



In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of
Wichita

Founded 1887

September 2023

President's Message

- Ned Lakin

At our August Board of Trustees meeting, we created a new committee. The work of the new Technology Committee will be to expand the technology available to us as 21st-century Americans, thereby broadening our connections with each other and reaching out to people who may never have heard of Unitarian Universalism. Our hope is that all will find in us a community of caring, open-minded, supportive, and loving people with whom they can relate in a rapidly changing (and frequently harsh) world.

I understand and believe that technology will continue to advance at a rapid pace, and none of us can know exactly where it might take us. But I also believe that the need of people to feel love, connection, and community with each other will not change. Our principles and ideals are very well-suited for gathering and keeping a system of human values alive in a faster-paced and increasingly complex world.

I want to see us move in this direction. We want to continue to offer our ways of being a caring community to people of all ages and their families and to diverse groups who might be disaffected by rigid norms or other judgmental social attitudes. At the same time, we will continue to support those who are already here, regardless of their ability with or their access to technology.

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

Jon M. Ramirez

Office Hours:

Mon/Wed/Fri 1-5pm &

Tue/Thu 8am-12pm

Director of Religious Exploration:

Anna Jenney

anna.jenny@gmail.com

Newsletter Staff

Copy Editor:

Anne Welsbacher

awelsbacher@gmail.com

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 awelsbacher@gmail.com

First UU Pagan Circle

The Pagan Circle will meet once again on Friday, September 22, 6:00–9:00 pm. Come join us in celebrating the Autumn Equinox (Mabon). We will observe the changing of the seasons, the second of the Harvest Celebrations, and the joy of balance in life. Please bring your own drink and finger foods to share with other participants.

Feel free to call Anne Bailey at (316) 650-4905 or Linda Jordan at (316) 512-6652 if you have questions about this gathering.

Membership Committee

We hope to schedule an Inquirer's Class on Zoom for prospective members in September. If you are interested in joining our congregation, please call the Church office at (316) 685-3481 to sign up for the class. If you have questions, call Anne Bailey at (316) 650-4905.

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 larillacombs@aol.com or (316) 559-4478 about getting on the schedule to be a greeter.

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

Tidbits from the Board

August 2023

- Ned Lakin

1. The air conditioner is fixed!
2. We are reviewing and updating the Church Bylaws.
3. We have established a Technology Committee; Ellen, Corey, Jon, and Ned are its first members.
4. We are reviving the Committee on Ministry
5. We had a presentation on church security issues
6. We are planning a retirement event for Anita Culp
7. Magda wants to step down as church custodian
8. We will be reviewing and updating our Policies and Procedures Manual
9. We will be looking at a presentation on shading in Betty's Place
10. Thanks to the volunteers for Children's RE: Ellen, Vivien, and Marcia.

From the Music Committee

- Jana Rambo

We've had a lot of activity in the past few weeks. We had a bad news/good news situation: we learned that our esteemed pianist, Laura Black, will be leaving us at the end of August to take on other responsibilities. Her music has been greatly appreciated, and she'll be missed. The good news is that Josh Saxe is willing to step into the pianist's position effective September 3. I know everyone has appreciated his playing when he's subbed for Laura, so we're happy he's accepted the position.

Recently Tom Neilson contacted us about playing for us again. He's been here twice in pre-Covid days and is finally getting back on the road. He'll be with us in concert February 17, 2024, and will perform and speak at Sunday service February 18. Tom is a singer-songwriter in the folk music tradition; if you haven't heard him before, you can get a sense of his music (and politics) on YouTube. As in the past, he requests that we give him a place to stay while he's here. I'm not sure if his significant other will be with him or not. He travels light and brings his own food and bedding, so it's not much work for the host. If you can provide lodging for him, please let the Music Committee know. Contact Jana at jayrobo@aol.com or (316) 992-5528.

From the Director of Children's Religious Exploration

- Anna Jenney

Happy September! Our Children's Religious Exploration classes start again this month. We encourage you to reach out to the young ones in your life (ages 5-12) and invite them to join us. Weekly lessons usually include a read-aloud and discussion followed by a craft or some sort of hands-on activity.

September's theme is The Gifts of Welcome. The first Sunday in September will be the Youth Water Communion Ceremony. Young people may bring water from travels or special places in their lives, if they'd like.

Other lessons for September will include The Work of a Wider Welcome, Welcoming Change (Autumn Equinox), and Welcoming the Work of Apology and Forgiveness.

On another note, if you have someone in your life who would like to work in our nursery a few Sundays a month (ages 0-4), please reach out to Director of Children's Religious Exploration Anna Jenney at anna.jenney@gmail.com.

We are excited to see new and returning faces in our classroom!

Anna

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

-Aristotle



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—Anne Bailey and Annie Welsbacher	<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

September 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.				1	2
3 9:45a Adult Rel Explo (+Z) 11a Children's Rel Explo 11a Worship Service (+Z) 12::15p First Sunday Lunch	4 OFFICE CLOSED 5:30p Labor Day Party 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	5 4p Worship Comm (Z) 7p UU Craft Night	6	7	8 12p Fridays for the Future 7p Sierra Club	9 10am Caring Committee
10 9:45a Adult Rel Explo (+Z) 11a Children's Rel Explo 11a Worship Service (+Z)	11 6pm Vegan Potluck 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	12 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	13 7p Membership Committee (Z)	14 7p Leadership Council (Z)	15 11:30a Eclectic Readers	16 8:30a Gardening Group
17 9:45a Adult Rel Explo (+Z) 11a Children's Rel Explo 11a Worship Service (+Z) 12:15p Social Action Group	18 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	19 11:30a UU Friends Lunch	20 6p Board of Trustees (Z) 7p Newsletter/Calendar Deadline	21	22 6p Pagan Circle	23
24 9:45a Adult Rel Explo (+Z) 11a Children's Rel Explo 11a Worship Service (+Z)	25 1p Movie Group 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z)	26 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry	27	28	29	30 6:30p UU Humanists Grp

Ripples from the Caring Committee

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 resources.

This month we welcome fall equinox, and also the bombardment of all things fall. The colors of the season are warm and delicious; getting outdoors for fresh air and exercise is sure to recharge our spirit.

Please consider donating extra garden produce to the Caring Committee to be sold after service, with proceeds going to the emergency fund.

Contact Jana Rambo at (316) 686-4215 if you can help with occasional transportation to medical appointments for congregants.

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 for the 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 every-day 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 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 October.

What touches one of us touches us all.

Report from the Leadership Council

The Leadership Council is led by the president-elect and open to any committee leaders, volunteers with church-related duties, or interested members. Its purpose is to coordinate committee activities and church events. The council meets the second Thursday of the month at 7 pm. For more information, contact Corey Swertfager at bikercorey@gmail.com.

Topics discussed at the August 10 meeting included:

- Guidelines for the Caring Committee's funds dispersal;
- Summer activities for children during Sunday services and the return of Children's RE for the 2023-24 season;
- Treasurer duties shifting to Corey Swertfager;
- Fundraising ideas for the upcoming year and current projects including sale of remaining art and First Sunday Lunches;
- Need for an upcoming new member recognition service;
- Music programming, including pianist Laura Black's resignation and newly hired pianist Josh Saxe and a Tom Nielson concert planned for next year;
- Plans for partnership projects with the new minister at Manhattan's UU church, Isabel Call.

**"The wound is the place where the
Light enters you."**

-Rumi

From the Worship Committee

As summer eases into fall, the September services at First UU will reflect themes both celebratory and somber.

On September 3, Bob Minor returns to the pulpit to present “*A World Religions Professor Faces Mortality (or: BFFs For Eternity: What If That’s Actually The Whole Point Of It All?)*.” As people age, their thoughts naturally turn to the question of mortality, and Prof. Minor, Professor Emeritus, Religious Studies at the University of Kansas, is no exception. He will explore what the afterlife means – and doesn’t mean – to him.

On September 10, Corey Swertfager presents “*Justice Ministry*.” With so much injustice in the world, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed and powerless. In our society, power comes from two sources: lots of organized money and lots of organized people. For those without money, the power must come from the people. Our Unitarian Universalist principles provide inspiration for building a powerful Justice Ministry: two of our principles call out justice specifically. But one congregation doesn’t have enough people-power to hold big institutions accountable. Come learn how First UU has joined dozens of other Wichita-area congregations in the Sedgwick County Multifaith Justice Organization to mobilize thousands of people to do justice.

On September 17, Rev. Joe Mohr returns to the pulpit with another of his monthly presentations.

September 15 through October 15 is National Hispanic Heritage Month. On September 24, Jon Ramirez presents a sermon based on a 1980s speech given by migrant farm worker union activist Cesar Chavez, whom Ramirez met while a student at the University of Kansas when his Latino student organization brought the icon to speak on campus.

With September, First UU’s youth exploration program also returns. Be sure to read RE Director Anna Jenney’s article in this issue for a peek into fall activity plans.

Throughout the year, First UU’s Adult RE classes meet for an hour every Sunday before church. Join them at 9:45 a.m. in person or via Zoom. Topics vary widely, and have included such subjects as Bart Ehrman’s “The Historical Jesus,” Gretchen Eick’s lectures on the indigenous peoples of North and South America, humanism, racism, fascism, and the self-deconstruction of former Evangelical Christians. Contact Charles Merrifield at chasmerrifield@gmail.com or 316-371-3960 or Ellen Burd at burde740@gmail.com or 316-308-8890 for more information.

* * *

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

First Unitarian Universalist Church

7202 E. 21st
Wichita, KS 67206

www.firstuu.net

Eclectic Readers

The Eclectic Readers Group will meet as usual on the third Friday, September 15, for lunch at 11:30 am with discussion to follow at noon. The book chosen for September is “Watership Down.”

“Watership Down” was the debut novel by English author Richard Adams, published in 1972. Set in Hampshire in southern England, the story features a small group of rabbits. Although they live in their natural wild environment, with burrows, they are anthropomorphized, possessing their own culture, language, proverbs, poetry, and mythology. Evoking epic themes, the novel follows the rabbits as they escape the destruction of their warren and seek a place to establish a new home (the hill of Watership Down), encountering perils and temptations along the way. The book won the annual Carnegie Medal (UK), annual Guardian Prize (UK), and other book awards.

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) 712-384 if you would like to read this book.