



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita

Founded 1887

September 2022

President's Message

- Rachel Rutledge

As the hottest days in August begin to break, we Unitarian-Universalists look toward the end of summer and the end of triple-digit heat. The COVID positivity rate in Sedgwick County is now 14 percent, which is down from weeks past. We still have the need for masks on in person at church, and we still need social distancing. Unfortunately, we go without coffee and First Sunday Lunches due to the pandemic. I for one can't wait for restrictions to be lifted to enjoy the fellowship we have with our coffee and our food events. Hopefully those days are coming sooner rather than later.

We still have not resolved our air conditioning dilemma, but we continue to work on it. Anita Culp, Bruce Roby, Kent Rowe, and Holger Meyer have all been essential in working to get estimates and gather information about different models and makes of air conditioners. We are waiting for complete sets of bids to be presented to the board for a vote. The board has also worked at informing itself of the problem at hand and the options it has to correct it. We should know more in the immediate future.

The Children's RE Committee, headed by Andrew Davis, has really done some good work over the summer. Anna Jenney has been hired as the RE Director and will start work on September 4. Two other people have also been offered positions: the Children's RE Assistant and one Nursery Attendant. We would still like to hire one more Nursery Attendant, and we hope to get everyone started by September 4. The Committee has done a lot of difficult and time-consuming work to hire this many people in a short time frame, and they are to be commended. They have found some fantastic folks who will be an asset to our church. I look forward to the new staff members becoming part of the fabric of who we are.

In Touch

The newsletter of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita is published monthly.
www.firstuu.net
Member
Unitarian Universalist Association

President: Rachel Rutledge

Office Manager:
office@firstuu.net
(316) 684-3481
Anita Culp
M, Tu, & Th: 9:30am – 2:00pm
W & F: 1:00 – 5:00pm

Director of Religious Exploration:
Anna Jenney

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Copy Editor: John Findling
jfindlin@ius.edu

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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 jfindlin@ius.edu

Membership Committee

- Anne Bailey

The Membership Committee will again offer its Inquirer's Class on Zoom on Thursday, September 22, and one week later on September 29. Please call the church office, (316) 648-3481, and let Anita Culp know that you wish to attend the class. The Zoom codes will be sent to you.

The Committee will meet as usual on the second Wednesday, September 14, on Zoom. Please let us know if you would like to attend this meeting by emailing Anne Bailey at annebailey@earthlink.net or calling her at (316) 650-4905. We are always looking for additional members to help with this important committee.

Days of Interest in September

The first Friday in September is National Food Bank Day. But we can bring food donations year-round to place on the shelving in First UU's sanctuary for delivery to a local Wichita food bank. An additional donation option is through the Renaissance Food Pantry; contact First UU member Jennifer Connelly at (316) 305-6070.

September 8 is International Literacy Day, raising awareness and concern for literacy problems that exist within our own local communities and globally. Here in Wichita, Storytime Village, Inc., will host legendary basketball Hall of Famer Shaquille O'Neal on September 10 at Hoops 4 Literacy, a charity basketball game to support early literacy for Kansas children. Learn more at Storytime Village, (316) 719-9336 (storytimevillage.org).

As much fun (and delicious) as the springtime's Cinco de Mayo is, September 16 is the real Mexican Independence Day. It celebrates Mexico's declaration of independence from Spain in 1810.

September 20 is National Voter Registration Day (nationalvoterregistrationday.org). This nonpartisan civic holiday celebrating our democracy was first observed in 2012 and has gained momentum ever since. Nearly 4.7 million voters have registered to vote on the holiday to date.

Ripples from the Caring Committee

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

Kudos to the Board for getting the children's RE program ready for its September opening. Anna Jenney, who grew up as a youngster in our RE program, has been hired as Director of Children's Religious Education, and other staff members are being added. It's really great to see our First UU kids all grown up and caring for the next generation!

We send loving and healing energy to all our members, more power to the healthy, and wishes for recovery to those of us dealing with illness. Our thoughts are with Sigrid Trombley as she deals with dialysis. And we offer a special mention for our Congregation President, Rachel Rutledge, in stabilizing her diabetes. We wish wellness to all other members and friends who are struggling with health issues.

One of the functions of the Caring Committee is providing transportation to medical appointments for church members. We are all really busy, and gas prices are high, so we know we ask a lot, but if you could join the list of people available to provide transportation, we need your help. Please contact Jana Rambo at (316) 686-4215 and let her know. Thanks in advance.

The UU Friends continue to meet for a delicious lunch and delightful conversation at 11:30 a.m. each third Tuesday in locations that are deemed relatively COVID safe. Wear your mask if you choose, take any other precautions you follow, and join us. The location for September will be in the second Friday Update newsletter, or you may contact the church office at (316) 648-3481.

If you are experiencing emotional and stress-related issues, Rev. Joe Mohr is available to church members for confidential counseling at no cost. Contact him directly to schedule at (580) 729-0781.

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.

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.

Bullet Points from the Board August 17, 2022

- We are meeting our budget through the first six weeks of the fiscal year.
- We will be making a decision about the HVAC unit at the next board meeting.
- On September 4, we will begin our new vision for Children's RE with the advent of our new RE Director, Anna Jenney. We will also reopen the nursery. Both children's RE and the nursery are for children who have been fully vaccinated.
- Today almost felt like Fall. Yea!

First UU Pagan Circle

- Anne Bailey

Please watch next month's newsletter for a date in October when we will gather to celebrate Samhain (or Halloween). Samhain is a Gaelic festival marking the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter or the "darker-half" of the year. We hope to be able to enjoy a meal together, if the Covid numbers will allow it. If you have questions, please call Anne Bailey, (316) 650-4905, or Linda Jordan, (316) 512-6652.

Holiday Party Group

- Judy Wherritt

The Holiday Party Group has gone virtual. We'll meet via Zoom on Monday, September 5, from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. for conversation starting with the theme of Better Breakfast Month. What is your all-time favorite or most memorable breakfast? After we've exhausted the subject of breakfast, we'll play a fun virtual game.

Contact the church office at (316) 648-3481 for Zoom information.

September Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

These members joined First UU Church during the month of September (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: Will Jordan (51), Carol Clark (45), James Clark (45), Greta Crosby (26), Charlie Jenney (20), and Paula Peare (9).

September 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	(Z) - Meeting via Zoom (+Z) - Meeting In-Person and via Zoom Call church office at 316-684-4581 for Zoom information.			1	2	3 9:30a Gardening Group 7:00p Pagan Circle
4 9:45a Adult ReligExplr(+Z) 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE	5 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z) 7:00p Labor Day Party (Z)	6 4:00p Worship Committee (Z) 7:00p UU Craft Night (Z)	7 7:00p Committee on Ministry (Z)	8	9 12:00p Fridays for the Future	10 10:00a Caring Committee
11 9:45a Adult ReligExplr(+Z) 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council	12 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	13 10:00a Renaissance Food Pantry	14 7:00p Membership Committee (Z)	15	16 11:30a Eclectic Readers	17
18 9:45a Adult ReligExplr 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Social Action Com 7:00p Global Learning Center (+Z)	19 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	20	21 6:00p Board of Trustees(Z) 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	22	23	24 7:00p UU Humanists (+Z)
25 9:45a Adult ReligExplr(+Z) 11:00a Worship Service 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Music Committee	26 1:00p Movie Group 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	27 10:00a Renaissance Food Pantry	28	29 7:00p Inquirer's Class (Z)	30	



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)

Who's Who @ First UU?

FIRST UU OFFICERS & BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President – Rachel Rutledge
President-Elect – Ned Lakin
Board of Trustees – Jerette Preisser, Ellie Shore, Jim Bucchorn, Andrew Davis,
Celestra Snyder, Magda Garrett, Charles Merrifield
Treasurer – Anne Bailey

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Adult RE – Frank Ruf
Aesthetics – TBD
Building & Grounds – Bruce Roby (Building) and Anita Culp (Grounds)
Caring – Jayne Henry and Magda Garrett
Children's RE – TBD
Chalice Book Store – Joe Lozano
Communications – TBD
EcoFest – Holger Meyer and Lucy Kirkham-Cochener
Finance – Charles Merrifield
Fundraising – Marcia Ellsworth and Vivien Minshull-Ford
Green Sanctuary – Linda Jordan
Kitchen Mavens – TBD
Librarian – Nancy Milner
Membership – Anne Bailey
Music – Jana Rambo
Nominating – Dan DeMott, Corey Swertfager, Melanie Jenney
Partner Church – Debbie Wadman
Personnel – TBD
Social Action – Ellie Shore
Stewardship – Ned Lakin
Worship – Kay Davis
Committee on Ministry – Peter Ninemire, Chair; Sigrid Trombley,
Will Jordan, Jennifer Hess, and Caroni Lombard

GROUP CONTACTS

UU Craft Group – Anita Culp
Eclectic Readers – Anne Bailey
Fourth Monday Movie Group – Vivien Minshull-Ford
Gardening Group – Anita Culp and Linda Jordan
Holiday Party Group – Anita Culp
UU Humanist Group – Charles Merrifield
Pagan Group – Anne Bailey, Linda Jordan, and Paula Peare
Zen Friends of Wichita – Bob Feleppa and Vivien Minshull-Ford

STAFF

Custodian – Magda Garret
Office Manager – Anita Culp
Pastoral Care – Joe Mohr
Director of Children's Religious Education – Anna Jenney

From the UUA

- Rev. Abbey Tennis

The national Unitarian Universalist Association has a website containing tons of interesting essays, information, and resources (uua.org).

The excerpt below is from the site's Braver/Wiser section. Interested individuals can sign up for weekly reflections from this space (uua.org/braverwiser).

“Loving with a Broken Heart,” by Abbey Tennis, was posted June 29, 2022.

Episcopal priest Gwen Buehrens asks of each seminarian she talks with, “What are you going to do when the church breaks your heart?” It’s a question that I return to regularly – because if we spend enough time in this faith tradition, or any faith tradition, it breaks our hearts. Religious community has broken your heart, and it has broken mine.

Our hearts get broken in religious community when we act with selfishness rather than compassion. When we become more attached to our history than to today’s call for justice. When we lose sight of our integrity. When we are devastated and no one shows up for us.

The richness that comes from commitment, though, isn’t just about one choice. We must choose each other again and again, through conflict and through plenty. The hardest moments of life are the moments when we must choose each other even when our hearts are the most broken.

I do not mean we should never end relationships or commitments. In times of abuse, or in times when our deepest truth calls us in a new direction, ending connections is what is needed.

But it’s only when we choose each other again and again – not those who cause us harm, but those who bring healing to the world – that we can cut through the shallowness of our culture that starves our souls. Choosing each other, and choosing once more, is the only way we can become fully known and fully loved.

Rev. Abbey Tennis (she/her) is Lead Minister at the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia.

From the Worship Committee

- Anne Bailey, Kay Davis, Linda Jordan, Rebecca Veron

This September, we explore what it means to be “a people of belonging.” We’ve all felt the hunger to be included, the longing to be let in. No one likes standing outside the circle. No one likes leaning against the locked door listening to everyone laughing inside. From the time we are little, belonging is something we seek. It’s the hoped-for Holy Grail at the end of our journeys. Or is it just the beginning of our journey?

There are two types of belonging, only one of which is a blessing. If you find yourself being invited to linger rather than leave, warning bells should go off. Be wary of those who welcome you with a club jacket and soft couch. They may have let you in, but soon they will enlist you to help with the work of keeping others out. The true blessing of belonging isn’t that you get to come inside the circle; it’s that you get to participate in expanding it. Which means maybe our question this month is different than the one we might expect. Instead of “Where can I find belonging?” maybe it is “How can I transform myself into belonging for others?”

We invite you to worship with us each Sunday as we explore these questions and more.

Sept 4: Melanie Jenney presents “*Coming Into Our Own*” by the Rev. Jude Geiger. Change is inevitable and perpetual in both our lives and our congregation just as it is in the passing of the seasons. What does it look and feel like as we move into a new season in our personal lives or in the life of our congregation? Are we open and accepting of the changes that come in response to new challenges or adversity? And what changes within us if we learn to take the long view of each new challenge in our lives?

Sept. 11: Annie Welsbacher brings us “*Long to Belong*” by the Rev. Rod Richards. We’ll explore the complexities of the meaning of the word “belonging,” the human need to belong to something meaningful and larger than ourselves, and the differences between positive belonging and negative belonging.

Sept. 18: Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director of Kansas Interfaith Action (KIFA), brings us an update about KIFA’s work and legislative matters of special concern this coming year. KIFA is a statewide, multi-faith issue-advocacy organization that “puts faith into action” by educating, engaging, and advocating on behalf of people of faith and the public regarding critical social, economic, and climate justice issues. You are encouraged to invite your friends to join us for worship September 18.

Sept. 24: Rev. Joe Mohr returns to the pulpit to bring us his thoughts on the theme of “*Belonging*.” Be sure to read the weekly Update or check the First UU Website or Facebook page for more information about Rev. Joe’s presentation.

Sonnet to A Negro in Harlem

Helene Johnson - 1906-1995

You are disdainful and magnificent –
Your perfect body and your pompous gait,
Your dark eyes flashing solemnly with hate,
Small wonder that you are incompetent
To imitate those whom you so despise –
Your shoulders towering high above the throng,
Your head thrown back in rich, barbaric song,
Palm trees and mangoes stretched before your eyes.
Let others toil and sweat for labor's sake
And wring from grasping hands their meed of gold.
Why urge ahead your supercilious feet?
Scorn will efface each footprint that you make.
I love your laughter arrogant and bold.
You are too splendid for this city street.

First Unitarian Universalist Church

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Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

The book discussion group will meet at its regular time, the third Friday, September 16, beginning at 11:30 a.m. for lunch with discussion to follow at 12:00 p.m. The book chosen for September is *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*, by David Grann.

The Reign of Terror against the Osage people was one of history's most ruthless and shocking crimes. As the Wild West was dying, someone was killing members of the Osage nation who had gotten rich from oil under their land. Investigators who tried to uncover the truth were disappearing, but J. Edgar Hoover asked a former Texas Ranger to work with the Osage to unravel the mystery.

Copies of the book, borrowed from the Wichita Public Library, are available at the church. Please ask Anita Culp or Anne Bailey for a copy.