



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita
Founded 1887

President's Message

- Rachel Rutledge

May 2023

So far we have had an easy Spring, with so much going our way. Our Covid numbers have been consistently down for many weeks. We haven't had a lot of severe weather. Winter has not hung on exceptionally long. We've had flowers, buds, grasses, and greenery to brighten our days lately. The wind has been exceptionally trying, though. It does remind us that we live in Kansas. All of this has not stopped our activity one bit. Our services have been consistently good, and we have had a Welcome Back Lunch and a First Sunday Lunch, both of which were major successes. I am so glad to see the church back in the swing of things. It is so good to see so many people whom we haven't seen in person since the beginning of the pandemic, and so many people we haven't seen without masks in a while. With the Covid rate at 6.6 percent as of this writing, we can look forward to more in-person activity. Our next potluck lunch will be a week later than usual because of the garage sale, on Sunday, May 14, which is also Mother's Day.

Our latest endeavor is the Whopper Garage Sale. It should be just as big as our last garage sale, which netted about \$4,000 for the church. There will be many different things for sale – books, kitchen gadgets, china, art, clothing, and much more. We need many people to help with sorting, pricing, staffing the checkout table, and helping customers. It is a ramshackle symphony of people working together that makes an event like this so successful. It is May 4, 5, and 6. You may drop off goods for the sale at the church between April 30 and May 3. See the article on the sale elsewhere in the newsletter for more details.

General Assembly (GA) is coming up, too, June 21-25 in Pittsburgh. This year there is also an online option, where you can attend workshops and events virtually. There are a lot of new things going on and so much to learn and so many people to talk to. Our church is allowed four delegates to GA, and the fee for online participation is \$300. The church may be able to assist with fees.

Continued on page 2

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

Office Manager:

office@firstuu.net

(316) 684-3481

Anita Culp

M, Tu, & Th: 9:30am - 2:00pm

W & F: 1:00 - 5:00pm

Director of Religious

Exploration:

Anna Jenney

anna.jenny@gmail.com

Newsletter Staff

Copy Editor: John Findling

jfindlin@ius.edu

Layout Editor:

Rolando Gomez

shadoe7@mac.com

The deadline for In Touch and for the monthly calendar is the third

Wednesday of each month.

Please send submissions to

jfindlin@ius.edu

May Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

These members joined First UU Church during the month of May (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: Ellen Oberle (22), Lara Pollock (22), Debbie Wadman (19), Dan DeMott (14), Magda Garrett (12), Masud Chand (8), Doug Wilson (7), Ed McCormack (5), Janelle McCormack (5), and Celestra Snyder (5).

President's Message, continued

The in-person fee to go to GA is \$500, plus lodging, airfare, local transportation, and meals, which the church cannot subsidize; however, the church might be able to pay a portion of the GA fee. Please see me, Rachel Rutledge, if you are interested in attending General Assembly this year.

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.

The committee will probably present an Inquirer's Class for prospective members in May; the date has not been set. If you are interested in joining our congregation, please call the church office at (316) 685-3481 to sign up for the class.

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 at (316) 650-4905 or LaRilla Combs at (316) 559-4478 about getting on the schedule to be a greeter.

Our Upcoming Whopper Garage Sale Thursday to Saturday, May 4-6.

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

We hope that the recent warm weather has brought on thoughts of spring cleaning and putting aside items to donate. As the event is just two weeks away, it's time for encouragement and an update on deadlines and other useful information.

You can bring donations to the church following the service on Sunday, April 30, from 1 to 3 pm.

On Monday, May 1, you can bring donations to the church during office hours: 11 am-2 pm or by appointment: call Marcia Ellsworth at (316) 208-3083 or Vivien Minshull-Ford at (316) 371-1949.

On Tuesday, May 2, donations may be delivered all day and in the evening by appointment. On Wednesday, May 3, we will have volunteers on hand from 9 am to 5 pm to receive donations.

We are hoping for books, household goods, clothing, furniture, toys, electronics, art – any items that are clean and in reasonably good condition. We will also have plants and baked goods for sale. If you would like to bake something, please call Debbie Wadman, (316) 351-3359. We still need volunteers to help with every stage of the event, from heavy lifting (sorry!) to sorting, pricing, and displaying – and most importantly, for the cleanup and getting the sanctuary ready for the Sunday service.

Call Vivien or Marcia to sign up. Hint: don't pick a task that is too strenuous for you. Above all, it should be fun, pizza and refreshments will be involved – and you'll be doing a marvelous thing for First UU.

Stewardship Campaign 2023-24

- Ned Lakin, Anne Bailey, Charles Merrifield, Bruce Roby and Annie Welsbacher

Thank you to the followup-caller volunteers who met April 18 to contact First UU members and friends about pledging for the 2023-24 fiscal year. We had a good turnout, with lots of enthusiasm and good ideas.

And thank you to those of you who have already pledged. For those of you who haven't pledged, our friendly volunteers will be contacting you to discuss your pledges and your ideas for the church as we grow into the future. Remember, we can't prioritize our spending needs until we know how much to spend – and we can't have that information until all of us have pledged. We are approaching the half-way mark to meet our tentative budget, and about one third of us have pledged. That puts us behind where we were at this time last year, in terms both of dollars and number of people.

Please get pledge forms into us by May 1 so that the finance team has time to prepare the proposed budget before the May board meeting. We will all vote on the final proposed budget at the annual meeting early this summer.

UUA General Assembly in June

- Corey Swertfager

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through the democratic process: our fifth principle in action. This year's GA is taking place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 21-25. Anyone may attend, in person or online. First UU is eligible to have four voting delegates this year.

Important votes for delegates will be cast in June: election of a new, six-year-term UA President, who for the first time in recent history is running unopposed; extensive changes to the UUA bylaws, which include a revamping of our UU Seven Principles and transformation of our Living Tradition sources into a statement of Inspirations; approval of a Statement of Conscience, and some Responsive Resolutions. (You'll hear more about what all that means in the near future.)

Register for reduced rates (\$500 in-person, \$300 online; other rates are available) by May 15 at www.uua.org/ga. Stayed tuned for more information via in-person gatherings, Weekly Update, and social media. If you are interested in being a delegate, contact First UU President Rachel. If you would like to help us prepare for GA, contact Corey Swertfager at bikercorey@gmail.com or (316) 209-5177.

Bullet Points from the Board

April 19, 2023

- Andrew Davis

- Stewardship Campaign: we currently have 24 pledges for a total commitment of \$49,000.00. This is about half of the total we need to keep the church going with the current services. If you have not yet made a pledge, a member of the church will be contacting you to discuss your possible pledge for the upcoming year.
- We currently have enough money to pay our bills.
- The Sunday Lunch for May will be moved to the second Sunday, May 14. The garage sale leads up to the first Sunday and we want to give everyone volunteering to help a chance to both rest and have a good meal. We will return to the regular first Sunday lunch for June.

First UU Pagan Circle

- Anne Bailey

For the May meeting date for the Pagan Circle, please check the weekly church newsletter, Update, or call Anne Bailey at (316) 650-4905 or Linda Jordan at (316) 512-6652.

Holiday Party Group

- Anita Culp

The Holiday Group will meet in person at the church on Monday, May 29, at 5:30 pm, with a potluck dinner set for 6:00 pm. You are cordially invited to kick off the summer with the party group and its great company and a potluck dinner. Please bring a covered dish to share, and after dinner, we'll play games!

May 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 9:30a - 2:00p Garage Sale drop-offs	2 9:30a - 2:00p Garage Sale drop-offs 7:00p Craft Night (Z)	3 9:30a - 5:00p Garage Sale drop-offs and Setup and Pricing	4 9:00a - 5:00p Garage Sale	5 9:00a - 5:00p Garage Sale	6 9:00a - 1:00p Garage Sale 1:00 - 4:00p Cleanup
7 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 11:00a Sunday Service	8 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	9 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	10 7:00p Membership Committee (Z)	11 7:00p Leadership Council (Z)	12 12:00p Fridays for the Future	13 10:00a Caring Committee
14 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 11:00a Sunday Service 12:15p First Sunday Lunch 6:30p Global Learning Ctr	15 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	16 11:30a UU Friends Lunch	17 6:00p Board of Trustees (Z) 11:00p Newsletter and Calendar Deadline	18	19 11:30a Eclectic Readers	20
21 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 11:00a Sunday Service 12:15p Social Action Committee	22 1:00p Film Group 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	23 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	24 1:00p Newsletter Mailing	25	26	27 6:30p UU Humanists
28 9:45a Adult Relig Explr (+Z) 11:00a Children's RE 11:00a Sunday Service 12:15p Music Committee	29 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	30	31		(Z) - Meeting via Zoom (+Z) - Meeting In-Person and via Zoom Call church office at 316-684-4581 for Zoom information.	

Candidate Biography
Corey Swertfager
President-Elect

Apparently, I got the seven-year itch, because it was seven years ago when I started my first go at being First UU President. The leaders since then have been outstanding, as are the current members of the board and the candidates vying to come aboard. I am greatly looking forward to serving again as President-Elect and working with all of the First UU family. Let love lead.

Candidate Biography
Ned Lakin
President of the Board of Trustees

I was raised in a liberal Mennonite home in south-central Kansas and have lived in this area most of my life. I majored in history at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas, and graduated from there in 1969.

I first learned about Unitarian-Universalism in the mid-1990s and have grown to feel that it is the best “fit” for me as a place from which I can view, interpret, and live what I hope and believe is an ethical and useful life.

My professional life has included working for 24 years in an agency serving people with disabilities. Our agency had around 200 full- and part-time employees and a budget of several million dollars. In my capacity as Executive Director, I interacted with board members, staff, persons we served and their families, professional peers, state and county officials, accrediting organizations, and private businesses and individuals from whom we sought funding, support, and good will. I was fortunate to have an excellent team of managers to work with, and I am proud of the work we did together over that period.

My involvement at First UU of Wichita has been, and continues to be, a place and a mission in which I want to invest my time, talent, and “treasure”! I love the variety of people here and the openness with which we approach the world. I feel strongly that we have much to offer to our communities, and that what we have to offer is something our communities can use to build a better planet and a more humane world.

Candidate Biography Charlie King Board of Trustees

Charlie has been a member of First UU Church of Wichita since 2008. He has a bachelor's degree in Theatre and has worked in many productions, sometimes on stage, sometimes as a stagehand and prop builder. He has volunteered in many capacities at First UU, including groundskeeper, kitchen cleanup, Worship Committee member, service leader, and presenter, and has served on two occasions in the past on the Board of Trustees.

Charlie draws inspiration from "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part" and from the source of spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions, which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Candidate Biography LaRilla Combs Nominating Committee

I'm forever grateful that my brother, Porter, introduced me to the Unitarian Universalist faith in the 1970s, and I was fortunate that Greta Crosby was the Minister when I started attending the First UU Church of Wichita. I soon joined the church, and this beloved community has since been a vital part of my life. I've been involved in church life in various ways through the years, including service on the Board of Trustees, as Volunteer Coordinator for EcoFest, and as a member on the Committee on Ministry and the Social Action and Caring Committees.

I am currently a member of the Caring Committee. In addition, working with the Membership Committee, I help recruit and schedule members and friends to be greeters on Sunday mornings. If elected, I will work together with the other committee members to encourage our capable and talented members to become nominees for leadership positions for the coming year.

From the Worship Committee

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

Creativity is the May theme for Sunday worship services and Children's RE. Creativity, as one UU minister notes about this month's theme, is an act of faith. And creativity, she continues, isn't restricted to what we think of as "art." It can include creating and living an artful life. The sermons selected from the UU Association's Soul Matters program for this month reflect on both creativity as a personal act and on how it intersects with faith. We also have a special guest speaker for the Mother's Day service.

May 12 marks the 62nd anniversary of a very important "creation" indeed. On May 12, 1961, the first annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston was held. At that meeting, the constitution and by-laws were ratified for the new organization merging Unitarians and Universalists. We recognize May 12 as UUA Founding Day.

May 7: Charlie Jenney will present "*Courage and Creativity*" by Rev. Kate Dean, minister of the Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel in Hampstead, London. Dean notes that creativity doesn't just emerge in the form of a final work of art, music, or writing or in a difficult problem solved. It requires time to plan, to mull things over and research the problem before us. And it requires encouragement from others and the courage to test potential solutions, fail, and keep on trying. The entire process can be a deeply spiritual experience that brings out our inner passions and our dreams. The service will also feature music from congregation member Corey Swertfager.

May 14: Julie Burkart, president at Wellspring Health Access and founder of Wichita's Trust Women clinic, will speak on the ultimate creative act: Motherhood. Burkart, a former First UU member and daughter of longtime member LaRilla Combs, has opened multiple women's regional clinics around the country and is opening a new one in the Wyoming region, where she and her husband recently relocated. She is back in Wichita for the birth of her grandchild.

May 21: Rev. Joe Mohr will address the topic of creativity in his monthly sermon. The service will also feature Scottish fiddle tunes from violinist Elizabeth Wallace and cellist and First UU member Susan Mayo. Mayo has been part of the Kansas musical landscape for more than 30 years as a cellist, composer, and community arts organizer. She is co-executive director of Flint Hills Counterpoint, an ecology arts project based in Marion County, Kansas, music director for Woodfest, Symphony in the Flint Hills's fall event; board chair of the Historic Sunflower Theatre, guest lecturer at Wichita State University, and a member of the Wichita Symphony Orchestra. Wallace was adjunct professor of viola and violin at Utah Valley University and Dickinson College and has taught at other universities. She was a member of the Utah Chamber Orchestra at Ballet West and has performed with the Utah Symphony and at Carnegie Hall. She has played with major artists, ensembles, and venues globally, among them Kronos, Juilliard, and the Chieftains, to name a few.

May 28: Magda Garrett will present "*The Creative Spirit*" by Rev. Janet Parsons, minister of the Gloucester Unitarian Universalist Church in Massachusetts. Drawing from the book *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear* by Elizabeth Gilbert, Parsons rethinks the meaning and source of the creative spirit and argues that all that is required for us to live creatively is that we give ourselves permission to be open to curiosity and risk taking; that we are willing to say "yes" to inspiration instead of "no," or "I can't."

Calling All Creatives! For the month of May, we will feature readings written by First UU congregation members during each service. If you have a poem or paragraph(s) you would like to read during the service, please get in touch with us. We need to hear from you by May 1 to help facilitate our planning for May services, but we'd love to hear from you further into May and at any time beyond in hopes we can extend and expand on ways to showcase our members' talents. Please contact Vivien Minshull-Ford, (316) 371-1949 or vminshull@gmail.com.

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 volunteers.

Each one of us deserves the very best that life has to offer. Believe that you are enough, stay engaged with nature. Maintain relationships with others, especially those with folks who love and care about you.

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 can donate cash or a card, we will distribute it as needed. The Caring Committee is a good steward of your donation, You may donate through the church office, and thank you in advance.

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. Since some eateries are closed on Tuesday, we may offer occasional Wednesday lunch dates.

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 (316) 765-3352 to share for May.

What touches one of us touches us all.

First Unitarian Universalist Church

7202 E. 21st
Wichita, KS 67206

www.firstuu.net

Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

The book discussion group will meet at our regular time and date, 11:30 am on the third Friday of the month, on Friday, April 21, beginning at 11:30 am for lunch with discussion to follow at 12:00 pm.

The book chosen for May is *Trains and Lovers* by Alexander McCall Smith. As they journey by rail from Edinburgh to London, four strangers pass the time by sharing tales of trains that have changed their lives. A keen-eyed Scotsman recounts how he turned a friendship with a coworker into a romance by spotting an anachronistic train in an 18th-century painting. An Australian woman shares how her parents fell in love and spent their lives together running a railroad siding in the remote Outback. A middle-aged American patron of the arts sees two young men saying goodbye in a train station and recalls his own youthful crush on another man. And a young Englishman describes how exiting his train at the wrong station allowed him to meet an intriguing woman whom he impulsively invited to dinner – and into his life.

After making arrangements to borrow these books from the Wichita Public Library, it was discovered that the group has read this book previously, so if you don't wish to read it again, you are invited to find another book about trains or a different book by the same author.

Copies of the book, borrowed from the library, are available at the church. Please speak to Anita Culp or Anne Bailey if you would like to borrow a copy.