



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita
Founded 1887

President's Message

- Rachel Rutledge

March 2023

February is a short month, but there has been a lot going on. February is Black History Month, and it features St. Valentine's Day, President's Day, and often the dead of winter. However, we have some good news here at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita! It has been decided by the Board and the good souls who are known as the Kitchen Mavens to bring back First Sunday Lunch.

Our first lunch technically will not be a "First Sunday" Lunch because it will be on the second Sunday – a Welcome Back Lunch – on Sunday, March 12. There is a lot of reasoning behind our decision. Our members and visitors have been very compliant with masking and distancing, and we have been very conscientious about following Covid rules. Our trial runs of cookies and coffee after the services have gone very well. We have also had good luck with food service at the recent memorial services.

All of that weighed in the decision, and it was decided that it was best for our church, best for our fellowship, and best for us as people to get back to our beloved First Sunday Lunches. I look forward to March 12 and am so happy that we have reinstated this lovely event.

It is that time of year again when we start to talk about our congregation's financial situation and financial health. A Stewardship Committee is forming, and it will soon be time to turn in your pledge forms with your pledge amount.

The church has taken several financial blows in the past few years with the loss of many members who contributed substantially. It is very important to pledge, and the church needs as much financial help as it can get. We are trying to do many things with a limited number of members to draw from. Thankfully we have gained quite a few new members, and we are always looking for more to join us. Please be thinking about your pledge.

In Touch

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

www.firstuu.net

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Unitarian Universalist Association

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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



"House Party," featuring works by Skyler Lovelace, is the new exhibit at First UU.

UU Artspeak: Skyler Lovelace and Stephen Miner

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

New Exhibit: House Party, the works of Skyler Lovelace

Skyler Lovelace is a long-time member of First UU, dating back to the days when the church was located in the Fairmount neighborhood. She is a visual artist and writer who “combines paints, pixels, and words so that they work and play together.”

The House Party project began two years ago, when people were self-isolating and spending more time at home and interacting with the objects in their homes. As Skyler puts it, “My home, built in 1914, exemplifies solid American Four Square design: it was a good place to weather the pandemic storm, in part because the art of local artists decorates my home. Research suggests that looking at art lights up the same areas of the brain that light up when we’re looking at people. So: spending time with my small collection of art was like a house party, at least as far as my brain was concerned.”

If the pandemic had permitted, Skyler says, she might have had all the artists on her walls over for a party. Instead, she began making paintings that responded to what their work said to her. She painted portraits of her house inspired by their styles. This combination of a new visceral and intellectual pandemic-borne appreciation of her house and homage to the work of a dozen local artists is what you will see in her exhibit, which runs until April 5. Skyler will appear in a question-and-answer session following the service on March 5. Coffee and snacks will be available.

To enrich your experience of looking at Skyler’s art, you can read more and check out her electronic Flipbook of the exhibit and its inspiration through a link on her website. Go to SkylerLovelace.com and select House Party under the “artwork” pulldown menu.

Related appearance: Ernie Kind

House Party was mounted by Skyler and Ernie S. Kind, former member of First UU, widow of UU member Fred de Witt, and curator of the church art gallery. Ernie, a fiber artist, will express his true voice through his work in a joint Faculty Artist talk with Adelia Wise at 11:15 a.m. on Wednesday, March 22 at the Ulrich Museum on the WSU campus.

Current Exhibit: Works by Stephen Minor

Stephen Miner’s gorgeous landscapes now on display in the church sanctuary will remain until he needs them. All his works are for sale. Contact Marcia Ellsworth, (316) 208-3083, or Vivien Minshull-Ford, (316) 371-1949, for prices. The church retains a portion of the sales, so everyone wins.

All art matters, exhibits, promotion, and sales are under the auspices of the Fundraising Committee. Its members are Marcia Ellsworth and Vivien Minshull-Ford.

March Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

These members joined First UU Church during the month of March (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: Sigrid Trombley (37), Lila Arnold (22), Peter Ninemire (22), Melanie Jenney (19), Jana Rambo (14), Miranda Crouse (14), Vivien Minshull-Ford (14), and Billie Knighton (6).

Membership Committee

- Anne Bailey

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

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 is the committee that presents the Inquirer's Class for prospective members; this year we are holding our classes on Zoom. We hope to be able to present it again in March. If you are interested in joining our congregation to sign up for the class, please call the office at the number provided below.

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 LaRilla Combs about getting on the schedule to be a greeter or to join this committee. We plan to meet again on Zoom on the second Wednesday, March 8. Please call the church office, (316) 685-3481, and ask for the time of the meeting and the Zoom information.

Midyear Meeting

-Rolando Gomez

The Midyear meeting was held on February 19th, after Sunday service. A budget was presented, proposed and adopted by the membership.

March 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	(Z) - Meeting via Zoom (+Z) - Meeting In-Person and via Zoom Call church office at 316-684-4581 for Zoom information.					
5 9:45a Adult Relig Exp (+Z) 11:00a Sunday Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's Relig Ex 12:15p Art Reception	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	10 12:00p Fridays for the Future	11 10:30a Caring Committee (+Z)
12 DST starts 9:45a Adult Relig Exp (+Z) 11:00a Sunday Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's Relig Ex 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 Holiday Party Group (Z)
19 9:45a Adult Relig Exp (+Z) 11:00a Sunday Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's Relig Ex 12:15p Social Action Comm 6:30p Global Learning Center	20 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	21 11:30a UU Friends Lunch	22 2:00p Pagan Circle	23	24	25 6:30p UU Humanist Group (+Z)
26 9:45a Adult Relig Exp (+Z) 11:00a Sunday Service(+Z) 11:00a Children's Relig Ex 12:15p Music Committee	27 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	28 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	29	30	31	



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, and 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

Personnel—TBD

Social Action—Ellie Shore

Stewardship—Ned Lakin

Worship—Anne Bailey

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 Exploration—Anna Jenney

Bullet Points from the Board

February 15, 2023

- Andrew Davis

- GREAT NEWS! We will have a special Welcome Back Lunch on Sunday, March 12. We are welcoming Sunday Lunches back into our lives for anyone who would like to sit, eat, talk, and enjoy time with other like-minded folk.
- MORE GREAT NEWS! First Sunday Lunches as a regular part of our community fellowship will begin Sunday, April 2.
- We can still pay our bills.
- We have done a wonderful job of stepping up both to meet both emergencies (i.e., fixing the air conditioning) and to fill in the gap created by the untimely deaths of a few long-term members. Please keep up with your pledges so we can keep our community strong.

Music Committee

- Jana Rambo

Carol Neighbor will perform special music, including Irish tunes, at the March 26 service. The Music Committee is lining up additional people for future performances. We also are giving consideration to the hymns we use, and we continue to look for a song leader for services. If you would like to help with song-leading or with special music, please contact me at (316) 992-5528.

From the Worship Committee

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

Vulnerability is the March theme for Sunday worship services and Children's RE. What are the risks of hiding our fears and vulnerabilities? What rewards await us if we turn to face them, and what tools can help us learn how to do this? These are among questions to be explored this month as we investigate the tender topic of vulnerability.

March 5: Annie Welsbacher will present "*Embodied Grief*," by Sandra Fees, minister for the UU Church of Berks County in Reading, Pennsylvania. All too often, individual responses to pain – whether physical, spiritual, or emotional – manifest as flight, fight, or avoidance responses. What would happen if we faced our pain head on and asked others for help instead?

March 12: Holly Terrill will present "*The Value of Vulnerability*," by Rev. Jonalu Johnstone, recently retired from the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan up the road in Kansas, is currently Co-Lead Interim Minister of Reflection & Discovery at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin, Texas. When we repeatedly resist sharing what we are feeling or who we really are, when we ignore our need to express grief or deny an important part of our lives, we lose our authenticity and our personal identity. Presenting ourselves as invulnerable risks our own health when the stress finds alternate expressions. But we also risk the larger body – the community – when we disconnect from others in this way. When we allow our vulnerabilities to show, we create real community and closeness to others.

March 19: Rev. Joe Mohr will present "*Who Am I?*" Imposter syndrome is a psychological occurrence that has seen an uptick in popularity alongside things like quiet quitting and dissociative disorders. The Covid pandemic has disrupted many social norms, and in the absence of safety, many people have engaged in creative ways of coping in this overwhelming setting. Imposter syndrome asks, Do you feel as if you're making it up as you go? Do you feel as if you must hide the fact that you are a fraud? Fear and insecurity cause us to bluff our way through many situations. However, if we take the time to practice vulnerability, we might come to find that we are not alone in this phenomenon. By stepping out from behind our facade of competence, we can take back control of our own lives and remove the burden of knowing more than we do.

March 26: Charles Merrifield will host and moderate "*The Power of Vulnerability*," a TED Talk by Brené Brown that was presented in Houston in June 2010, followed by congregational sharing about the ideas discussed in the presentation.

First UU Pagan Circle

- Anne Bailey

We will meet on Wednesday, March 22, beginning at 2:00 pm to celebrate the Spring Equinox with a special drum circle. Bring your drums or other rhythm instruments and plan to join us in singing and chanting. If you have questions, please call Anne Bailey at (316) 650-4905 or Linda Jordan at (316) 512-6652.

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.

The Caring Committee continues to need 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 Caring Committee maintains a small emergency fund used to provide cash assistance to church members in need. In addition, a person in need may occasionally show up at our front door. For them we usually provide a Dillons gift card. If you are able to donate cash or a gift card, it will be distributed as needed. The Caring Committee is a good steward of your donation. You may donate through the church office, and the committee thanks you in advance.

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, who is available to church members for confidential counseling at no cost. Contact Joe directly to schedule an appointment at (580) 729-0781.

Members of 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 March.

First Unitarian Universalist Church

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Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

The book discussion group will meet at our regular time, the third Friday, March 17, beginning at 11:30 am for lunch with discussion to follow at 12:00 pm.

The book chosen for March is the 2014 graphic memoir of American cartoonist and author Roz Chast, Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant? The book is about Chast's parents in their final years. Her father, George, died at the age of 95, and her mother, Elizabeth, who worked as an assistant elementary school principal, died at the age of 97. The author derived the book's title from her parents' refusal to discuss their advancing years and infirmities. Chast's cartoons have appeared in The New Yorker magazine since 1978. The book was appreciated for showcasing Chast's talent as a cartoonist and storyteller. It received several awards and was a number-one New York Times Bestseller.

Roz Chast will speak at various locations in Wichita and Kansas in March and April. Visit wichitalibrary.org/Events and search for "Roz Chast".

Seven copies of the book, donated by the NEA Big Read Wichita, will be available at the church. Please speak to Anita Culp, at (316) 684-3481, or Anne Bailey, at (316) 650-4905, if you would like to have a copy. Additional copies will be available through the Wichita Public Library.