



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita
Founded 1887

President's Message

- Ned Lakin

August 2023

The month of July 2023 at First UU got off to an auspicious beginning when, at the end of June, one of our air conditioning units gave out! With the help of numerous members and friends of the church, we were still able to have our First Sunday Lunch on July 2. In fact, for me, it turned out to be a delicious, harmonious, and joyful event. I think it demonstrated what we are capable of as a group of committed people who are willing to join together to make good things happen—even under trying circumstances. And I hope and trust that this will be an ongoing theme of our 2023-2024 church year.

In addition to scheduling the mending of the air conditioner failure, we also completed the hiring of a new church office manager, dealt with the need to repair cracks and holes in the church's stucco covering, and entertained the prospect of adding some shading to the south side of the church building at Betty's Place.

Our new office manager (and relatively new member), Jon Ramirez, began his orientation and training for the job with Anita on July 10. Jon brings to the position years of experience with diverse groups of people along with knowledge of computer applications and systems. Please make the effort to greet Jon and welcome him to the office manager role, if you have not yet had the time to do so.

The Board of Trustees welcomes Louis Goseland and Vivien Minshull-Ford as newly elected members. As many of you know, Louis is deeply involved in community justice initiatives (along with Corey Swertfager, our Treasurer-in-training and President-Elect), and Vivien has filled and continues to fill numerous roles and responsibilities as a long-time indispensable member of the church.

Continued on page 4

In Touch

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

www.firstuu.net

Member

Unitarian Universalist Association

President: Ned Lakin

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

August Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

These members joined First UU Church during the month of August (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life: LaRilla Combs (46), Anita Culp (13), Roberta Hickman (4), Sherry Skillwoman (4), Laurie Hoffman (3), and Joe Mohr (3).

First UU Pagan Circle

- Anne Bailey

The First UU Pagan group, formerly known as WUUPS, is not planning to meet in August. Please talk to Anne Bailey at (316) 650-4905, Linda Jordan at (316) 512-6652, or Donna Morris at (316) 573-9101 if you would like to help with reawakening this group.

Membership Committee

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.

We will be scheduling an Inquirer's Class on Zoom for prospective members in August. The date for the next class has not been set but will probably be in the second half of the month. Please call the Church office at (316) 685-3481 to sign up for the class if you are interested in joining our congregation. Or you may call Anne Bailey at (316) 650-4905 to reserve your spot.

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 at (316) 559-4478 about getting on the schedule to be a greeter.

Report from the Board

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

The Board of Trustees under the leadership of new President Ned Lakin met on July 19. The most pressing issue is the air-conditioning unit, which quit working right before First Sunday Lunch. The north side of the building was affected, including the kitchen. We set up tables at back of the sanctuary, which had AC, and ate Indian food in comparative comfort. In fact, many congregants said they really liked this new departure. The unit has been since been repaired. The board discussed the vexing issue of acquiring the necessary refrigerant, which is not EPA approved, to keep the four-unit system going. There was discussion of a geo-thermal system, much more in keeping with our environmentally beneficial philosophy, but we agreed to settle for fixing our existing system, and hope the other units hold up.

Another pressing issue is the repair to the cracked stucco on the east side of the church under the mural. The board agreed that we should go ahead, and members of the congregation will help restore the mural. Anyone who would like to help with mural painting, please contact Vivien Minshull-Ford or Marcia Ellsworth.

Ksenya Gurshtein is kindly donating funds to help purchase a sail design shade tent for Betty's Place, the outdoor playground for Children's Religious Education, so it can be used during the summer. This installation may necessitate moving the church name up higher so it can be seen from 21st Street.

Lynn Way will speak and help facilitate plans for a special service on July 30, "Sunday Sundaes." Six-and-a-half gallons of ice cream are being funded by coffee money, and congregation members are encouraged to bring toppings. See From the Worship Committee in this issue for more information.

The new board will meet in person, though the zoom option will be available for members who live out of Wichita or have other reasons for participating from home.

Presidents Message, continued

Over the next couple of months, I want to present tentative goals for this year to the Board and membership of the church. The major themes I want to suggest include the growth of our membership and involvement in the church; initiating plans to secure the financial future of the church; establishing a Technology Committee to guide us in taking advantage of electronic means to meet these goals as well as to facilitate intra-church communications; and bolstering our processes and structures for keeping current with our Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, Job Descriptions, Committees, and church functions and documentation, generally.

I consider being elected as President of the Congregation at First UU church of Wichita to be an honor and a privilege; and, with your commitment and support, I look forward to a very eventful year!

Ned

Movie Group

First UU's monthly Movie Group is temporarily on hold while its facilitator, John Findling, settles his family into their new home. Watch for updates on its return.

Rented Furniture

— Del Smith, from *Finding My Way: My Stories*, @2018

Rented furniture suits me now —

Someone else's squeaks harbored in the bedstead;

Strange matchbooks sneaking out of the couch.

And when I go I will have left another sound.

And felt-tip pens underneath the cushions.

August 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 4:00p Worship Committee (Z) 7:00p UU Craft Night	2	3	4	5
6 9:45a Adult Relig Explo (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service (+z) 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	7 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	8 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	9 7:00p Membership Committee (Z)	10 7:00p Leadership Council (Z)	11 12:00p Fridays for the Future	12 10:00a Caring Committee 12:00p Private Event
13 9:45a Adult Relig Explo (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service (+z)	14 6:00p Vegan Potluck 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	15 11:30a UU Friends Lunch	16 6:00p Board of Trustees (Z) 11:00p Newsletter & Calendar Deadline	17	18 11:30a Eclectic Readers	19 8:30a Gardening Group
20 9:45a Adult Relig Explo (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service (+z) 12:15p Social Action Committee	21 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	22 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	23	24	25	26
27 9:45a Adult Relig Explo (+Z) 11:00a Worship Service (+z) 12:15p First Sunday Lunch	28 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	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—Ned Lakin
President-Elect—Corey Swertfager
Board of Trustees—Jim Bucchorn, Andrew Davis, Celestra Snyder, Magda Garrett,
Charles Merrifield, Louis Goseland, and Vivien Minshull-Ford
Treasurer—Corey Swertfager

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Adult Religious Exploration—Frank Ruf <i>Aesthetics—TBD</i>	Kitchen Mavens—Magda Garrett and Debbie Wadman
Building & Grounds—Bruce Roby (Building) and Anita Culp (Grounds)	<i>Leadership Council—Corey Swertfager</i>
<i>Caring—Jayne Henry and Magda Garrett</i>	Librarian—TBD
Children's Religious Exploration—Kerry Dobbins	<i>Membership—Anne Bailey</i>
<i>Chalice Book Store—Joe Lozano</i>	Music—Jana Rambo
EcoFest—Holger Meyer	<i>Nominating—LaRilla Combs, Jana Rambo and Kent Rowe</i>
<i>Finance—Charles Merrifield</i>	Social Action—Ellie Shore
Fundraising—Marcia Ellsworth and Vivien Minshull-Ford	<i>Stewardship—Andrew Davis</i>
<i>Green Sanctuary—Linda Jordan</i>	Worship—Anne Bailey
	<i>Committee on Ministry—Peter Ninemire</i>

GROUP CONTACTS

UU Craft Group—Anita Culp	Holiday Party Group—Anita Culp
Eclectic Readers—Anne Bailey	UU Humanist Group—Charles Merrifield
Movie Group—Vivien Minshull-Ford and John Findling	Pagan Group—Anne Bailey and Linda Jordan
Gardening Group—Anita Culp and Linda Jordan	Zen Friends of Wichita—Bob Feleppa and Vivien Minshull-Ford

STAFF

Custodian—Magda Garrett
Office Manager—Jon M. Ramirez
Pastoral Care—Joe Mohr
Director of Children's Religious Exploration—Anna Jenney
Assistant Director CRE—Gabby Garrett
Nursery—Stephanie Davidson

UU Art Notes: Artist Workshop August 6

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

The paintings hanging in the sanctuary are by artist and master frame maker Stephen Miner. His lovely landscapes are available for purchase: 30 percent of any sale goes to the church.

You may know Stephen better as the artist who showed fascinating themed shadow boxes of assemblages and found objects in our EcoFest art exhibition. It is astonishing that he can do paintings that are so different. I think many of us have favorites among the collection. If you are interested in knowing prices, please ask me or Marcia Ellsworth.

Our curator, Ernie Kind, recently hung a small exhibit of Hermine Greywall's paintings in the Zen Room, part of a sorting and evaluation of all the art works belonging to First UU. The Adult Religious Education room and the corridor leading to it will soon have a new exhibit, which includes works by Hermine Greywall, Helen Brewer, and New Mexico artist Kandy Tate. The room now houses two glass-fronted cabinets for our ongoing sale of collectibles.

Gaylord and Kind Exhibits, Lunch, Workshop:

Don't miss the art in the Gathering Space Gallery featuring works by Micala Gingrich Gaylord and Ernst Kind. Gaylord's memory sculptures memorializing the lives of deceased friends and family members can be accessed by opening your camera app and pointing it at the QR code under each work. The large sculpture on the right will reveal its sound bites if you shine the flashlight on it and find the right spot. Kind's fiber, fabric, and tie-dye exhibit also commemorates past lives.

Both Gaylord and Kind will join us for First Sunday Lunch on August 6. If you would like to ask questions about their work, plan on sitting with them. At 2:00 pm following Sunday lunch, Gaylord will conduct a workshop on memorializing dead people. The one and a half-hour workshop costs \$20. Materials will be supplied, and participants should bring a memento of the person they want to remember in sculpture. Please let Marcia or Vivien know if you wish to take part in this thoughtful and unusual workshop so we can save you a place. My telephone number is (316) 371-1949 and Marcia Ellsworth's is (316) 208-3083.

From the Worship Committee

UU paganism, joy, and a special guest presenter are among topics and offerings for our August services.

On August 6, Melanie Jenney presents “*Why I Am a UU Pagan.*” Ken Langer from a UU parish in Bedford, Massachusetts, begins this sermon with, “I want to take this opportunity to explain to you why I identify myself as a UU Pagan and why I think it is important that both UUs and Pagans take time to understand each other. I am a UU because I enjoy being in an open and accepting community of people with diverse spiritual viewpoints and I am a Pagan because my spiritual inspiration comes primarily from nature.” Jenney will share Langer’s perspective.

On August 13, Charlie Jenney presents “*Surprised by Joy,*” by Rev. Julia Hamilton. Joy shows up most often when we are present and open to the uncontrollable beauty of life. Joy recedes when we lose touch with the present, when we are so preoccupied with the future, with trying to control where things are going, that we can’t see what delights might be popping up right in front of us.

On August 20, Rev. Joe Mohr returns to the pulpit with another of his monthly presentations.

On August 27, we’ll hear from special guest speaker Rabbi Moti Rieber. Rieber – aka Reb Moti – has been executive director of Kansas Interfaith Action and its predecessor organization, Kansas Interfaith Power & Light, since March 2011. He is a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Wyncote, Pennsylvania. A life-long activist on peace, social justice, and environmental issues, Reb Moti brings a variety of pulpit, interfaith, and organizational experience to the work of Kansas Interfaith Action. Reb Moti and his wife, Suzy, live with their three children in Overland Park.

* * *

Worship Committee members are Anne Bailey, Marcia Ellsworth, Melanie Jenney, Linda Jordan, Charles Merrifield, Vivien Minshull-Ford, Debbie Wadman, and Annie Welsbacher.

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.

We are in the grip of a fierce hot summer and the weather can be unforgiving. Health professionals tell us those most susceptible to the extreme heat are the older and youngest among us. Remember to limit your outdoor activities to the coolest part of the day, stay hydrated, and wear protective covering if you are outdoors in the sun.

The Caring Committee hopes to continue the legacy of Susan Hund-Milne, who regularly donated extra produce from her garden, by requesting such donations from the gardens of our congregation at large. We can then sell the produce after church, with the proceeds going to the committee's emergency funds. Contact Magda for information and about how to you can help.

If you can help with occasional transportation to medical appointments and such for some of our congregants, contact Jana Rambo.

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 card, it will be distributed as needed. The Caring Committee is a good steward of your donation. You may donate through the church office. Thank 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. Given that some eateries are closed on Tuesday, we will likely offer occasional Wednesday lunch dates.

The church is fortunate to have in our service Rev. Joe Mohr, who is available to church members for confidential counseling at no cost. With recent losses, illnesses, and everyday stressors, you may find that you need Rev Mohr's services more than ever. Please reach out; we care about you. 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 to share for the September issue.

Reach Magda at (316) 765-3352 and Jana at (316) 686-4215. The church office number is (316) 684-3481.

What touches one of us touches us all.

First Unitarian Universalist Church

7202 E. 21st
Wichita, KS 67206

www.firstuu.net

Eclectic Readers

The book discussion group will meet at our regular time and date, the third Friday of the month, August 18, beginning at 11:30 am for lunch with discussion to follow at 12:00 pm.

The choice for August is "*The Blue Bottle Club*" by Penelope J. Stokes. A reporter finds slips of paper on which four teenage girls wrote down their dreams in 1929 and tracks down the now senior women whose dreams have been torn, but who still have a common thread running through their lives. One of today's top-selling authors traces the fascinating story of the friendship among four women, from 1929 to the present – all intricately tied to one mysterious blue bottle.

Copies of the book, borrowed from the Wichita Public Library, will be available at the church. Please talk to Anne Bailey at (316) 650-4905 or Anita Culp at (316) 685-3481 if you would like to read this book. Plan to join us for lively discussion on August 18 at the church.