp (co-chair Grounds)
Bruce Roby (co-chair Building)

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

Last summer our children were led by congregation members who volunteered to share their talents and interests. Once again, we had a wide variety of offerings that were interesting, educational and fun.

For the 2019-2020 "church school" year which runs September through May, we have primarily used the *Soul Matters* program for our lessons and activities. Children have attended the first half of the main services twice a month with follow up lessons in the classroom. The remaining Sundays of each month were used for lessons in the classroom and occasional holy/holiday celebrations.

Attendance was fairly low throughout the first few months, but picked up in recent months prior to the church closing. We began averaging around 8 per week, with some Sundays as low as 2 and others up to 10 or even 12 in attendance.

Since closing, I have sent weekly home service lessons with stories, discussion questions, meditation and suggested activities which tie in with the weekly themes. I do not know how many families might be using these, but no one has asked me to stop sending them.

I plan to continue to send weekly lessons based on the themes from *Soul Matters* that our Worship Committee is following throughout the summer. We will see what the Fall brings in regards to our church's decisions around reopening.

As far as a RE Committee, it is still just me. I do have a couple of folks I can call on to cover for me when I'm out of town, but for the most part, I am the only one teaching lessons. It had not been a problem when only a small few were in attendance. However, when we return to the church, it is my hope that the attendance will pick up again, and it will become necessary to divide the age groups. When that happens, we will need more teachers.

I am excited for the progress on *Betty's Place* and am looking forward to the time we can explore it together in person.

Sincerely,
Denise Jackson-Simon DRE

EcoFest Committee

Ecofest is the signature outreach and fundraising event of our congregation for the past five years. This year it was supposed to happen on Sunday, May 3rd, 2020. Starting late in 2019 we recruited a team of volunteers to organize the event. A local web designer, Erin DeGroot, updated and redesigned the website, ecofestwichita.org. We got a new 3- x 6-foot banner to advertise the event and got T-shirts and business cards. We had many volunteers, vendors, artists, environmental non-profit organizations, and sponsors lined up. Then the COVID-19 pandemic started and we had to cancel Ecofest. Everybody has been supportive of this decision. Vendors who already had registered are still interested in participating in the event at a later date. Sponsors pledged flexibility in running radio ads at later dates. The banner and T-shirts don't show a date and can be reused later. (The T-shirts are on sale in all sizes. The design is awesome and the hemp-cotton blend is really comfortable to wear.)

Although state and county governments have just relaxed the pandemic safety measures our church has adopted a policy of opening slowly when it is safe to do so, likely not for some months at least. We are now exploring having at least some parts of Ecofest online and will hold meetings soon to discuss this with interested parties.

This is our (Lucy and Holger) first time to co-chair Ecofest and we could not have done it without the help and guidance of the previous co-chairs, Marcia and Vivien. Even though we did not have an event this year yet, volunteers have already put substantial effort into organizing Ecofest 2020. Thanks to all of you!

Respectfully submitted,
Lucy Kirkham-Cochener and Holger Meyer

Fundraising Committee

Denise Jackson-Simon has been teaching the RE children about giving. Last year, the cause was an Equine Sanctuary which cares for neglected horses. The kids were excited about the project: "They made the poster and were elated when we did the final count of the money before we turned it in." Denise thinks they really love knowing that they are doing something worthwhile. The year before, the RE children raised funds to provide multicultural books for special needs children. It's never too early to learn about fund raising and the joy it can bring.

For us grownups, fundraising has special rewards, especially when it's for our church, which always needs funds over and above the results of the yearly pledge drive. In November last year, our garage sale netted almost \$5,000, We kept some remaining attractive items which are now Second Time Around, our permanent sale area in the Adult RE Room. As soon as we are back in the building, we

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will promote this feature as an ongoing fundraising possibility for 1st UU. Meanwhile, we are considering the possibility of a virtual sale area.

In February, right before the Quarantine, we laid on our Valentine Tea extravaganza. Bob Boewe of The Spice Merchant provided tea, coffee, and equipment. This was the be all and end all of wonderful baking by numerous 1st UU Star Bakers and sandwich makers. One visitor said that our event surpassed the famous St. James Episcopal Church tea. The event netted \$500 for the church.

With the Covid-19 lockdown, we are doing without this year's Ecofest, a substantial money raiser for the church, and feeling the draught. Co-Chair Marcia Ellsworth is not one to be stopped by a mere pandemic: she has been making cloth masks for donations to the church which have already reached \$480. Apart from amazing members of our congregation who step up to help in so many ways, our fundraising committee team are co-chairs Marcia Ellsworth and Vivien Minshull-Ford, Jayne Henry, and Caroni Lombard. We are always ready for fundraising ideas—and more members.

Green Sanctuary Committee

First UU of Wichita started the process of becoming a UUA recognized Green Sanctuary several years ago. We have a building that was designed with environmental sustainability in mind. The annual Ecofest is an expression of our shared goal of being environmentally conscious and as close to carbon neutral as possible. We held services with topics surrounding environmental issues and had programs on environmental issues in adult and children's religious exploration. And of course we installed solar panels on our roof in Spring of 2018. Over the last year we have been dealing with Westar/Evergy on installing a new meter into the system that measures how much electricity is produced by the solar system. We had a downtime when Westar locked out the system in December 2019. The technical and bureaucratic issues finally got resolved. We also had a component of the system fail. The inverter had to be replaced. The automated monitoring recognized the fault and the manufacturer shipped a free replacement unit within two days. It was installed soon after it arrived, but logging of the produced electricity in the system connected to our website did not resume immediately. Even with these downtimes we have produced a total of more than 20,200 kWh of renewable electric energy in the two years we have operated the system. The 7.0 kW peak power system produces over 50 kWh on a good sunny summer day. During the current pandemic the building is mostly empty. To me it is a comfort that the building, although now not used for Sunday services, committee meetings and activities, still produces clean energy every day, energy that is powering neighbouring homes when it is not used in the church building. Over the last year all the lighting inside the church has been upgraded to LED lights. These consume far less electric energy for the same light output than fluorescent or incandescent lighting.

The green sanctuary committee is looking into further improvements in energy usage and energy management of the church. We have space on the roof to double the capacity of our solar array. The

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church could take a large step toward independence from the electric grid by installing batteries or bi-directional electric car charging stations. Intelligent management of large electric appliances such as the air conditioning and the hot water heater could reduce the peak load by limiting the amount of electricity required at any instant. The A/C would still cool the building, but might shut off for a few minutes while the dish washer is running. Different motors in the ventilation system might start up and slow down more gently and avoid the spikes that some older motors cause in electric power needs (and thus charges on the electric bill).

As we are studying these issues and improve our own building we are also reaching out to the community and share information, tips and tricks, and help with others in Wichita to maximize the impact we can have.

Holger Meyer

Leadership Council

The Leadership Council is a monthly gathering of the chairs of all the committees at First UU. We met on second Sundays after the service at church until 8 March 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic forced social distancing and we did not meet in April and May. We take reports from each committee and try to identify and solve problems, for example issues that are beyond the scope of a given committee or open positions and lack of resources for some committees. This is also a good way for the president elect to learn in depth about the work of all of committees.

During the year we discussed many issues as detailed in the meeting minutes. Most of these are resolved or obsolete at this time. We had recurring discussions on how to get more church members involved in some of the committees to better share the load of everything we try to do. We held a committee fair to let everyone know what each committee is doing and to solicit involvement. Several committees recruited new members through that event. The largest open issues are the desire to update the website (Communications committee, various others), to push further toward becoming as sustainable as possible (Green Sanctuary, EcoFest Committee), and to make First UU a welcoming place with something to offer for everyone (Welcoming Congregation, Social Action, Small Groups, and others).

The reports by each of the committees will have details on their respective activities, so I just want to take this space to thank the chairs and members of all the committees for their diverse work to make First UU the unique place it is.

Holger Meyer

Membership Committee

Committee Members: Anne Bailey, Chair, Anita Culp, and Susan Hund-Milne, Jayne Henry, Nancy Milner, and Doug Wilson. The committee was meeting on the second Wednesday of each month but we last met on March 11.

Purpose of this committee is to promote and develop the growth of church membership, and to strengthen and sustain current membership. The Membership Committee is an important part of the First UU's ministry.

Name Tags: The Membership Committee prepares permanent name tags for new members and regular attendees who request them and has temporary name tags for new people and visitors.

New Comer Dinners: Nancy Milner has hosted several dinners during the past year in her home to which she has invited people new to our community as well as long-time members in order to help people get to know each other in a more informal setting. Our thanks to Nancy for providing this valuable activity.

Inquirers Class: This fiscal year, Inquirers Classes were held in June, August, and October. The class scheduled for January was cancelled because of weather, and the class scheduled for March 28 was cancelled because the Church building was closed. Classes will hopefully be scheduled at least quarterly once the building is open.

Membership Review: The committee reviews member attendance at each meeting. We have a total of 112 members at this time, up from 105 at last year's report. We have gained new members over the year but have lost some due to deaths and people moving away from the area. There is at least one prospective member who has recently moved here from another state.

Greeters: The Membership Committee is responsible for seeing that there are people to greet visitors each Sunday morning. We are always looking for new people to perform this vital function. Please talk to any committee member about getting on the schedule to be a greeter or to join this committee.

Anne Bailey
For the Membership Committee

Playground Committee

The progress being made on Betty's Place has been slow and steady. Our playground taskforce has moved cautiously forward due to the current coronavirus restrictions and the closing of our building. There is now a stage, stage roof, electricity, fence, kid friendly planting area, and two gates. We are currently working on individual projects such as building benches for the stage, landscaping inside and outside the fence, building a path, creating various areas within the playspace, and generally getting projects completed. On the list of things to complete are a stump-climbing area, a musical play area, stage benches and a work table. If you are creative and have wood working experience, please let someone on the committee know. We need members to take responsibility for a single project. Plans are available for projects but need some talented people to step up to make them become a reality.

Linda Jordan has been joined by Jenny Bowen to put some green into the space. They started a space for kids to plant and dig in the dirt and will be adding trees, bushes, and native plants to make the area come to life. Bruce Roby built and installed an outdoor chalkboard for the outdoor classroom area. A whitebud tree was purchased and planted outside the southeast corner of the fence to provide future shade for Betty's Place. I am in the process of getting a sign that says Betty's Place to go on the front of the stage. If you have tree stumps (some of ours have disappeared), let us know. Locks are now on each gate so if you need access, please call the office for a combination. We are also in need of large rocks and small rocks to build paths and use for seating, etc. They will need to be small enough to transport. Ideas and artists are also needed to enhance our current mural and give it a musical theme. Betty's Place has turned into a real labor of love. We are making progress one step at a time. Let's make it happen for our youth and congregation before we open up again for services! Volunteers with ideas and time are always needed for this major project. - Marcia Ellsworth,

Committee Chairs: Marcia Ellsworth and Bruce Roby

Members: Sandy Roberts, Linda Jordan, Jenny Bowen, Susan Hund Milne, Denise Simon-Jackson
Many other helpers too numerous to mention.

Social Action Committee

For fiscal year July 2019-June 2020, Social Action committee members, and First UU congregants at large who involve themselves in social issues, have engaged in some important issues. Here are a few that come to mind, in no particular order, and we apologize at the start for the ones we fail to mention. But you know who you are!

- **Haiti:** First UU continues to support the Lambert community by sponsoring two students
- **Smart Justice:** participation in meetings and direct action, sponsorship at expo; coordinated with ACLU
- **Criminalization of Justice:** closely related to Smart Justice, again contributed effort
- **Pride Day:** sponsored a table at the Indian Center; marched in parade
- **Driver's license suspension bill:** supported with letter writing and phone calls, following Peter Ninemire's lead
- **Alternative Gift Fair:** sponsored the project Seeds for Haiti

Joe Lozano and Janelle Patterson