



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita
Founded 1887

Co-President's Message

- Billie Knighton

January 2022

It's that time again! As we anticipate the "New Year", we bring with us a lot of old stuff, too! In that regard I want to share a quote from Fritjof Kapra that can be seen as challenging as well as a welcome understanding of some of some of the puzzles we face as we begin 2022:

"When we look at the state of the world today, what is most evident is the fact that the major problems of our time – energy, environment, economy, climate change, social justice – cannot be understood in isolation. They are systemic problems, which means that they are all interconnected and interdependent, and they require corresponding systemic solutions."

A new consciousness is rising that we humans must revise our worldview, develop a deeper understanding that we are a part of nature, and redesign our way of life in harmony with the Gift provided by our Mother Earth, our only home.

I don't need to tell you the challenges are huge, but it is up to us to work with them rather than against them. More than a decade ago, Paul Gilding, a past head of Greenpeace, wrote "The Great Disruption: Why the Climate Crisis Will Bring on the End of Shopping and the Birth of a New World". Well, so are we in the midst of the birthing of that new world now? It's sure feeling like it to me!

As Unitarians we are blessed to be part of a spiritual community that over the decades has demonstrated its dedicated commitment to positive actions. Indeed, it was more than sixty years ago that, as a couple newly graduated from college, my husband and I discovered Unitarianism in Lincoln, Nebraska. What a joy it was to discover a spiritual community that worked for the common good while refusing to fall back on platitudes and dogmatic belief systems!

And now, decades later, Unitarians are still committed to its founding ideals of supporting the values that support the common good. Thank you, First U-U, for continuing that priceless tradition as we go into yet another "New" Year!

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.

Please send submissions to

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Ripples from the Caring Committee

- Linda Jordan

The Caring Committee is the arm of the church that responds to events in the lives of the congregants. We send birthday and congratulations cards in joyful times and sympathy and get well cards when appropriate. We offer support by providing transportation to church, medical appointments, and errands. During bereavements and illness, we sometimes provide light housekeeping and a few meals, and we help with receptions after memorial services.

May you have a great month, and if you have anything for the Caring Committee, let us know.

What touches one of us touches us all.

January Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

These 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 (52), Kent Olmstead (42), Anne Bailey (37), Marcia Ellsworth (19), Corey Swertfager (15), Anne Welsbacher (15), Frank Ruf (13), Kent Rowe (13), Linda Jordan (11), Ellie Shore (2), Kerry Dobbins (2), Lucy Kirkham-Cochener (2), Linda Walter-Swygert (2), and Kirk Mitchell (2).

Inquirer's Class

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

Have you wondered what Unitarian Universalism is all about? Are you thinking about becoming a church member? Then the Inquirer's Class is for you. The class will cover the history of Unitarian Universalism, the history of First UU Church of Wichita, what First UU can offer you, how you can be involved in First UU Church, what it means to be a member, and more. The class is offered as two Zoom sessions on Thursday evenings, January 6 and January 15, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Each session covers different topics and the second session builds on the first one. If you would like to attend the class, contact Anne Bailey, (316) 650-4905, or online at annebailey@earthlink.net, or Anita Culp, (church office) (316) 684-3481, or online at office@firstuu.net.

Weather Closing Information

- Anita Culp

Winter weather in Kansas means the possibility of snow and ice. When the weather is bad, the Board Co-Presidents make the decision on canceling in-person Sunday services based on the safety of congregants to be out driving, relying on the weather forecast for Saturday night. The Co-Presidents try to make the decision no later than mid-Saturday afternoon so there is time to get the word out to congregants. This sometimes leads to confusion if the weather improves Saturday night and the decision to cancel in-person services has already been made. We may be able to pivot and still have a Sunday Zoom service but that may not be possible.

Closings are posted on Facebook, the church website, and ListServe; and three local TV stations are notified: KWCH (broadcast channel 12), KAKE (broadcast channel 10), and KSN (broadcast channel 3). Of those three, KWCH is the most reliable, as it uses an automated system, and the message goes on their crawl line within a few minutes of notification. Look for "First Unitarian Universalist Ch--Wichita" on the crawl line. The church telephone message will also announce the closing. If you do not have a TV, feel free to contact Anita Culp at her home telephone number, (316) 744-2840.

When we do have church services after a snowstorm, the church has a snow-plowing contract for the parking lot for snowfall amounts over two inches. The company is good about getting the job done before the Sunday service. As always, the decision is yours about venturing out in bad weather. We want you to be safe.

Membership Committee

- Anne Bailey

The Membership Committee will meet on Zoom on Wednesday, January 5, at 7:00 p.m.. There is still room on this committee for anyone interested in getting involved. We will be finalizing plans to present our "Inquirer's Class" for new and prospective members on Zoom on January 6 and 13. Please let me know if you would like to attend this class - annebailey@earthlink.net or (316) 650-4905. We are always looking for additional members to serve as greeters for Sunday morning.

Bullet Points from the Board

December 15, 2021

- It may sound a bit redundant, but we're still in the black.
- We will have an Inquirer's Class on January 6 and 13.
- We've found the money to fix the basketball goal.
- There will be a garage sale after the holidays, so start collecting your stuff to donate to the sale.
- We still need gloves, hats, and scarves for the mitten tree.
- Children's RE: open on January 30 for fully vaccinated children who wear masks unless there is a significant spike in community spread of COVID.

Mid-Year Congregational Meeting

The church's annual Mid-Year Congregational Meeting will be January 23, 2022, beginning at 12:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in-person at First UU Church with additional participation by Zoom. The meeting agenda will include the Co-Presidents' State of the Congregation, a report from the Finance Committee on the proposed budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year, and a vote on that proposed budget. Other reports from committees may also be given.

Voting at the meeting will be done in three ways: in-person ballot, using the voting function in Zoom, or using an absentee ballot. Members eligible to vote will receive an absentee ballot in the mail. If you plan to attend and vote using Zoom, please keep in mind that only one person per Zoom connection can vote using Zoom. You also must sign on and be registered in Zoom as yourself; if you are signed on as a co-host, you will not be able to use Zoom to vote.

January 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) at home Children's RE 7:00p Song Circle	3 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	4 4:00p Worship Comm (Z) 7:00p UU Craft Group (Z)	5 4:00p Committee on Ministry (+Z)	6 7:00p Inquirer's Class (Z)	7	8 10:00a Caring Committee
9 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) at home Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council 7:00p Song Circle	10 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	11	12 7:00p Membership Committee (Z)	13 12:30p Renaissance Food Pantry 7:00p Inquirer's Class (Z)	14 10:00a Small Group Ministry (Z) 12:00p Fridays for the Future	15
16 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) at home Children's RE 12:15p Social Action Comm 7:00p Song Circle	17 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	18	19 6:00p Board of Trustees(+Z) 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	20	21	22
23 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) at home Children's RE 12:15p MidYear Meeting (+Z)	24 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	25	26	27 12:30p Renaissance Food Pantry	28 10:00a Small Group Ministry (Z)	29 7:00p UU Humanists (+Z)
30 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 7:00p Song Circle	31 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)		Best information about Zoom or In-Person meetings was used at time of publishing and may change. Contact the church office for up to date Information.	(Z) - Meeting via Zoom (+Z) - Meeting In-Person and via Zoom Call church office at 316-684-4581 for Zoom information.		

Social Action Committee Updates

- Marcia Ellsworth

Alternative Gift Market

As you probably know, 1st UU's Social Action Committee sponsored a table at this year's community-wide Alternative Gift Market. According to the published results, the market was a huge success! Our UU table promoted medical care for Haitian schools. Donations to our cause will provide medical boxes for 15 mobile, school-based clinics in Haiti. Thanks to all church members who supported this project by volunteering that day, donating to the cause, or sewing felt bears to give as a token for donations. Special thanks to Joe Lozano who organized the event for us. I think the Wichita community and our church together have made a significant impact Around The World.

Kansas Interfaith Action (KIFA)

Our Social Action Committee has affiliated with Kansas Interfaith Action (KIFA), a statewide organization of churches committed to addressing social problems. KIFA devotes much of its attention to working with the state legislature. The goals of KIFA for the coming legislative session include Medicaid Expansion, Payday Loans, Food Sales Tax, Education Honesty with Critical Race Theory, and Climate and Clean Energy.

We can help. Each of us can do something to help improve life in Kansas by working with KIFA. Here are examples of actions we can take, ranging from more intense to less intense.

1. Attend the February 15 Legislative Advocacy Day in Topeka where we will personally visit with legislators.
2. Participate in the February 16 and 17 Virtual Legislative Advocacy Days when we will communicate with legislators via the Internet and telephone.
3. During the legislative session, you will receive Action Alerts on the KIFA issues. The alerts will contain names and addresses of legislators to contact, along with issue points you may raise in your communication. One of our church friends, Senator Mary Ware, anticipates that the Action Alerts will be useful in helping advance KIFA's goals.

KIFA's next statewide virtual meetings will be January 10 and February 14. Add yourself to the KIFA email list at <https://kansasinterfaithaction.org/get-involved>

From the Worship Committee

Members: Anne Bailey, Sara Jane Crespo, Kay Davis, Linda Jordan and Rebecca Veron Lewis

In “The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation,” Thich Nhat Hanh tells us, “People usually consider walking on water or in thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to walk on earth. Every day we are engaged in a miracle which we don't even recognize: a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves, the black, curious eyes of a child – our own two eyes. All is a miracle.”

1/2/22: Andrew Davis brings us *“Peeling the Onion.”*

We organize clean-up days to pick up trash along rivers or in neighborhoods because no matter how much we might wish otherwise, the trash won't pick itself up. There's an entire industry built around decluttering our homes and offices because too many of us are willing to settle for living in the midst of messiness. Is it any wonder, then, that our minds can get just as messy and would be well-served by a good decluttering. Andrew will explore mindfulness as a way to declutter ourselves, one layer at a time.

1/9/22: Annie Welsbacher presents “Use Your Inside Voice” by the Rev. Victoria Safford.

In the quiet, we remember what we are, which is not perfect, but wholly human – both wholly and holy. The whole motion of the holiday season as half the world goes dark, is toward remembering and waiting for the quiet conviction that each life within all life is a gift. We must be willing to travel through darkness and silence, to wait for the words to give voice to the holy within us.

1/16/22: Rev. Joe Mohr presents *“Make Believe.”*

Let's be honest, there is nothing magical or special that happens when the clock strikes 12 on New Year's Eve that makes us new people. However, we can't help believe and feel a newness, the freedom to reauthor ourselves under the auspice of resolutions. The power to believe in a better version of yourself fuels our resolve. Wake up to potential this year and be mindful of who you are.

1/23/22: Charles Merrifield presents *“Pay Attention!”* by the Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

The exponential growth of information available to us because of technological advances has an adverse impact on our ability to filter out unimportant information so that we can pay attention to what matters. Mindfulness practice, making time for stillness to pay attention to the present moment can help us to reconnect with our inner selves and one another more fully.

1/30/22: Commissioner Lacey Cruse presents *“A Place to Call Home: A Glimpse into the Unhoused Needs in Sedgwick County.”*

Homelessness is often a visual representation of mental illness and substance misuse. Commissioner Lacey Cruse will share the work being done with the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition and how a system-wide change is in order to help those struggling. She will also touch on how our current criminal justice system plays a vital role in society but must shift from a punishment mentality to one more focused on rehabilitation in order to see real, tangible change.

RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon

Happy New Year! It is my hope that I will be seeing our children in person very soon. The Board met this evening and have decided to open RE for children on January 30. Guidelines for attendance will include the need to be vaccinated and masked. We will also practice distancing and hand washing. Please watch for any other news regarding children's RE in upcoming Weekly Updates and emails from me. It will not be long now! Yay!!! In the meantime, I will continue to send weekly lessons via email. If you are not on the list and would like to be, or are on it and would like to be removed, please let me know at simontrio3@aol.com

This month we explore the ways in which our times call us to "Live with Intention." There are five ways we will explore the skills it takes to live with intention. They are: It Takes Empathy - The activation of our intentions; It Takes Passion- The driver of intention; It Takes Persistence - The fuel of intention; It Takes Accepting Mistakes - The impacts of intention; and It Takes Pausing - The replenishment and sorting of intention.

Please plan to join me in this important exploration. And again, keep your eyes open on news about returning to church. Until then, take good care and let me hear from you!

Ecofest

This year we were going to have Ecofest in September. As the date was getting closer, booster shots were not yet available, and a rise in spread of the Delta variant of COVID-19 led us to again postpone the event. It is now scheduled for May 1, 2022. In spite of Omicron and any other variants that might arise until then, we are determined to keep the date this time. Even if (as might be expected) the incidence of COVID-19 cases may rise over the winter months, we hope for any wave of cases to subside in spring and for May 1 to be the date we can make Ecofest happen with all the familiar activities inside and outside of our church and hundreds or thousands of guests visiting the large number of vendors, artists, advocates, and other offerings we will have.

A lot of planning goes into Ecofest. Your lead Ecofest organizers, Holger and Lucy, will start holding regular planning meetings in January. These are anticipated to be in person at the church and also by Zoom so everyone can participate in the way they feel most comfortable. Many of you have already been involved in some way in the past. We hope that you can continue to be involved. Some of you are new to First UU or have not been involved in organizing Ecofest. We welcome you to join in if you are so inclined. The meetings will be on Tuesday evenings. (Holger will be teaching an evening class on Mondays and Wednesdays this spring semester.) Please mark your calendar for January 11, 2022, at 6:00 pm. Zoom information will be included in the reminder emails we will send out before each meeting.

First UU Pagan Circle

- Anne Bailey

Since the scheduled date of our regular meeting is January 1, the Pagan Circle will not be meeting in January. Most people have other things to do that day, including recovering from New Year's Eve. Please join us on Saturday, February 5, at the church or possibly on Zoom if people express an interest in this option. We will have a short ritual to celebrate Candlemas. Since we will meet inside the building, please wear a mask and bring your own drink - and of course, your rhythm instruments so you can sing and chant along with us. We will have an informal ritual and discussion beginning at 7:00 p.m. Please feel free to call me at 316-650-4905 if you have questions or comments.

First Unitarian Universalist Church

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www.firstuu.net

Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

We will be meeting at our regular time on **Friday, January 21**, at the Church, beginning at **11:30 a.m.** for lunch. A Zoom option will be offered if you are not comfortable attending in person. Our book for January is *Tales of the City* (1978), the first book in the *Tales of the City* series by American novelist Armistead Maupin, originally serialized in the San Francisco Chronicle. Set in 1970s San Francisco, it follows the residents of a small apartment complex at 28 Barbary Lane, including the eccentric landlady, Anna Madrigal. Copies of the book checked out from the Wichita Public Library will be available at the Church. Please call Anita at the Church for information about borrowing a copy. That number is (316) 684-3481.