



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita
Founded 1887

President's Message

- Rachel Rutledge

December 2022

Upon my usual monitoring for COVID information, I discovered that on the Sedgwick County Covid 19 Dashboard that the Positivity Rate had fallen two weeks in a row, first to 4.99% and now to 5.03%. We are very close to being below 5% positivity rate, we just have to hold below 5% for a few more weeks. This means we can start thinking about First Sunday Lunch again, which makes my heart sing. How I have missed our lush potlucks with so many different kinds of food and great fellowship. I have looked forward to First Sunday Lunch for such a long time, and not only are they a great way to get together, but they do good for the church as well. I just have to hope as we all do that the positivity rate continues to trend downward.

Right now we have a lot of great new people that have come to join us. It is so great to see new people show their interest in our church and nice to see new faces among us. How it warms my heart when I have to really look for a parking space outside because there are so many cars! It's great to see a whole sanctuary of people ready to hear a great message and be with like-minded people.

We are very saddened by the loss of Elaine Edens, which was quite a shock to our congregation recently. Elaine was such a friend to the church and invested so much of herself into our beloved church. I know a lot of you attended her reception and I am so glad she could have services in the church she loved. We will never forget her, and will always remember her gladly.

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

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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

Church Custodian Position Open

Currently the Church Custodian position is open. The pay is \$11.00 an hour, up to ten hours per week. References and background check required. If you are interested please call the Office Manager, Anita Culp, at (316) 684-3481.

Membership Committee

- Anne Bailey

The Membership Committee will again offer our Inquirer's Class on Zoom in January. 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 call.

The Committee will meet as usual on the second Wednesday, December 14, 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.

December Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

This member joined First UU Church during the month of December (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: Rachel Rutledge (17).

Early 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.

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 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 concerns. Reasonable requests for assistance will be accepted and support provided, always contingent on available volunteers to help.

The Caring Committee is always looking for additional volunteers to assist in transporting church members to and from medical appointments. Contact Jana Rambo at (316) 686-4215 if you can lend a hand.

The past month saw the passing of longtime church member Elaine Edens, a loss that has, of course, shaken our congregation. There is an opportunity to process our grief if needed with Rev. Joe Mohr. Please communicate with the caring committee if you are interested in participating in a grief session.

If you find yourself in need this holiday season, be aware of the numerous local charitable organizations with programs to assist. A good place to begin is calling 211 for appropriate resource referral.

Watch for monthly reminders of the UU Friends lunch bunch. Turnouts have been great and the food and fellowship most enjoyable. We meet the third Tuesday of the month.

The church is fortunate to have in our service Rev. Joe Mohr. Rev Mohr is available to church members for confidential counseling at no cost. Contact Joe directly to schedule at (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 to share for the January newsletter.

Peace be with you into the New Year.

What touches one of us touches us all.

Bullet Points from the Board November 16, 2022

- Rachel Rutledge

- The Sedgwick Co. Covid Rate has been at 5 percent for two weeks in a row. If we can go three consecutive weeks, we will start scheduling First Sunday lunches again.
- We need a new custodian to replace Magda Garrett. The pay is \$11.00 an hour up to ten hours a week. If you are interested, please contact Anita Culp at the church office.
- We can still pay our bills.
- The Fundraising Committee will have a Holiday Cookie Drive again this year. See the article in this newsletter for more details.

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-afternoon Saturday 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 our 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.

First UU Pagan Circle

- Anne Bailey

We will meet again on Friday, December 16, to celebrate Yule a little early. This is a change from what was published in the November newsletter. 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.

December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	(Z) - Meeting Zia Zoom (+Z) - Meeting In-Person and Zia Zoom Call church office at 316-684-4581 for Zoom information.			1	2	3 All day - Private Event
4 9:45a Adult Relig Expir (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE	5 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	6 4:00p Worship Committee (+Z) 7:00p UU Craft Night (Z)	7	8	9 12:00p Fridays for the Future	10 3:00p Private Event 7:00p Game Night
11 9:45a Adult Relig Expir 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council 7:00p Global Learning Center (+Z)	12 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	13 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	14 7:00p Membership Committee (Z) 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	15	16 11:30a Eclectic Readers 7:00p Pagan Circle	17 9:00a-5:00p Cookie Sale 7:00p UU Humanists (+Z)
18 9:45a Adult Relig Expir (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Social Action Comm	19 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	20 11:30a UU Friends Lunch	21 6:00p Board of Trustees (Z)	22	23	24
25 9:45a Adult Relig Expir (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's RE	26 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	27 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	28	29	30	31 7:00p New Year's Eve Party (Z)

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

The Caring Committee

- Magda Garrett

This UU ministry group of members of the congregation are among the unsung heroes of the church community, quietly working in the background, yet having a significant impact on the life of the church. During the pandemic when the church was closed, they organized telephone callers to contact everyone in the church directory and ask how people were doing at a time when no one was getting out.

The committee members meet once a month to solve problems and write birthday and other greeting cards. They are the first contacts if a member or friend is ill or has an accident, and they put out a call to church members for food preparation and delivery. They organize memorial services, put out tables and refreshments, and assist with special family requests for flowers and music.

Another important part of this ministry is visiting UU people in nursing homes, occasionally making grocery deliveries, feeding cats, or tidying up – or, in some cases, bringing mystery paperbacks. Committee members provide rides to and from church, or, even more importantly, trips to doctors, specialists, and hospitals. One Caring Committee member coordinates the drivers for health visits, which can number as many as four or five a week.

I count myself as a Caring Committee adjunct member: I help where I can, particularly with rides to dentists, doctors, and pharmacies. I also see daily how the Caring Committee members impact the lives of First UU members, and they have my full admiration.

I am writing to ask for new adjuncts or even new committee members to help with this occasional work. If you feel you would like to help, please contact new directors Magda Garrett, (316) 765-3352, magdagarrett@gmail.com, or Jayne Henry, (316) 204-8287, artjaynehenry@hotmail.com – or catch them after church. You will get to know church members who often don't make it to church, and I have found this part of the job enjoyable.

From the Worship Committee

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

This is a season of celebrations during which we have multiple opportunities to open ourselves up to wonder and awe. As we explore our theme of “Wonder” this month, we encourage us all to take time out to marvel at nature, to enjoy the many religious and cultural celebrations and reflect on their deeper meanings and the commonalities that connect us with each other. May we recapture feelings of childlike awe, wonder, and pure excitement and joy inspired not only by the big things but also in those we are accustomed to think of as mundane.

Please join us for worship each Sunday as we explore “*The Path of Wonder*” and the many ways people experience it.

December 4: Andrew Davis presents “*Wishing for Wonder*.” While mere wishing for something new or better leaves us untethered from reality, wishing for wonder binds us to it. Wonder only emerges when an unexpected reality surprises us.

December 11: Danielle Ramirez and Wichita minister and Community Mobilizer for Safe Streets Wichita Jan Chandler offer a presentation based on their newly published book “*Being Wichita Women*,” a powerful collection of stories written by 30 local women exploring issues women face and expressing wonder at the resilience and healing of women who have experienced trauma and adversity. The book will be on sale in the gathering space following the service.

December 18: Rev. Joe Mohr returns to the pulpit to bring us his views of what inspires wonder. Watch the Weekly Update for more information about this worship service.

December 25: This is called the holiday season for a reason: December is absolutely jam-packed with celebrations. While Christmas is the headline for many, countless winter celebrations abound. Some of the most well-known and oft-celebrated are religious in nature, but a number spring from nature itself, acknowledging the darkest day of the year and the inevitable return of the sun, while others honor cultural traditions. Join us as we talk about some of these other celebrations in story and song.

Music Committee

- Jana Rambo

The Music Committee still has plans to meet with the Worship Committee to discuss how we can work together to improve music in our services. We intended to do so the past two months, but too many members have been unable to attend. We still intend to find a time when we're all available to have this discussion. For more information about this committee, contact Jana Rambo at (316) 992-5528.

UU Holiday Cookie Sale

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

This year's holiday cookie sale is a go! Marcia Ellsworth and I were not sure that all the UU bakers would be up for another sale, so we decided to put it to the vote – and the result was a cookie landslide. We're pricing the boxes at \$20, in line with inflation. The bakers are still deciding on what festive confectionaries they will make this year, and so far, I have heard about ginger snaps, thumbprint cookies, oatmeal scotches, peppermint bark, cheesecake, sugar cookies with painted trees, cheese and chili crackers, chocolate kisses, gumdrop cookies – or just surprises. The sale and pickup time will be Saturday, December 17, 3-5 pm.

You may order your holiday cookies by calling Marcia Ellsworth at (316) 208-3083, Vivien Minshull-Ford at (316) 371-1949, or Anita Culp at (316) 684-3481. All orders must be made by Monday, December 12. Pay in advance at the church or during pickup time. For an extra \$2 charge, your box or boxes can be delivered to your address, but we need to know by Friday, December 16.

Current Art Exhibit at First UU

- Marcia Ellsworth

We are pleased to have well-known Wichita artist Stephen Miner exhibiting his work again at First UU. You might remember his creative, environmentally friendly assemblages from our Ecofest celebrations several years ago. Many of his pieces in the gathering space use recycled materials in unique combinations. The paintings in the sanctuary are interpretations of nature from the many places he has traveled. Stephen has said he chooses his subject matter directly from the everyday world. "I want to 'still' life, freezing a moment in time and elevating the mundane to a higher status," he says. His works have been exhibited in Kansas and Oklahoma and will be on display at our building for the next two months. They will be for sale if you are so inclined. First UU will retain 15 percent of the sales.

Our permanent collection of Hermine Greywall's paintings will remain in storage at the church.

First Unitarian Universalist Church

7202 E. 21st
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www.firstuu.net

Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

The book discussion group will meet at our regular time, the third Friday, December 16, beginning at 11:30 for lunch with discussion to follow at 12:00.

We will be doing something a little different for December. Please come prepared to tell us about your favorite author or your favorite literary genre. Anything from ancient writings to something published last week. Fiction, non-fiction, science fiction, poetry, fantasy, romance, crime or punishment, war or peace. You get the idea – probably something you have already read or about to read. December is always a busy month, so this will give you a little break and give us a chance to know more about your reading preferences.