



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita
Founded 1887

February 2023

President's Message

- Rachel Rutledge

As we begin a New Year, we still have the presence of COVID among us, and unfortunately it still dictates much of our functioning as a community. The COVID positivity rate has gone down below 10 percent for three weeks in a row, so masks are now optional, and we are allowing coffee and snacks again at church. This could be temporary if the positivity rate goes up again, so we are always on the watch. We need to enjoy what we can when we can. I know the mood at church is greatly uplifted when we can enjoy simple pleasures like coffee and cookies. At this time, we have made no decision on when we can provide a proper First Sunday Lunch again. The standards are higher for First Sunday Lunches, as we require the COVID rate to be below five percent for three consecutive weeks before we can resume them. We will have a lunch just as soon as those requirements are met.

We have hired a new custodian, Laurel Keating, who will start with us next week. We are so glad to have help with cleaning the church again! We look forward to working with Laurel. We recently bought a new vacuum cleaner as well, so we are well equipped.

We will have our Mid-Year Meeting on February 19. You will get all the information we have about how the church and its committees are functioning and what the remainder of the church year has in store for us. We look forward to seeing you there.

In Touch

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

www.firstuu.net

Member

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

Membership Committee

- Anne Bailey

The purpose of this committee is to promote and develop the growth of church membership and to strengthen and sustain current membership. The Membership Committee is an important part of the First UU's ministry.

This Committee prepares permanent name tags for new members and regular attendees who request them and has temporary name tags available for new people and visitors. This committee presents a class for prospective members. This year we are currently holding our classes on Zoom.

The Membership Committee is responsible for seeing that there are people to greet visitors each Sunday morning. We are always looking for new people to perform this vital function. Please talk to Anne Bailey or Anita Culp about getting on the schedule to be a greeter or to join this committee. We plan to meet once again on Zoom on the second Wednesday, February 8. Please call the church office at (316) 685-3481 and ask for the time of the meeting and Zoom information.

February Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

These members joined First UU Church during the month of February (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: Marsha Diggs (26), Mike Diggs (25), Carna Michelle Yipe (15), Caroni Lombard (14), Clyde Rob Williams (13), Rolando Gomez (9), Ned Lakin (7), Holger Meyer (7), Holly Terrill (7), Joe Lozano (6), Lynn Kientz (5), Mitch Kientz (5), and Danielle Ramirez (3).

“Sometimes All You Need is a Little Nudge”

- Marcia Ellsworth
First UU Social Action Committee

Did you know that First UU composts its food waste as a part of its ongoing effort to support environmental reform? For the past three years, we have collected two buckets full of leftover food scraps weekly. It has then been picked up by Compost ICT or Serenity Farms. Both did a great job but have had to close their businesses. Nudge compost is now serving the same customers and has begun picking up our UU buckets on Fridays. Fortunately, they have agreed to do this for close to the same cost as before. By continuing this service, we hope to encourage our congregation to be aware of the importance of decreasing waste and turning what we do have into reusable compost.

Nudge compost believes that sometimes all we need is a “little nudge” and has dedicated their business to bring communities together and improve the health of Wichitans. Jesse Marks, the owner, started Nudge Compost a few years ago after completing a Masters in Public Administration. His final research paper was on food insecurity in Wichita. He says he learned about reducing food waste at the source, recovering edible food to reroute to food banks, and using waste for animal feed. Compost collected by Nudge is turned into power-packed soil at Wichita Dirt Co. They then make compost available to customers and donate to community gardens and area schools. Jesse admits that he may be an idealist but believes that a composting program has the power to bring about important change. We need more people like Jesse to make this world a better place! If you would like to know more about Nudge Compost or subscribe to their services at your home, you can email him at nudgecompost@gmail.com. Nudge also provides a self-service drop-off at minimal cost.

In the meantime, we need more volunteers to help pay for this service. First UU depends on generous members to donate to this cause. Jesse has given the church a discount, and if you are interested in continuing this service, you can help by donating all or a part of the \$65 for three months of service. This will help defray the cost for two five-gallon buckets to be picked up each week. Just let the church office know. For the past three years, about six people have taken on the cost because they believe in the cause and because donating gives those members the right to bring their compost to the church! When the church feels it is safe to start First Sunday Lunches again, there will be plenty of compost generated in the building for the two buckets to be filled. In the meantime, supporting this effort promotes our church values.

There have been a few changes to what is accepted by Nudge Compost. I have posted signs above the sinks in the kitchen. For the time being, they cannot accept meat/bones/or dairy. Plate scrapings, vegetables, breads, grains, and plant clippings are acceptable. If you have questions, call Marcia Ellsworth at (316) 208-3083.

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. Reasonable requests for assistance will be accepted and support provided, always, contingent on available manpower.

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.

At the end of 2022, our church lost two beloved congregants, Kathleen McGee and Paula Peare. We wish to extend deepest condolences to the family and friends of Kathleen and Paula.

The Caring Committee maintains a small emergency fund used to provide cash assistance to church members in need. In addition, a person in need may show up at our front door. We usually give them a Dillons gift card. If anyone is able to donate any amount of cash or a Dillons card, these will be distributed as needed. The Caring Committee is a good steward of your donation. Thank you in advance; you may donate through the church office.

Watch for monthly reminders of 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 that members wish to include in this newsletter. Please contact Magda Garrett (316) 765-3352 to share for March.

What touches one of us touches us all.

February 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 7:00p Pagan Circle
5 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service (+Z) 11:00a Children's RE	6 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	7 4:00p Worship Committee (Z) 7:00p UU Craft Night (Z)	8 7:00p Membership Committee (Z)	9 6:30p Sierra Club Meeting	10 12:00p Fridays for the Future	11 10:00a Caring Committee (+Z) 2:00p Private Event 7:00p Holiday Party Group (Z)
12 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service (+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Leadership Council	13 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	14 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	15 6:00p Board of Trustees (Z) 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	16	17 11:30a Eclectic Readers	18 9:30a Gardening Group 7:00p Game Night
19 9:45a Adult RE (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service (+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p MidYear Meeting (+Z) 6:30p Global Learning Center (+Z)	20 Office Closed 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	21 11:30a UU Friends Lunch	22	23	24	25 7:00p UU Humanists (+Z)
26 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service (+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 12:15p Music Committee	27 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	28 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry			(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 Religious Exploration—Frank Ruf	Aesthetics—TBD
Building & Grounds—Bruce Roby (Building) and Anita Culp (Grounds)	
Caring—Jayne Henry and Magda Garrett	Children's Religious Exploration—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
Leadership Council—Ned Lakin	Librarian—Nancy Milner
Membership—Anne Bailey	Music—Jana Rambo
Nominating—Dan DeMott, Corey Swertfager, and Melanie Jenney	
Partner Church—Debbie Wadman	Personnel—TBD
Social Action—Ellie Shore	Stewardship—Ned Lakin
Worship—Shared leadership	
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
4th 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 and Linda Jordan	Zen Friends of Wichita—Bob Feleppa and Vivien Minshull-Ford

STAFF

Custodian—Laurel Keating
Office Manager—Anita Culp
Pastoral Care—Joe Mohr
Director of Children's Religious Education—Anna Jenney

Bullet Points from the Board

January 18, 2023

- Andrew Davis

- Masks are optional at Church starting January 22. We will start serving coffee and treats as well.
- We have hired Laurel Keating to be our new custodian. Welcome, Laurel. We will try to be neat.
- We can still pay our bills.
- The board will be holding a planning retreat this spring to think about ways to increase community connections within the congregation. COVID has made it difficult for people to get involved and feel connected, and we want to do something about that. Stay tuned for more information.

From the Worship Committee

- Anne Bailey, Kay Davis, Marcia Ellsworth, Melanie Jenney, Linda Jordan, Charles Merrifield, Vivien Minshull-Ford, Debbie Wadman, and Annie Welsbacher

Love is February's theme for Sunday worship services and Children's RE. Although Hallmark and other commercial enterprises have linked the February occasion of Valentine's Day with romantic love (and the purchase of merchandise and food they've deemed required to show it), the entity we call love has many dimensions. The February presentations offer four explorations of the topic. Please join us.

February 5: Melanie Jenney will present "*Love 2.0*" by Rev. Kaaren Anderson, Interim Minister at the UU Fellowship of Vero Beach, Florida. Anderson discusses and argues for us to change our view of love from one in which we think of it as a special connection with "one special person" to any moment "where we are given the gift of being pulled out of our isolation into a connection with someone else." She recounts her time at First Unitarian in Rochester, New York, and learning from the interpreters hired to accommodate their growing deaf ministry to arrive at her conclusions about changing the way we all think about love.

February 12: Debbie Wadman will present "*Tough Love Saves Us All*" by Rev. Gretchen Haley, co-minister for the Foothills Unitarian Church in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Haley states that "Unlike partial communities that seek to put limits around love or duty, the Beloved Community is that community that keeps drawing the circle wider and wider still. It is a loyalty that is based not in our sameness, but to the Love that holds us across our differences." She encourages us "to call this love holy, to pledge our allegiance to it, which in turn requires a critical awareness of our own tribe, and our own trauma."

February 19: Rev. Joe Mohr will present "*Love Me More*." Sam Smith is a prominent figure in the queer movement across many cultures. His prolific song "Love Me More" speaks to the pain of self-acceptance that many face daily. Mohr observes that he often finds himself listening to this song to bolster himself to face every day's challenges. This Sunday, Joe delves into the notion of self-love and how it contributes to the overall self-satisfaction we feel in our day-to-day lives.

February 26: Vivian Minshull-Ford will present "*Go To Bed Angry*" by Rev. Emilie Boggis, co-minister at Beacon UU Congregation in Summit, New Jersey. Boggis explores what makes relationships grow and last and what makes them fail. She then generalizes these behaviors to our relationships in the world at large, and what we can do individually to make this a better world. Boggis wrote this sermon in response to the theme of "Loving the Hell Out of the World" used a few years ago.

First UU Pagan Circle

- Anne Bailey

We will meet on Saturday, February 4, beginning at 7:00 p.m., to celebrate Imbolc, a bit late. We hope 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.

Holiday Party Group

- Judy Wherritt

The Holiday Party Group has gone virtual. We will meet via Zoom, on Saturday, February 11, from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Come and go as you please. Conversations dealing with the theme of "Random Acts of Kindness" day will frame the discussion. Have you received an act of kindness? Have you given acts of kindness? Who created the phrase "Milk of Human Kindness"?

Once we've milked our theme for every drop of kindness, we'll play a fun virtual game. Please contact the church office for Zoom information.

First Unitarian Universalist Church

7202 E. 21st
Wichita, KS 67206

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Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

The book discussion group will meet at our regular time, the third Friday, February 17, beginning at 11:30 a.m. for lunch with discussion to follow at 12:00 p.m.

The book chosen for February is *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain. She argues that we dramatically undervalue introverts and shows how much we lose in doing so. Passionately argued, superbly researched, and filled with indelible stories of real people, *Quiet* has the power to permanently change how we see introverts and how they see themselves.

Copies of the book borrowed from the Wichita Public Library will be available at the Church. Please speak to Anita Culp at (316) 685-3481 or Anne Bailey at (316) 650-4905 if you would like to borrow a copy.