



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita

Founded 1887

President's Message

- Rachel Rutledge

November 2022

As the weather begins to cool and takes us into fall, our congregation has been blessed with a resolution to our HVAC woes. A longtime member has generously donated the needed funds to repair the HVAC system. It is really a wonderful gift and lifts a great weight off our shoulders. The parts are on order, and they should arrive November 1. I am so thankful that we are going forward with this and already have plans in place for the work to be done. We are truly blessed by this caring donation to our congregation.

The need for a Lobby Manager is stronger than ever. There was an attempted theft of a catalytic converter in our lot last week, and considerable damage was done to the vehicle, although the converter itself was not taken. The theft was stopped in progress by the very brave owner of the car. It's very dismaying that someone would come to First UU with the idea to do such a thing. Obviously, we have more than physical violence for our Lobby Manager to watch for. We may get more car part thieves, which everyone should be on watch for. It's easy to believe that we live in a relative bubble, with no one seeking to harm us, but every once in a while, an incident like this happens, and we have to be wary of what goes on around us.

It's not even Halloween yet, but we are making plans for the winter. The board is looking at snow removal contracts, and others are considering Christmas fundraising opportunities. The holidays will be here before we know it. I just hope that we get our wish to have the community positivity rate of COVID fall below 5 percent for three consecutive weeks so we can have first Sunday lunch again. As of October 21, the community positivity rate is 6.8 percent. Getting closer to our goal! We still need to maintain social distancing and good hygienic habits. Masks are optional but encouraged for those who prefer them. It is so nice to be able to be back in the sanctuary; I know we all remember the long Zoom period. It's good that we still have our services on Zoom, so that everyone can participate. I think we are doing our best to keep moving forward week to week, and we have a lot of people keeping an eye on the future, either monthly,

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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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 to (wo)man our table and before that to help make/create the little ornaments we'll be handing out there. We haven't settled on the actual design yet but expect to 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 whose purpose is to educate and equip local midwives. We think it's a great cause, check it out at <https://alternativegifts.org/giving/gifting/catalog>. Please contact Joe Lozano at tjoe232@gmail.com with any questions or suggestions or just to volunteer. I will update the congregation as we get more information. Thank you!

Membership Committee

- Anne Bailey

The Membership Committee will be offering our Inquirer's Class on Zoom in November. Please call the church office (316) 648-3481 and let Anita know that you wish to attend the class. The Zoom codes will be sent to you by email, text, or phone.

The committee will meet as usual on the second Wednesday, November 9, on Zoom. Please let me know if you would like to attend this meeting by emailing annebailey@earthlink.net or calling (316) 650-4905. We are always looking for additional members to help with this important committee.

November Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

These members joined First UU Church during the month of November (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: Nancy Milner (44), Charles Merrifield (36), Nancy Berube (31), Jennifer Hess (10), Tia Bivens (4), Grant Sutter (3), and Jerri Howell (3).

Ripples from the Caring Committee

- Magda Garrett

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.

The Caring Committee is looking for additional volunteers to assist in transporting church members to and from medical appointments. Contact Jana Rambo at (316) 688-4215 if you can lend a hand.

We continue to send warm wishes, healing thoughts, and positive vibes to those in the congregation facing health issues, and we wish continued good health-both physical and mental-to all church members.

As we move into the upcoming holiday season, it's easy to get caught up and overwhelmed with the many tasks and obligations as we try to make memorable experiences for family and friends. To help minimize the stress of the season, we recommend the following:

- Don't forget yourself:
- Get plenty of rest.
- Don't overindulge (food, alcohol).
- Allow yourself to say NO.
- Reach out to others for support and encouragement.
- Remember you are loved.

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

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

Have a terrific November!

What touches one of us touches us all

Bullet Points from the Board

October 19, 2022

- Fern Van Gieson donated \$10,000 to help pay for the repairs to our HVAC system. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you, Fern!
- As of October 14, the COVID positivity rate has dropped to 6.82 percent. If you haven't had a chance to get the latest booster and you are eligible, please do to help everyone stay safe.
- We still need people to volunteer to make coffee, bring treats, and/or clean up on Sundays. The sign-up sheet is on the island in the kitchen.
- First Sunday lunches will not start until we have two weeks of a 5 percent or less COVID positivity rate.
- If you like the quotes or sayings on the electronic sign in front of the church, Anita will be adding a link on the website to provide you with more information about them.

Deadline for January 2023 Newsletter

- Anita Culp, Office Manager

The deadline for articles and announcements for the January In Touch newsletter will be Wednesday, December 14, 2022. This is a week earlier than the usual third Wednesday deadline. This change is being made so that our newsletter editors won't have to work on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day; as that would be too Scrooge-ish.

November 2022

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



Meet Gabby Garrett

First UU's new Assistant Director of Children's Religious Exploration

- Annie Welsbacher

This summer, First UU hired a new children's religious exploration team. Gabby Garrett is our new Assistant Director of Children's RE. (See the September issue for an introduction to RE Director Anna Jenny.)

Gabby began her journey at First UU during middle school. "The UU Church played a big role in shaping my world views, as my formative and coming-of-age years were spent learning acceptance and valuing others," she says.

She particularly remembers a class project in which students wrote on a board which religions they were especially interested in and wanted to learn about. "The following months, we sat in on church services and had guests come and speak about their beliefs and practices," she says. "It was such an eye-opening moment as an adolescent to see how diverse our community is. It also helped reinforce core UU principles such as the inherent worth and interconnectedness of each human being."

Along with the classes taught by former longtime RE Director Denise Simon-Jackson, Gabby remembers classes taught by First UU congregation members. "Each teacher had different perspectives to offer and interesting stories to tie into their lesson plans," she says.

Gabby earned a BA in history and political science from WSU in 2019. She has been working as a food safety inspector for the Kansas Department of Agriculture. "A major part of my role is educating food service workers on food safety," she says. "Everyone has an individual learning style. For some people, a PowerPoint and book are the best way to learn. Others require a more hands-on approach. Either way, it is so rewarding to teach someone an idea or method of doing something and watch the lightbulb turn on in their head."

Gabby looks forward to teaming up with Anna teaching First UU youth, noting that one benefit for the two of them is that they both grew up in First UU. "We plan on sharing turns leading the lesson plans each week. Once the weather begins to cool, I am also excited to utilize Betty's Place and integrate that area into our lessons."

"I'm excited to work alongside Anna!" Gabby says. "I think her biggest strength is her experience and education teaching children. We both have welcoming and positive personalities, which are important skills when interacting with children, especially children who might be new to the church and RE."

First UU Pagan Circle

- Anne Bailey

We will be meeting on Saturday, December 17, to celebrate Yule a little early. 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 (316) 650-4905 or Linda Jordan (316) 512-6652.

First UU Film Group

- John Findling

For the past few months, the UU Film Group, which meets at 1 pm on the fourth Monday of each month, has been screening movies in person. However, attendance has been very low, and those of us who choose films, publicize the date, and try to come up with interesting things to say about each film, want your input about how we can make this group more relevant to you.

There are countless films that we could show, and we are uncertain about what members of the congregation would like to see. Generally speaking, we have shown older, classic films rather than recently released movies; we have shown documentaries that may have a historic or social justice theme, and we have shown musicals or comedies. What would you like to see? Another idea that has been proposed is to divide the year into three month blocks and show a series of related films in each block. For example, we could devote one block to films by the same director or starring the same actor or actress; another block to comedies from different eras, a third block to films with a strong political message, and a final block to films that one the Best Picture Oscar in various years.

We seek your opinion on these questions in our effort to make the film group more attractive to a larger group of members and friends. If you have any thoughts you would like to share with us, please contact John Findling at jfindlin@ius.edu or Vivien Minshull-Ford at vminshull@gmail.com.

From the Worship Committee

- Kay Davis

Whether we are prepared for it or not, life brings inevitable change. Some changes we choose, while others are thrust upon us when we least expect them, and how we respond can make enormous differences in both our mental health and in the outcome. While the ones we choose may bring us some stress, generally it is good stress because we are intentionally working toward a goal. But what do we do with the changes when we have no choice? Do we accept and passively let them happen? Do we seek to merge the new with the old to create a comfortable pace and outcome? Or do we embrace the change wholly, and regard it as an exciting journey into the unknown? Join us as we explore change and learn how we can meaningfully support each other as we face the changes in our lives.

Nov. 6: Dr. Bob Minor presents “Not All Change Is Progress: Preparing for It Either Way.” Change is inevitable but many changes are not predestined. Most changes involve human choices, some beyond our control. How do we prepare for change in the long run, good or bad? Let’s confront and explore that.

Nov. 13: Lynn Way brings us “The Bigger Yes,” by Rev. Gretchen Haley. Haley looks at the phases of change as described by William Bridges and suggests ways to create “rituals of transition” to help us process and cope with the anxiety created by change.

Nov. 20: Rev. Joe Mohr brings us his insights about navigating change. Watch the Weekly Update for more about this week’s homily.

Nov. 27: Annie Welsbacher presents “Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes” by Rev. Dr. Michelle Collins. Collins, a roller coaster enthusiast, revisits William Bridges’ phases of change to argue that change is like a roller coaster. In fact, she says it can be much like an entire amusement park! Join us for a serious yet light-hearted discussion of how to handle the transitions in our lives.

Snow Days

- Anita Culp, Office Manager

Winter weather in Kansas means the possibility of snow and ice. When the weather is bad, the Board President makes the decision on canceling in-person Sunday services based on the safety of congregants to be out driving and on the weather forecast for Saturday night. The president tries to make the decision no later than mid-Saturday afternoon so there is time to get the word out to congregants. This sometimes means that even though the weather improves Saturday night, the decision 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 they use 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.

As for 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.

Being Wichita Women

- Danielle Ramirez, creator and compiler

The "Being Wichita Women" book project started in 2020, and the book was officially released in June 2022. It is a powerful collection of stories from 30 local women exploring trauma, adversity, resilience, and healing. The vision was to create a space in which dynamic women could experience some degree of healing by sharing a personal story, while highlighting building blocks to resiliency that could have an impact on others in the community. The goals were simple:

- Women use their authentic voice in storytelling.
- Women should have full agency over the stories produced.
- The stories should include diverse voices.
- The stories should be grounded in anti-racism.
- In summary, the stories should result in a book that will inspire, comfort, and connect those who are experiencing hardship or want to have a better understanding of women's struggles.

As stories were being compiled, women had the opportunity to participate in retreat sessions that aided in the healing and writing process. For example, we hosted sessions like Telling Your Authentic Story, The Brain Game (learning about ACEs), Marketing for Success, and Intergenerational Trauma. Licensed art therapist Ellamonique Baccus even led an Art Therapy session!

The contributors wrote about a variety of experiences including housing insecurity, single motherhood, losing loved ones, violence, racism, homophobia, and more. No two stories are alike, and our hope was that no matter a reader's circumstance, they could see themselves in these carefully crafted pages. Some of the anecdotes are heart-wrenching, and others are celebratory in their overcoming of personal struggles.

Being Wichita Women has garnered substantial community support. It is being distributed in five locations in Wichita and online. In addition, the book recently received a Wichita Business Journal "Diversity & Inclusion" award. Nearly 20 percent of sales (which will total about \$7,000) will be funneled back to seven local groups working to improve the community, including Sistahs Can We Talk, ICT Community Fridge, Destination Innovation, AB&C Bilingual Services, Filling the Gap Lunches for Kids, ICT Streets Team, and Storytime Village.

We are changing the narrative of what it means to be a woman in Wichita!

Copies of Being Wichita Women will be on sale at First UU on Sunday, November 20, with 10 percent of the proceeds going back to support the church.

First Unitarian Universalist Church

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Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

The book discussion group will be meeting at our regular time, the third Friday, November 18, beginning at 11:30 for lunch with discussion to follow at 12:00. The book(s) chosen for November are any book or short story by William Faulkner.

Born in 1897, William Cuthbert Faulkner was an American writer known for his novels and short stories set in the fictional Yoknapatawpha County, based on Lafayette County, Mississippi, where he spent most of his life. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1949 and won two Pulitzer Prizes. Faulkner is one of the most celebrated writers of American literature and is considered the greatest writer of Southern literature.

The Wichita Public Library has more than 100 books by and about Faulkner. They are also available from local used bookstores.