



# In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of  
Wichita

Founded 1887

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October 2022

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## President's Message

- Rachel Rutledge

As September slowly rolls into October, we are at long last getting relief from these 100-plus-degree Kansas summer days. We have really had to deal with the hot weather because, unexpectedly, a second church air conditioner went out in addition to the one that wasn't working previously. I authorized a repair to the latest broken air conditioner. It will cost \$3,600, and the part will take at least two weeks to come in.

As you all can imagine, that is a serious amount of money for us, given our current church budget. We find ourselves in a position where we are crucially tight for money because of the air-conditioning situation. We all need to look for solutions to our fiscal situation right now. Any ideas about fundraising or bringing new money into the church will be greatly appreciated.

This problem is not going to go away. Because of the cost of our HVAC needs, we don't have the money to spend on programs. We need additional funds to keep the church running and to provide the services that we need. I know that with the imagination and resolve of all the great people we have, many new ideas will come forth. I invite each and every one of you to let Board or committee members know if you have an idea for raising money, no matter how small or how improbable. We need to consider every possibility at this time.

On a bright note, it is so wonderful to have our Children's RE staffed fully. Anna Jenney, the Children's RE Director, is a great addition to our church, and Gabby Garrett, her assistant, is a wonderful support to her. (See article about Anna in this issue.) Stephanie Davison, the nursery attendant, has been a great help with the new toddlers and babies we have had. It is so positive to have children in the church again—and to have these great people contributing to the service of Children's Religious Education.

Anne Bailey has informed me that she has five new prospects for her most recent Inquirer's Class. I am very heartened by this! How lovely to hear that so many are interested in joining our church. We need new people who will bring new ideas and new talents to our congregation. I have noticed many new people this summer, and I sincerely hope that some will continue to come through the fall. I hope that they come to regard the church as I do, a vibrant place to experience spirituality and fellowship and a place to give back according to your talent and ability. The prospect of having new members makes me happy and excited for us as a congregation.

# In Touch

The newsletter of the First  
Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Wichita is  
published monthly.

[www.firstuu.net](http://www.firstuu.net)

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Unitarian Universalist  
Association

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Anita Culp

M, Tu, & Th: 9:30am –  
2:00pm

W & F: 1:00 – 5:00pm

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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](mailto:jfindlin@ius.edu)

## Alternative Gift Event

- Joe Lozano

First Unitarian Universalist of Wichita is once again participating in the Alternative Gift Market, which is going to be held on Saturday, November 12, 2022, at Hillside Christian Church.

We will be looking for volunteers both prior to and during the event. Volunteers are needed ahead of time to help create the little ornaments we'll be handing out, and for the event itself, we'll need volunteers to staff our table. We haven't settled on the precise design for the ornaments yet but expect to determine it shortly, so please let us know if you are willing to pitch in and we will get the info out to you.

This year we are sponsoring a very exciting project for Haiti called Midwives and Mothers. Its purpose is to educate and equip local midwives. We think it's a great cause. Check it out [here](https://alternativegifts.org) or visit [alternativegifts.org](https://alternativegifts.org). (Select "giving" on the green bar, then choose "gifting," and then select the catalog.) Please contact [Joe Lozano](mailto:Joe.Lozano@gmail.com) at [tjoe232@gmail.com](mailto:tjoe232@gmail.com) with any questions or suggestions or just to volunteer. We will update the congregation as we get more information.

Thank you!

## First UU Pagan Circle

- Anne Bailey

We will meet on Saturday, October 29, at a time to be announced, 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 not, we will have an informal ritual and enjoy each other's company. If you have questions, please call Anne Bailey at (316) 650-4905 or Linda Jordan at (316) 512-6652.

## 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 acknowledge birthdays and other special celebrations with cards and kudos. In times of sorrow, we also acknowledge and seek to bear witness to the pain. Volunteers associated with Caring Committee can, at times, provide transportation to medical appointments, church services, and other church associated events. Light meals and light housekeeping can be provided as needed due to illness, bereavement, or other.

We continue to send warm wishes, healing thoughts, and positive vibes to those in the congregation facing health issues, and continued good health—both physical and mental—to all church members. We encourage members and friends to follow good health care practices to keep well:

Stay hydrated.

Get ample rest.

Manage and maintain good diet and exercise.

Reach out when you need human contact.

The church is fortunate to have in our congregation Rev. Joe Mohr, who is available to church members for confidential counseling at no cost. Contact Joe directly to schedule (580) 729-0781.

We as the Caring Committee are interested in the joys and sorrows members wish to include in this newsletter. Please contact Magda Garrett at (316) 765-3352 or [magdagarrett@gmail.com](mailto:magdagarrett@gmail.com) to share for the next issue.

Have a terrific first month of Fall.

What touches one of us touches us all.

## Holiday Party Group

- Judy Wherritt

The Holiday Party Group has gone virtual. We'll meet via Zoom on Saturday, October 8, from 7:00 to 8:30 pm., for conversation starting with the theme of Queen vs. the Queen. What is your opinion of Queen Elizabeth II? What is your opinion of Queen, the rock band? What is your opinion of Queen Elizabeth I? After we've exhausted the subject of queens, we'll play a fun virtual game.

Contact the church office, at [office@firstuu.net](mailto:office@firstuu.net) or 316-684-3481, for Zoom information.

## October Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

These members joined First UU Church during the month of October (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: Porter Marshall (27), Jamey Findling (18), Jenny Findling (18), Sheri Barnes (17), Linda Shriver (17), Charlie King (14), Deborah Burnham (9), Connie Pace (7), Eric Ford (7), and Kim Ford (7).

# October 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b> 9:30a Gardening Group
<b>2</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE	<b>3</b> 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	<b>4</b> 4:00p Worship Committee (Z) 7:00p UU Craft Night (Z)	<b>5</b> 7:00p Committee on Ministry (Z)	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 10:00a Caring Committee (+Z) 7:00p Holiday Party Group (Z)
<b>9</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council	<b>10</b> 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	<b>11</b> 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	<b>12</b> 7:00p Membership Committee (Z)	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 12:00p Fridays for the Future	<b>15</b> 7:00p Game Night
<b>16</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explr 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Social Action Com 7:00p Global Learning Ctr	<b>17</b> 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	<b>18</b> 11:30a UU Friends Lunch	<b>19</b> 6:00p Board of Trustees (Z) 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 11:30a Eclectic Readers	<b>22</b> 7:00p UU Humanists (+Z)
<b>23</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Music Committee	<b>24</b> 1:00p Movie Group 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	<b>25</b> 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 7:00p Pagan Circle
<b>30</b> 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE	<b>31</b> 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)			(Z) - Meeting via Zoom (+Z) - Meeting In-Person and via Zoom Call church office at 316-684-4581 for		



### 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

## Meet Anna Jenney, First UU's New Director of Children's Religious Exploration

- Annie Welsbacher

Early in 2022, First UU's longtime Director of Children's Religious Exploration Denise Simon-Jackson announced her retirement after 17 years. Denise nimbly sustained a program that shifted in size and nature through congregational challenges, fluctuations in the numbers of member families, a move to our current location from "the old" church building, and a pandemic.

Now, those big shoes have been ably filled by a new director who has been training for this job for virtually her entire life. Anna Jenney and her sister Zora grew up at First UU the daughters of longtime First UU members Charlie and Melanie Jenney, who are both teachers. Charlie has taught science at Robinson Middle School for many years, and Melanie has teaching gigs alongside work in publishing.

"I started in the nursery at the old building," says Anna. "We had a couple of different teachers when I was really little. My earliest memory is of a cardboard time machine. We learned about people from different eras. But mostly I remember Denise. She was great! I loved our holiday skits and all the music she incorporated."

During summers, when adult volunteer teachers filled in, Anna remembers "guitar lessons and some sign language; we even had bunnies visit the building one time!"

As Anna grew older, she and her peers tackled more complex matters. "My parents volunteered quite a few times, and they ran the teen lessons for a while. That stretch was super impactful. I specifically remember discussing euthanasia around the world and talking about the ethics of it. First UU really gave me the opportunity to consider who I was and what I believed in, spiritual or otherwise."

She remembers posters hung around the church with "the big questions" on them: Is there a God? Is there a heaven? Church members tallied responses, but the final tally "ended up with many words on it, since First UU members seem to have more to say than a tally can represent."

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## From the Worship Committee

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

What is your definition of courage, and how do people become courageous? This October, we will explore the theme of “courage” from different perspectives. Please join us each Sunday as together we grow in courage, spirit, and understanding of one another. We will shift gears at our final service of the month to mark the traditional celebration of Samhain.

Oct. 2: Samuel Paunetto, “*An Abyss Calls Another Abyss*,” Psalm 42:7.

We’re pleased to welcome a new voice to the pulpit this week. Samuel is a school social worker at East High School. His research focuses on addressing racial systemic disparities as a public health issue. This sermon will explore the pains and struggles of the oppressed and the abyss of their despair – but also at the mystery of their courage.

Oct. 9: Andrew Davis, “*The Courage to Grow*.”

Andrew draws from the work of Paul Tillich, an existentialist Protestant theologian, to explore the significance of courage for our lives today. In *The Courage to Be*, Tillich argues that the antidote to a life of anxiety is found in the courage to affirm our right to exist even if that existence is out of step with the majority views of the culture in which we live. This claim is eerily similar to the Unitarian Universalist assertions regarding self-reliance, and both arguments suggest that that courage is most needed to grow and change, rather than defend the status quo.

Oct. 16: Rev. Joe Mohr returns to the pulpit to share his perspective on the subject of courage. Watch the Weekly Update for more information on this week’s presentation.

Oct. 23: Melanie Jenney, “*Ordinary Courage*” by Rev. Gregory Pelley.

Rev. Pelley tells the story of his encounter with a stranger that caused him to overcome his fear of perceived danger and to instead reach out in kindness to ease another’s suffering. His story is juxtaposed with his recounting the story found in Luke 13:10-17 and questioning the meaning given to it by many theologians.

Oct. 30: Linda Jordan, “*Storytelling at Samhain Completes the Circle*.”

Linda will focus on the power of storytelling as a part of Samhain, discussing the importance of passing on family traditions, the way to change them to make them work for changing times without losing their essential nature, and inspiring the young to build on them. Join us this Samhain/ All Souls Day/ Halloween/ Día de los Muertos as we celebrate and remember those who have gone before us – and consider their influences on our lives.



*"Meet Anna Jenney, continued"*

Anna "got to know a lot of the adult members pretty well, too" through Secret Friends, in which children were partnered with adult members, who sent them letters and gifts. "I still have the sock girl one of the members made for me," Anna says. "I think that's one of the things I'd really like to do again, now that I'm the director."

Anna received her B.A. in Elementary Education at the University of Kansas in Lawrence (where she visited the local UU church briefly). She also received an endorsement to teach English Language Learners (students who have a different language background at home), and during college she worked at a daycare/child development center.

"I've wanted to be a teacher ever since I started school," she says. "My dad even got me an outdated overhead projector for my eighth birthday. They set up a classroom for me in the basement and I was always convincing my friends to play school with me. I spent a lot of time in dad's classroom as I grew up. I was even his student for a couple of years. He was such a creative and high-energy teacher, it really made me see that teaching can be a lot of fun. I considered other career paths as I entered college, but quickly realized my heart was in teaching."

At First UU, Anna hopes to incorporate many things she enjoyed growing up, including Secret Friends and arts and crafts. "I'm not nearly as musically inclined as Denise was, so I'm not sure there will be many recitals. I love books. I think they can teach so many good lessons—plus they're great for kids of all ages. I hope to use a lot of literature in my teaching. I also want the kids to have a lot of opportunities to create things." She says she's using the national UU Association's "Soul Matters" package curriculum available to member congregations, but sees it as a launching point rather than a set script for her classes.

"I'm really excited to start this new adventure," Anna says. "First UU was a huge part of helping me establish an understanding of who I am and what I believe. I'm excited to help kids with that same self discovery."



*Anna Jenny*

# First Unitarian Universalist Church

7202 E. 21st  
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*www.firstuu.net*

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## Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

The book discussion group will meet at our regular time, the third Friday, October 21, beginning at 11:30 a.m. for lunch with discussion to follow at 12:00 p.m. Vaccination and masks are required. The book(s) chosen for October are any books of poetry by a woman author. Carol Neighbor, who has a collection of poetry books by women authors, has loaned us various books from her library.

The books are available at the church. Please ask [Anita Culp](#), at [office@firstuu.net](mailto:office@firstuu.net) or 316-684-3481, or [Anne Bailey](#), at [annebailey@earthlink.net](mailto:annebailey@earthlink.net) or 316-650-4905, for a copy.