



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita
Founded 1887

Co-President's Message

- Kirk Mitchell

April 2022

There's certainly not been any time for hibernation the last few months! There have been some changes that might possibly be a light at the end of the tunnel, but of course we're all hopeful that it isn't from an oncoming train. While the seriousness of one situation appears to be waning, another springs forth.

Last night, the board looked at the current policies we've established for dealing with the COVID situation, and what we should change given what's currently happening. We've reestablished live services after the 14-day rolling positive rate for Sedgwick County dropped below 10 percent, and it was certainly nice to see those who felt safe enough to join us. The most recent rate is 1.52 percent and the Board discussed easing our masking requirements for the future. The CDC Guidelines use a lower than 5 percent rate percent to indicate a low risk of communal transmission of the virus. As I write this, there were 31 new cases reported in the county, although there were a frightening 14 new deaths reported. The number of hospitalized cases is dropping as well.

Given that all states have dropped the mask mandates for indoor activities, that there are therapeutic drugs available that work for the current variants, and that transmission rates are low, the board moved to allow mask usage in all indoor First UU activities to be voluntary. These activities will include our live services, coffee time before and after services, first Sunday lunches, upcoming activities like garage sales, political candidate forums, and other scheduled events and activities that First UU is supporting. We will attempt to smooth this transition by starting this change April 1. No kidding!

We do ask that those who choose not to mask to continue social distancing, especially if you're near those wearing masks. We will continue to offer Zoom access to services for those uncomfortable about the changes.

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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. 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

Spring is here, and First UU is in bloom! Come join us at church to reconnect and participate. You are missed when you aren't here. And if you are coming, you'll be glad to know that the fresh coffee is back on Sunday mornings. There will still be services on Zoom with code numbers sent by email. We still want all in-person participants vaccinated, and we still request mask wearing, but the COVID numbers are down, and we are carefully beginning to resume the activities we stopped during the pandemic.

The board has approved a change in the Caring Committee leadership. We welcome longtime committee members Magda Garrett and Jayne Henry to their new role as co-chairs of the Caring Committee. And we express our thanks for the dedicated work that LaRilla Combs and Jana Rambo, our outgoing co-chairs, have done for years on the committee. They will both continue as committee members.

We are always interested in the joys and sorrows members would like included in the newsletter. If you'd like to share one, please contact Linda Jordan. This month we have the joy of welcoming a new member, Danielle Ramirez. We welcome her to first UU and if you see her, take a minute to introduce yourself. Also, we are wishing healing and good health to Sigrid Trombley and Lila Arnold, who are both home from recent hospitalizations. Yet another joy is that Millie Cherryholmes turned 90 years young on March 23. She's in a nursing home in Newton and currently unable to attend services. She finds phone calls difficult, but would enjoy a card or a note from her UU friends.

The UU Friends Lunch is back! There were nine of us at Oh Yeah China Bistro in March, and we had a great meal and lots of enjoyable conversation. Come join us on the third Tuesday of the month at 11:30. Check the Weekly Update for the second week of April for the location. Making a reservation with the church office is also helpful.

If you are feeling down or confused, remember Joe Mohr is available to First UU members at no charge to you for confidential counseling. Contact him directly at: (508) 729-0781 to schedule an appointment.

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.

Remembering Dee Dee Jordan: 1937–2022
- Annie Welsbacher

I met Dee Dee Jordan in Science-fiction Time: backwards.

First, she was always there. Part of the ether, the Life space I happened to inhabit. She was the golden voice in the First UU Choir, that rare star singer who could excel as both a soloist and a seamless ensemble singer. (It might surprise some of our members to learn that this church had a large, kickass choir in the 1960s–70s.) She was at parties, at Christmas gatherings, at church activities. She was the ever-effervescent face of optimism and joy, her bobbed hair – solid white since her early 30s – a striking personal brand 50 years before having a personal brand was a Thing. And underneath that iconic hair were sparkling eyes and big smiles, especially when she was in her element – her family, her music, her community.

Dee Dee's gentle, quiet manner belied the strong and opinionated woman beneath it. She knew last night's game scores and had serious opinions about the winners, how they had played and whether or not they'd deserved it – and she would tell you all about it in Technicolor detail if you asked. She was the mother of three rowdy sons, which might have seemed an anomaly for such a polite, ladylike woman – if you didn't know her. If you did, anything other than boys – rowdy because she let them be boys (all three now grown into fine men) – would have been the real anomaly.

Later, I met Dee Dee as Mom's former Music Ed student at WSU. I knew this in a vague sort of way, the way kids sorta-kindly know what their parents do when they're not around. Mom observed Dee Dee student-teach in various Wichita schools and evolved naturally from mentor to friend.

As an adult, I got regular updates about the Jordans' annual trip to Colorado, a particular remote mountainy spot where they cabin-camped and where Dee Dee occupied her own nirvana. You thought her eyes always shone? Just ask her how her trip had gone and see them sparkle up like firecrackers. One of the last conversations I had with Dee Dee was an update on her sacrosanct Colorado ritual.

I also learned that Dee Dee would afflict you with bodily harm if you ever even considered calling her by her given name, Deloris. She was always and always will be Dee Dee. The very rhythm of that affectionate nickname described her to a T.

Over time, more details came into focus: Dee Dee was Mom's very first friend after we moved to Wichita in 1958. And soon after, Dee Dee joined First UU because of my mother.

It happened this way: Dee Dee told Mom about a discovery troubling her. When she and Will initially moved here, she had found a generic Christian church so that she could sing in a choir. She didn't care what choir, she just wanted to sing. She and Will drove together, she sat in the choir, the boys attended Sunday School. She sang, therefore she was happy; all was right with the world.

But one Sunday Will's timing was off, and she tumbled to the terrible truth – he was cheating on her. After dropping her off each week, Will was sneaking off to his office and working for an hour. He couldn't stand the church, but he couldn't stand not to make Dee Dee happy.

'Co-Presidents Message' continued

We feel that Zoom access should be a permanent addition to Sunday services and will be looking into making public access to other meetings available as well, although volunteers will likely be needed.

We do realize the COVID situation can change, so we've established a trigger if the 14-day rolling positivity rate exceeds 5 percent. If this happens, we will return to requiring masks until the rate again drops below that point.

In other news, the Nominating Committee may be contacting you regarding the openings we will have on the ballot for our upcoming Annual Meeting (June 12). We need 4 people willing to fill the 3- year board positions currently held by Vivien and Kent, at least 1 for the president-elect, and 5 candidates to serve on next year's Nominating Committee (preferably for 3 gentle arm-twisters). I hope you consider contributing your skills and voices to these positions. They are the heart and muscles of our church! If you are, please contact Anne Bailey, Magda Garrett, or Rolando Gomez or at least don't say no if they get to you first!

Bullet Points from the Board

March 16, 2022

- New Policy on Masks:

Because the COVID infection rate in Sedgwick County has dropped below 2 percent, combined with the availability of therapeutics for those who need them, the Board has chosen to make masks voluntary at First UU of Wichita. If, however, the 14-day infection rate average in Sedgwick County increases above 5 percent, masks will once again be required in our church building. Please note that worship services will still be broadcast on Zoom for those who need to take extra care with their health.

- We will start serving coffee before the worship service. If you like to have the coffee remain available, please be willing to take your turn brewing coffee and/or cleaning up after the service.
- The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, June 12, shortly after the worship service has ended. Assuming the test average has not risen above 5 percent by this time, there will be a light lunch served between the service and the start of the annual meeting.
- Ned Lakin is the chair of this year's stewardship drive. Yea, Ned!

April Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

These members joined First UU Church during the month of April (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: Kathleen McGee (32), Rick Welsbacher (14), Janet Roberts (14), Suzanna Mathews (12), Jim Bucchorn (7), Suzanne Miller (7), April Bales (5), Bruce Roby (5), Eric Whetmore (3), Carol Findling (3), and John Findling (3).



April 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 9:45a Adult Relig Expl (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 3:00p Private Event	4 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	5 4:00p Worship Committee (Z) 7:00p UU Craft Group (Z)	6 4:00p Committee on Ministry (+Z)	7	8 12:00p Fridays for the Future	9 10:00a Caring Committee 7:00p Holiday Party Group (Z)
10 9:45a Adult Relig Expl (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council	11 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	12 12:30p Renaissance Food Pantry	13 7:00p Membership Committee (Z)	14	15 11:30a Eclectic Readers (+Z)	16
17 9:45a Adult Relig Expl 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Social Action Com. 7:00p Global Learning Center Lecture	18 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	19 11:30p UU Friends Lunch	20 6:00p Board of Trustees (Z) 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	21	22	23 1:00p Candidate Forum 7:00p UU Humanists (+Z)
24 9:45a Adult Relig Expl (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE	25 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	26 12:30p Renaissance Food Pantry	27	28	29	30 7:00p Pagan Circle

From the Worship Committee

- Anne Bailey, Sarah Jane Crespo, Kay Davis, Linda Jordan, Rebecca Veron

What does it mean to be a people of creativity? And what (if anything) is the connection between faith and creativity? If you ask 50 people this question, chances are you'll get 50 different answers! Is it the ability to make music, write poetry or prose, sculpt, draw or paint beautiful visual art? Or is it the ability to see things in novel ways and bring about change in unexpected ways? Does it emanate from an unknown, unseen force? Or does it come from deep within each of us as a result of how we interact with the world and others and are in turn acted upon? This month, we'll attempt to find some answers of our own as we explore various facets of creativity and its sources. Join us as we consider all these possibilities and more.

April 3: Andrew Davis presents "Care As Creativity." Andrew explores how creativity is the link between our stewardship and our capacity to care for ourselves and others.

April 10: Holly Terrill presents "The Spirit of Creativity," by the Rev. Dr. Barbara Wells Ten Hove. Rev. Dr. Ten Hove explores the connection between art and religion. Ten Hove argues that there is power in art that allows the artists' creations to expose the anguish and joy in the world for all people to see. To share one's creativity is both risky and a deeply spiritual undertaking, but it is necessary for both our own and others' spiritual growth.

April 17: Kay Davis brings us "The Easter Exam," by Rev. Barnaby Feder. Easter and the concept of resurrection can be confusing, and most UUs struggle with this particular holiday filled with mass marketing and the mixed messages arising from centuries of "bad theology." Rev. Feder shows us a different way to think of the Easter message that is life affirming and honors UU principles and common values.

April 24: To conclude our month-long celebration of Creativity, we will listen to songs and poetry created by Unitarian Universalist poets and musicians – far and near, past and present. And some very local. In fact, if you would like to read or have your poem(s) read, please get in touch with Anne Bailey.

Stewardship Committee Report

- Ned Lakin, Chair

The Stewardship Committee, consisting of Ned Lakin, Anne Welsbacher, Anne Bailey, and Charles Merrifield, is working to put together the Stewardship campaign for our next fiscal year, which will begin July 1, 2022. We will be following the practices used for the past several years, with a packet and pledge form mailed out (or sent by email) to all First UU members and friends. There will be brief "Stewardship Moments" presented by members and friends during the Sunday morning services in April and into May, in which they will share their personal reasons for supporting the church and encourage others to respond generously to the campaign. We will do follow-up phone calls to those who have not yet responded, so that we can have a good handle on the financial resources that we will have available for the programs and maintenance of the church for the next fiscal year. We look forward to your response to this critical piece of sustaining the life of the church for the 2022-2023 fiscal year! Thank you all!

Garage Sale Planning Meeting

March 17, 2022

- John Findling

A group of about twelve skipped their afternoon green beer on St. Patrick's Day and met at church to do the initial planning for the church garage sale. With the further postponement of Ecofest, we agreed that it is important to have a sale that generates a sizeable amount of income for the church.

The ad hoc committee considered several possible dates for the sale and concluded that the sale should take place on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, May 19-21, with set-up and pricing of goods to be done on the Tuesday and Wednesday before the sale. We will accept goods for the sale starting after church on Sunday, May 14, and we hope to have pick-up and transportation available for large or heavy items.

In addition to standard garage sale fare, we will be selling books, plants, and, we hope, baked goods. In addition, we are looking for nice reasonably priced handcrafted items to sell at a separate table at the sale. While the traditional garage sale items will be discounted the second and third days of the sale, we want to assure those who donate handcrafted items that these will not be discounted.

Melanie Jenney will be handling publicity through social media – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and we are looking at other means of publicizing the sale.

At this time, we anticipate that sale volunteers will be asked to wear face masks, but we will not require shoppers to do so. That policy, of course, could change if the COVID situation in Sedgwick County worsens by May.

Needless to say, a large sale such as this is quite labor-intensive, so we hope that many of you reading this article will volunteer to help out at (or before) the sale. If you can help, please contact Marcia Ellsworth at (316) 208-3083 or leave word at the church office.

The RE Corner

- Denise Jackson-Simon, DRE

We are happy to report that Children's Religious Education is back at church on Sunday mornings! Don't miss out on the fun. Hope to see you there.

Restroom Science/Ecology How to Use Only One Paper Towel

- Anita Culp

1) Shake

Shake your hands first, 10 times.

2) Fold

Take one paper towel. Fold it in half. Then use it for both of your hands.

Folding the towel makes it more effective because of "interstitial suspension." In other words, the water gets suspended in the empty space between the paper towel's layers.



Remembering Dee Dee Jordan continued

She relayed all this to Mom, who said, "This is an easy fix: Come to my church." She did, Will did, the boys did; we all came out ahead—especially First UU.

Unlike most of us, Dee Dee Jordan knew exactly who she was and lived her life accordingly, nothing more, nothing less. When I think of "unconditional love," there are very few people who come to mind. Dee Dee is at the top of the list.

Membership Committee

- Anne Bailey

The Membership Committee will meet on Zoom on Wednesday, April 13, at 7:00 pm. We will be discussing the work of this committee and the latest presentation of our "Inquirer's Class". Please let me know if you would like to attend this meeting - annebailey@earthlink.net or (316) 650-4905. We are always looking for additional members to help with this important committee.

Ecofest Postponed Indefinitely

- Holger Meyer

At the last Ecofest planning meeting we made the unfortunate but necessary decision to postpone Ecofest again. This time it is not due to concern about the COVID-19 pandemic but out of concern that we will not be able to deliver a quality event to our guests and visitors, vendors, advocates, artists, and all the other participants.

During the pandemic some of us First UU'ers have moved, some have gotten older (well, we all have, but you know what I mean), some have drifted away from First UU a little to pursue other opportunities. We also attracted some new members. But some feel not comfortable to get involved deeply while knowing us only through Zoom and limited in-person interactions. Ultimately, we do not have quite the team we need to make Ecofest happen.

So Ecofest is postponed indefinitely for the time being.

Perhaps we can organize some smaller event this spring such as the garage sale we used to have.

Perhaps we are near the end of the pandemic and will open up the church more and have more old and new people get more deeply involved again. At some point we may feel like we can organize Ecofest and make it a success without burning out the few who would do too much of the work if the team is too small.

Perhaps we will decide to partner with another church to reach the strength needed to do Ecofest.

Perhaps we will have a somewhat different type of Ecofest in partnership with (an)other group(s).

The need for Ecofest and to raise awareness of sustainable practices and green living is more urgent than ever, so in one way or another, we will emerge from this, regroup, and continue.

Until then, be well, enjoy spring, plant a garden or some herbs on the window sill, and we will see you all on Sundays!

First UU Pagan Circle

- Anne Bailey

We have scheduled the next meeting of the Pagan Circle for Saturday, April 30, at 7:00 pm so that we can celebrate Beltane - only one day early. Don't forget to bring your drums or other rhythm instruments and remember that masks are required. By then we may be able to meet outdoors. Please feel free to call me at (316) 650-4905 if you have questions or comments.

First Unitarian Universalist Church

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Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

We will be meeting at our regular time on Friday, April 15, beginning at 11:30 for lunch, with discussion beginning at noon. Please check the Weekly Update to confirm that we are meeting in person, on Zoom, or both. Our selection for April is *The House on Mango Street*, which is the book chosen for the Big Read this year. This book was written in 1984 by Mexican-American author Sandra Cisneros. It tells the story of Esperanza Cordero, a 12-year-old Chicana girl growing up in the Hispanic quarter of Chicago. Based in part on Cisneros's own experience, the novel follows Esperanza over the span of one year in her life, as she enters adolescence and begins to face the realities of life as a young woman in a poor and patriarchal community. Elements of the Mexican-American culture and themes of social class, race, sexuality, identity, and gender are interwoven throughout the novel. Several free copies are still available in our church library. Please call Anita to obtain your copy. That number is (316) 684-3481.