



Annual Congregational Meeting First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita June 27, 2021

Meeting Agenda

1. Opening Remarks

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

Candidates are:

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

Jim Buchhorn
John Jordan

Andrew Davis
Ellie Shore

John Findling
Celestra Snyder

Nominating Committee: (vote for 3)

Anne Bailey
Charlie King

Magda Garrett
Caroni Lombard

Rolando Gomez

President- Elect: (affirm/not affirm)

Rachel Rutledge

3. Leadership and Committee Reports

4. Review and Vote on the 2021-2022 Church Budget

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Biographies for Candidates – 2021

Board of Trustees – Three-year Term
(will be voting for three)

Jim Buchhorn (Board of Trustees):

I'm a morning person and a UU member for half a dozen years or so. I'm also a college professor and chair of the English department at Butler Community College, so my familiarity with the work of a board of trustees comes mainly from observing them at work, presenting to them from time to time, and preparing reams of reports for their consumption. I've been a vegetarian for over 25 years now, off and on for those first few years and committed to for the last 16, and I consider myself to be a pretty good cook, so one of my favorite things to do at the church is help out with first Sunday lunch. My wife and I (I'm married to the poet Suzanne Miller) have two cats.

Andrew Davis (Board of Trustees):

I have been a member of First Unitarian Universalist Church since June of 2017, and served as Congregation President Elect and President from 2018 - 2020. I earned a BA in Religion and MA in Communications with an emphasis on interpersonal and organizational communications from WSU, in 1982 and 2008 respectively. For the last three years I have written and presented one sermon a month. I believe strongly in honoring the diversity of our congregation, by seeking ways to embrace both-and rather than either-or approaches to planning and problem solving. I also believe that the primary role of the Board is to work for the long-term ability of our church to thrive.

Celestra Snyder (Board of Trustees):

I have been a member of the church for around 4 years. I have helped with Small Group for a few years now. Soon after the pandemic started, I started helping groups that requested assistance or a host for Zoom meetings. I have also volunteered with Ecofest for the last few years.

John Findling (Board of Trustees)

John Jordan (Board of Trustees)

Ellie Shore (Board of Trustees)

I have been a member of First UU for about two years. I am originally from New York City, but have lived in Wichita for forty years.

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Nominating Committee
(will be voting for three)

Anne Bailey (Nominating Committee):

I was born in Wichita and have lived here all my life. I have been a member of First UU since 1985 and have served on the Board of Trustees a couple of times. I am currently church treasurer, chair of the Membership Committee and also serve on the Worship Committee.

Magda Garrett (Nominating Committee):

I have been a member of First UU since approximately 2008. Married to Jim, with 3 adult children. I made a professional career as a Social Worker. Love tending to houseplants, cooking, and being a homebody.

Rolando Gomez (Nominating Committee):

I've been attending First UU for tenish years. I am currently the newsletter layout editor and was previously a member of the Board of Trustees. I am an engineer working at Textron Aviation and was in the Navy some time ago. I occasionally try new things and do them badly.

Charlie King (Nominating Committee):

After years, decades of attending some events at the old church building, I showed up on a Sunday in September, 2008, and joined, signed the book shortly after. The first three years I watered and was basically the grounds guy. I served on the Board to finish a term for about 10 months in 2012-2013, until I resigned to care for my mother. I served again on the board under congregation presidents Doug Wilson and Andrew Davis

Caroni Lombard (Nominating Committee)

President Elect
(will be affirming/not affirming)

Rachel Rutledge (President Elect):

I am a Masters Level Social Worker practicing with a disabled and older adult population here in the Sedgwick County Area. I was born and raised in Wichita, but I went to college in Lawrence, KS, and New York , NY and pursued a career in fashion design before deciding to return to my midwestern roots. I have lived all over Wichita - South, Riverside, and a year ago I moved to Crown Heights. I have a West Highland Terrier named Freddie that I just adore, and he is quite the king of my castle. I like walking Freddie, gardening, painting, knitting, and I have managed to keep myself occupied during the pandemic. I have been working from home for the past 14 months, and I am so ready for the church to open up so I may see your smiling faces again. I love First UU and I am so honored to be selected to serve on the board and now to be the President Elect. Thank you.

Leadership and Committee Reports

Aesthetics Committee

Clearly this little committee of two, Susan De Wit and Kay Davis, has not been able to function since March of 2020 due to the shut-down. We look forward to getting back into the swing of things. Susan, one of our resident artists, will handle arranging for and hanging artwork in our Gathering/Gallery Space and will try to rotate exhibits so that we have new work to view and potentially purchase on a regular basis. She has already hung a new exhibit to ready the church for our reopening. Be sure to take time to view and enjoy this new installation.

Kay will once again bring seasonal decorative touches into our Gathering and Worship spaces and to other parts of our church as she is able, and to ready the meeting space before and straighten it after each worship service. Our goal is to create a warm, inviting environment for members, friends, and friends we have yet to meet to gather for work, worship and fellowship. We welcome any ideas or help anyone wishes to give us as we begin anew.

Submitted by Kay Davis

Betty's Place Committee

It is exciting to see Betty's Place as it continues to evolve. Many volunteer hours have gone into making it a space that children and adults alike can gather, learn about nature, and play. We will be celebrating Betty and her generosity with a Betty's Place Tea and Dedication on Sunday, September 12, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Please come to church a little early that day for tea, coffee, pastries, flute music, and a chance to visit with and thank Betty's family for their generosity.

Although the official opening is in September, church members are welcome to make use of this outdoor space now. Socially distanced get togethers are easy when outside. Meetings, pizza parties, brown bag lunches, children's parties are just a few of the ways our church community can enjoy Betty's Place this summer. Just call Anita in the church office to make plans. Shade canopies are available at the church.

Over the past year and a half many projects have been completed.

One of the most recent additions are three stunning mosaic totems facing 21st street just outside the fence. These were created and donated to Betty's Place by our UU religious exploration director, Denise Jackson-Simon and her artist friends, Kate Pepper and Charles Baughman. All three totems are reminiscent of the flutes that Betty Hensley so dearly loved and the emphasis on music that this play and gathering space will have.

Other installations include an elevated stage for performances, a Certified Butterfly Waystation and bee friendly flower garden, a white bud tree, repurposed cable spool tables and a chalkboard for the outdoor classroom, lots of tree stumps for seats and play, a sensory walking path with hand

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Betty's Place, continued

painted rocks, tic tac toe game station, a hopscotch game, benches in front of the stage, solar lights, natural wooden blocks and building materials, a special awning entrance from the Children's RE room, a balance bridge, and a wooden frame ready for child friendly musical instruments. We are hopeful that this space will attract more young families to 1st UU.

This project will continue to develop and improve as current installments need replacing and other ideas are realized. Volunteers will continue to be busy all summer keeping up with weeds and watering. In addition, willing hands will be needed for final touches and in perpetuity to keep the area maintained.

Lots of hard work and many hours have gone into this project. Committee members and volunteers include Linda Jordan, Bruce Roby, Sandy Roberts, Denise Jackson-Simon, Charles Merrifield, Susan Hund-Milne, Jayne Henry, Vivien Minshull-Ford, Debbie Wadman, April Bales, John Findling, Carol Findling, Lucy Kirchner-Cochener, Caroni Lombard, Kent Rowe, Jennifer Connelly, Ned Lakin, Jenny Bowen, Tong Vouthilak and, of course, Anita Culp!

Submitted by Marcia Ellsworth, Betty's Place Committee Chair

Building and Grounds Committee

The church building continued to be closed from July 2020 through May 2021. Presently, COVID-19 measures include a floor stand hand sanitizer station with an automatic dispenser which was finally obtained this week after being backordered for a year. Guest face masks are provided for visitors to the church.

A major building maintenance issue occurred in late June 2020 when the two HVAC units that serve the north end of the building (nursery, restrooms, offices, library, and kitchen) died. Two of the four HVAC units that serve the sanctuary also died at the same time. All of the units are original to the building and were 12 years old then. The north-end units were repaired in July by installing new compressors. Since the sanctuary was not being used, the dead compressors in the two bad units were not replaced while the remaining two functioning units have continued to work. A plan for addressing the sanctuary HVAC needs with more energy efficient units is being formulated by Holger Meyer and Kent Rowe.

Submitted by Anita Culp

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Children's Religious Exploration Program

Children's Religious Exploration has been implemented by way of weekly lessons and activities sent to families via e-mail. I have used the *Soul Matters* themes and materials. I have asked for comments and ideas from families in those e-mails and the RE Corner of our newsletter. However, I have only gotten responses from time to time from a couple. I have no way of knowing how many are participating in the lessons.

I have done some work with Betty's Place (see Betty's Place report) and have plans to incorporate the space for lessons once children return in person.

Submitted by Denise Jackson-Simon DRE

Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry (COM) is charged with helping to maintain relations with congregants and the minister as well as overseeing the ministry of the church. COM can make recommendations and it can organize events. The members of COM are Sigrid Trombley and Caroni Lombard (2 more years), John Jordan and Holly Terrill (1 more year), and Jennifer Hess and Charles Merrifield, chair (terms expiring end of June). Holly was appointed to fill the position left by Susan Hund-Milne.

COM focused upon supporting congregants' involvement during the pandemic. COM created a new email ListServe that includes all members and friends listed in the church directory. COM assisted the Caring Committee in staying in touch with all members with occasional telephone check-ins. COM supported Adult RE Sunday Morning Zoom meetings. COM made various suggestions to the Board of Trustees and others concerning the pandemic and opening.

Submitted by Charles Merrifield

Ecofest

Co-Chairs Lucy Kirkham-Cochener and Holger Meyer

We would like to thank Marcia Ellsworth and Vivien Minshull-Ford for being very gracious mentors in helping us navigate these last two years. We would also like to thank all other members of our Congregation who have stepped up and helped with planning and other tasks.

The date of September 19, 2021 has been set for this year's Ecofest. There is a new banner to hang on the fence of Betty's Place that was purchased last year prior to the cancellation of the 2020 Ecofest due to the Pandemic. There are T-shirts that are made of Hemp and Cotton with the Ecofest Logo on the back and our Church Name on the Front. The shirts were printed last year and are still usable since there was no date placed on them. They are available for purchase

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Ecofest, continued

for \$15 each from Anita or contact Lucy. Meetings are being held twice a month over zoom to plan for this event.

Postcards were created by Melanie Jenney by Marcia Ellsworth's suggestion and are being sent to potential vendors, artists, advocates, and sponsors.

The Facebook page for Ecofest is being staffed by Melanie Jenney and is looking good.

The website for Ecofest was updated with the help of Erin DeGroot working in conjunction with Holger Meyer.

A Google Docs spreadsheet has been created to keep track of vendors, sponsors, advocates, artists, and volunteers.

An email address of wichitaecofest@gmail.com was created to help keep all Ecofest related correspondence in one location accessible to whomever is in charge now and in the future.

- Ecofest Committees—Note we would like to have at least two Church members on each committee. Even if there are already two people on a committee and you would like to help with that committee, please contact someone in that committee and let them know. The people listed will be in charge of assisting with planning for their area and making sure it is running smoothly the day of the event with assistance from volunteers. If you aren't sure what one of the committees do, but are interested, please ask.

- Art Committee – Vivien Minshull-Ford and Linda Shriver
- Sponsor Committee – Marcia Ellsworth and Ned Lakin
- Advocacy/Presentation Committee – Jennifer Connelly, Kent Rowe, and Charles Merrifield
- Catering Committee – Debbie Wadman and Frank Jandl with Bonnie Till consulting
- Mechanical Committee – Kent Rowe and his cohort(s) to be decided
- Vendor Committee – Lucy Kirkham-Cochener and Holger Meyer
- Book Faire – Joe Lozano and John Findling
- Plant Sale Committee – Linda Jordan, Rachel Rutledge, Paula Peare, and Jerri Howell
- Bake Sale Committee – (A yet to be determined member in charge of recruiting) and Olivia Bernard for plating and help the day of the event.
- Publicity Committee – Melanie Jenney and Vivien Minshull-Ford
- Sustainability Sale Committee – Bruce Roby, Jayne Henry, and LaRilla Combs
- Craft Table Committee – Anne Bailey and Anita Culp
- Children's Corner – Denise Jackson-Simon and Anna Jenney
- Fair Trade Table – will be included with Bake Sale but have a separate money box
- Ticket Taker and money handler (day of event) – Corey Swertfager also our Accountant for the event
- Volunteer Committee ????? (In charge of recruiting volunteers prior to the event that will float and fill positions the day of the event. So cat herding skills are a plus here.)

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Ecofest, continued

- Set up Committee ??? (In charge of making sure that all things necessary for set up are available. This will be handled by Holger and Lucy, but we need many volunteers to make this an easy task for us all the day of the event.)
- Clean up Committee ??? (This needs to be fresh people who haven't already burned out setting up and working the event. So please feel free if you are great at clean up to volunteer. Leftover baked goods are up for grabs here.)
- Calling Committee – Larilla Combs and any other volunteers willing to contact the membership to determine what role they will play in Ecofest 2021 and whether they will be baking for the bake sale or donating items to the sustainability sale.

As you can see there are a few blank spaces in this list of names, I will be advocating for them to be filled by hook or by crook, and I am not above bribing people with Baklava.

A deadline of July 15th, was set for the Early Bird Special that allows people who sign up as Vendors, Artists, or Advocacy Tables to get one free meal per group that will be delivered by the Catering Committee.

\$1 off for Bike Riders and reusable water bottles.

Submitted by Lucy Kirkham-Cochener

Social Action Committee

Over the past 12 months the Social Action Committee has met remotely and there were relatively few actions that were undertaken given the circumstances. The biggest concerted effort of the past year revolved around the 2020 election, and involved things like UU the Vote, Bring Out the Vote, etc., with letter writing and phone banking the principal tools. Other than that, beyond Social Action Committee, there have been some individual efforts like the Renaissance Food bank that Jennifer Connelly and friends got up and running, and of course the continuing Green Sanctuary movement that FUU's eco warriors are always working on.

We had planned several events for us to participate in such as the Alternative Gift Fair and the Doctrine of Discovery matter that had to be canceled but we hope that in this next year things will open up more and allow us more latitude for new actions.

Submitted by Joe Lozano

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Worship Committee

**(Members: Anne Bailey, Kay Davis, Lara Pollock, Nancy Milner,
Lynn Way, and the late Susan Hund-Milne)**

The Worship Committee has survived a challenging year and is looking forward to better days ahead. We began our planning for 2020-2021 worship services with the understanding that we needed more consistency in our lives and the belief that many of our members and friends did as well.

Our small committee had grown smaller when our former chairperson and able leader, Annie Welsbacher found she needed to step down. In the spirit of democracy, we decided to try to function without a designated chairperson by sharing and rotating the responsibilities which worked well for us until age, illness and the stress of a pandemic and subsequent shut-down of the church began to take a toll on our group. Some of our members struggled with balancing church, work and family responsibilities, several of us experienced worsening health problems and Lynn eventually had to take a hiatus for surgery and recovery. And, of course, our dear Susan faced worsening of her multiple myeloma and passed away in the spring. Even on her worst days, Susan attended our Zoom meetings if she could and quietly listened, then gave wise advice when she thought it would improve our work. Susan will be in our hearts always, and she is sorely missed by each of us.

We tried to meet each challenge with renewed resolve, and committed ourselves this year to keeping Sunday worship services available to anyone wishing to access them. In an attempt to accomplish that goal, we continued with monthly thematic services and made arrangements to have our virtual pulpit filled with regular, paid speakers, Andrew Davis and Rev. Joe Mohr each month. We filled another Sunday in each 5-week month with Dr. Bob Minor. In the weeks that remained, we drew from recommended Soul Matters sermons and homilies found on the UUA Worship Web, turned the service over to Social Action Committee and speaker, John Stoesz, one Sunday in November of 2020, enjoyed live music in a service by Tom Neilson, a service by our own Lynn Way and Nick Boke from the Chester, VT Unitarian Church. Linda Jordan teamed up with Anne Bailey to help us celebrate four pagan holidays during the year. Eventually, our own Lara Pollock began to read some homilies, then bravely decided to write her own material to present once a month, and Ned Lakin and Sheri Barnes contributed original presentations as well, and Holly Terrill, Charles Merrifield and Annie Welsbacher served as lay readers as well.

In addition to our live services, we knew there were some who could not join us and we sought to meet their spiritual needs with a Home Worship Packet with readings and a homily for their use at home alone or with family or a small gathering of friends. This packet originated in response to the suddenness of the shut-down on March 15th. Knowing that many would be left at loose ends, Kay decided to create the service she and Andrew had planned to deliver that day in written form to be posted to the church website so that anyone wanting it could download it. The packet seemed to be welcomed by several people and became a weekly feature made available until we could resume in person services.

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Worship Service Committee, continued

Admittedly, we got off to a slow start with our virtual services as we struggled to learn to use Zoom technology, but the struggle paid off as we gradually learned to produce worship services that followed the same format as the in-person worship services we are all used to. In time, we even managed to incorporate audible music into our services without having to rely solely on YouTube offerings as a result of lots of experimentation and collaboration between Kay and Eric Whetmore.

We relied heavily on volunteers as all lay-led congregations do to help lead our services as well. Sixteen of you stepped up to help by taking turns ably leading services. You know who you are, and you have our deepest gratitude, and a promise that you will be recognized by name and in person at a future date. We could not have made our Zoom services work as we envisioned without each of these volunteers. We do want give special thanks to Bonnie Till and Dania Laubach who have now who have moved to Kansas City and Colorado respectively. Even after her move, Bonnie continued to lead services from her new home to help get us through this year. Thanks also go to Charles Merrifield and Holger Meyer for stepping in to host or co-host some of our services so that Kay and Lara could have a few breaks from the weekly technical responsibilities. And, while Zoom worship services are far from a perfect solution, we believe we have met our goal of creating a consistent and familiar way for us to remain connected to each other and to First UU of Wichita through a very challenging period.

We have decided to continue to hold our committee meetings via Zoom for now, but are considering hybrid meetings if the needed equipment can be obtained so that all of our members can attend. Lara has found it necessary to step down from the committee effective the end of June to make space for family, business and teaching commitments. Her creativity and steady voice will be missed. We are seeking new members to help us continue our work. Anita Culp has graciously joined as an ad hoc member lending her clerical skills to help with formatting the part of the Order of Service we are responsible for along with weekly service leader scripts as needed. Debbie Wadman has also provided ad hoc support with proofreading our work and helping us improve the quality of our written documents. We are grateful for the help and support from each of them, and will happily welcome others to join us.

Submitted by Kay Davis