



# In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of  
Wichita

Founded 1887

## President's Message

- Rachel Rutledge

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January 2023

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Here we are once again in the final days of another holiday season, celebrating the many special days we recognize in our Unitarian Universalist culture. Not just Christmas, but Yule, Channukah, Diwali, and Kwanzaa, among many. I really appreciate the vignettes that have been made in the sanctuary representing the holidays of different faiths in our holiday season. We enjoyed the Holiday Cookie Box fundraiser again this year, spearheaded by Marcia Ellsworth. There were a great variety of treats and cookies in the box, which typically sell out every year. The event netted \$1,062 for the church this year.

On a heavier note, the Sedgwick County Covid Dashboard recently registered 10.1% positivity rate, and we as a church have agreed that if the positivity rate goes above 10% in Sedgwick County, then we will return to wearing masks at church. No one wants to do this, but we may have to return to it. I will be watching the Dashboard closely and will let everyone know if the positivity rate remains above 10 percent.

Also, it's not just Covid we must watch out for. There are many other respiratory diseases going around, including RSV and the flu. During the pandemic, the flu rates have been much lower than in past years, probably because of the widespread use of masks. We may have to once again mask up, not only for ourselves, but also for our friends and our church.

Lastly, we are in the process of hiring a church custodian to fill our vacancy. If you know anyone that might be a good fit, please let us know - a recommendation from a church member is great! If you have anyone in mind, please contact office manager Anita Culp. It is a part time job, paying \$12 an hour, for up to eight hours a week. We are asking interested persons to contact Anita to complete an application and to provide two references. I am hoping that in casting our net widely, we can come up with a great person to help keep our church clean and well cared for.

# 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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(316) 684-3481

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)

## Membership Committee

- Anne Bailey

The Membership Committee will again offer our Inquirer's Class on Zoom in February. 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, January 11, at 7 pm, on Zoom. Please let us know if you would like to attend this meeting by emailing [annebailey@earthlink.net](mailto:annebailey@earthlink.net) or calling (316) 650-4905. We are always looking for additional members to help with this important committee.

## January Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

These members joined First UU Church during the month of January (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: Sally Ross (53), Kent Olmstead (43), Anne Bailey (38), Marcia Ellsworth (20), Corey Swertfager (16), Anne Welsbacher (16), Frank Ruf (14), Kent Rowe (14), Linda Jordan (12), Ellie Shore (3), Kerry Dobbins (3), Lucy Kirkham-Cochener (3), Linda Walter-Swygert (3), and Kirk Mitchell (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 acknowledge and seek to bear witness to the pain. Volunteers associated with the 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. Reasonable requests for assistance will be accepted and support provided, always, contingent on available manpower.

The Caring Committee is 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 New Year can often leave folks with a 'Holiday Hangover.' The family gatherings and friends are gone, the weather can be raw and bleak. Remember to self-care; we must have our own oxygen mask in place before we can give of ourselves to others. Seek professional care as needed by contacting Community Mental Health or a private practice therapist. Call 211 for referral/resource services. Reach out; you are not alone.

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 (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 (316) 765-3352 to share for January.

Peace be with you into this New Year.

What touches one of us touches us all.

## 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 it uses an automated system and the message goes on its 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.

# January 2023

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

### **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)
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## **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—Anne Bailey and Anita Culp  
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

## Double Vision: First UU Art Exhibition

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

Stephen Miner's art deserves careful and mindful scrutiny to receive the utmost benefit – and very rewarding it is. His works treat us to two very different sides of artistic vision. The paintings in the sanctuary are landscapes, demonstrating Stephen's brilliance as a colorist, while in the lobby gallery his work is something else indeed, "the complete opposite of painting."

In neatly framed assemblages, Stephen combines such items as tinted tissue, paper circles, or postage stamps, delicate and subtle, in unique combinations. As Stephen says, "found objects" provide a full expression within enigmatic representations. Marbles become planets; the clear blue is now sky; dice evoke luck; maps become destinations to be transported to. Those marbles can also roam free like stars in the night sky, set in motion by the viewer handling the piece and becoming part of the kinetic composition. The marbles can become game-like, theaters, or stage sets, where objects are metamorphosed into childhood pastimes.

Making marks with brush or pencil is now reduced to inked stamps from the alphabet. Space can be static as if in a timeless realm. Or things move at the lightest touch like notes flying off into the air. Or based on memories from some time capsule cloaking its known identity for a new one that becomes a matter of guesswork. An image of the viewer trapped in the mirrors captures the gaze – and you become a part of the piece and likewise the composition. "By using found objects, I'm deliberately diverting from the traditional art style of formalism. Instead, I am evolving from Post-War surrealism."

John Ciardi once said, "Anything looked at closely is worth looking at." That's the best clue to finding the humor, humanity, and mysteries contained in Stephen Miner's work. He has exhibited widely throughout the Midwest and been awarded many times for graphics, photography, and painting.

We are very proud to be exhibiting Stephen's work until the end of January. It will be followed by Skyler Lovelace's House Party show, currently at CityArts.

## From the Worship Committee

- Anne Bailey, Linda Jordan, Vivien Minshull-Ford,  
Charles Merrifield, and Marcia Ellsworth

The Worship committee is undergoing a change in membership as we begin the new year. Kay Davis and Rebecca Veron are leaving, and we are pleased to be joined by Vivien Minshull-Ford, Charles Merrifield, and Marcia Ellsworth, who will bring new energy and creative ideas to our worship services beginning in January. In addition, Anita Culp will be functioning as an ad hoc member to assist us with formatting the documents we produce for each service, and Debbie Wadman will continue to assist with proofreading our work.

The theme we'll explore in worship and Children's Religious Exploration this coming month is "Finding Our Center," and we're working on bringing you services to help us do just that. We hope you'll join us each week as we explore how to get in better touch with our inner selves.

January 1: Melanie Jenney will present "*From Shell to Core*" by Rev. Karen Anderson. What is the difference between making New Year's resolutions and setting goals? Rev. Anderson will lead us on a journey of self-discovery interspersed with her insights from various movies she especially loves.

January 8: Dan DeMott brings us "*Centering the Soul*" by the late Rev. Mark Peters Ward in which we hear about Ward's earliest experience with finding his center and reflect on our own. How do we get unstuck from the "mire of doubt and despair" that damages us and the earth and regain a sense of wholeness or integrity through the inner work of finding our center?

January 15: The Rev. Joe Mohr will share his views on this month's theme. Watch the weekly Update, social media, and the church website for more information.

January 22: We hope to feature guest speaker Dr. Greg Smith from Friends University. Alternatively, Lynn Way will present "*Be Here Now*," a homily by Rev. Lyn Cox. What can we learn about returning to mindfulness, or centering ourselves after trying to tame a litter of kittens? Join us to find out.

January 29: Linda Jordan gives us "*In Defense of Imbalance*" by Rev. Douglas Taylor. Most of us strive to keep each of the aspects of our lives in balance, but why do we often regard imbalance as a bad thing? Are there times when allowing our lives to become out of balance is necessary and good for us? What might happen if we fail or fall short?



## Ozymandias

Percy Bysshe Shelley - 1792-1822

I met a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

# First Unitarian Universalist Church

7202 E. 21st  
Wichita, KS 67206

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

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## Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

The book discussion group will meet at our regular time, the third Friday, January 20, beginning at 11:30 am for lunch, with discussion to follow at 12:00 pm.

The book chosen for January is *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry*, by Gabrielle Zevin. An utterly delightful novel of love and second chances, this book deals with a middle-aged bookseller mourning his lost wife, a feisty publisher's rep, and a charmingly precocious abandoned child who come together on a small island off the New England coast. When his most prized possession, a rare collection of Poe poems, is stolen, bookstore owner A. J. Fikry begins isolating himself from his friends, family, and associates before receiving a mysterious package that compels him to remake his life.

Copies of the book borrowed from the Park City Library will be available at the church. It is also available from the Wichita Public Library. Please speak to Anita Culp or Anne Bailey if you would like to borrow a copy.