

First Unitarian  
Universalist  
Church of  
Wichita

Founded 1887

In Touch is the  
newsletter of the First  
Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Wichita and  
is published monthly.

Member of Unitarian  
Universalist Association

**First UU Mission  
Statement: We are  
“A welcoming  
community with  
diverse beliefs  
united for positive  
change.”**

# In Touch

June 2024

## President's Letter

- Ned Lakin

In several of my recent Letters, I have talked about continuity, specifically as it relates to how we do things now to assure a future for our church community. I have talked about financial support and volunteering, both of which we must have if First UU of Wichita is going to thrive.

Now, I would like to say a few things about continuity in terms of leadership resources for the church. The bottom line, of course, is that we need younger church members to begin to move into positions of leadership, including chairing committees, serving on the Board of Trustees, and stepping forward for the offices of President and President-Elect.

The other day, member Marcia Ellsworth suggested that maybe, as we get more younger people visiting and coming into the church, we should encourage them to organize a group specifically for their age peers. They might use church facilities for monthly social gatherings, programs on topics of interest to them, or opportunities to talk about how they came to First UU and what Unitarian Universalism means to them – and where they see it going.

I thought this was a great idea – and wondered why I had not thought of it myself! The next day, I contacted Jon Ramirez, our office manager, and asked if he would do some exploring with our younger members and friends about this idea, and he agreed to do so.

Of course, this is just a start. But we all need to be more welcoming, supportive, and appreciative of what this next generation can bring to our church, both now and in the future; because, in the final analysis, they will be the future of First UU of Wichita.

## From the Worship Committee

- Annie Welsbacher

The theme for June is The Gift of Renewal. We also take a sneak peek at summer plans.

On June 2, Linda Jordan presents “*All Things New?*” a sermon by Rev. Darcey Laine on Ezekiel, dry bones, a blooming amaryllis, the gift of a Gladiolus bulb, and the reminder that “renewal is part of a cycle, and dormancy is not a disorder.” Trumpeter Dustin Huxman plays special music.

On June 9, Charles Merrifield presents “*Rest is Resistance*” by Rev. Emilie Boggis, who posits that, in our urgency and hurry, we lose sight of the abundance of resources available now that could help us meet our most challenging crises. Thus, Boggis invites us to slow down. We’ll also hear our monthly Story for All Ages.

On Father’s Day, June 16, Rev. Joe Mohr returns to the pulpit. Special music is presented by Ish Farid wearing his vocalist hat.

On June 23, John Findling will present “*Renewal Limit*,” in which Rev. Rod Richards plays with the idea of his local library’s dreaded “renewal limit” warning, and how this can apply to people, too. What do we do when we come to feel that renewal – of hope, of faith – is impossible? For special music, Seth Girton returns with his cello.

On June 30, Magda Garrett presents “*The Bigger Yes*,” in which Rev. Gretchen Haley explores the neutral, interim place we sometimes need to experience the renewal necessary to begin again. Josh Saxe plays special music on the piano.

Calling all artists! The service on August 25 will be “*Make a Joyful Noise*,” in which our own UU members will offer poems, short prose, visual art, music, and a sanctuary filled with the pulsing hums of drums – from bongos to car keys and everything in between. Contact Marcia Ellsworth, Linda Jordan, or Annie Welsbacher for more information.

## From the Children’s RE Director

-Anna Jenney

Children’s RE needs volunteers for the summer! Find the sign-up sheets and calendar on the front table.

June in kids RE will center around the gift of renewal. Lessons will cover renewing our spirits through reclaiming the right to joy (Pride and Flower Service), through nature and our physical being, through gratitude (Father’s Day), and through community (GA and Juneteenth).

If you have questions about the children’s RE curriculum or how you can help, please contact me, Director of Religious Exploration, at [anna.jenney@gmail.com](mailto:anna.jenney@gmail.com).

## First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita

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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  
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## Carol's Tree

-Marcia Ellsworth

When you are coming up the church drive, look to your right (to the east) just before you get to the parking lot. You will see a newly planted Autumn Brilliance Service Berry tree.

The tree was given to our church by the Findling family in memory of their mother and wife, Carol Findling. Carol passed away September 21, 2023, after a long struggle with Alzheimer's. She had been a member of First UU for five years and a longtime active Unitarian. This tree will be a reminder of Carol and her fondness for nature and gardening.

Service Berry trees do well in our area. They also provide berries in the summer for the birds. The tasty reddish berries are good in pies and considered a superfood for humans. The tree will grow to about 20-25 feet tall and about 15 feet wide and will have a lovely canopy. In the spring, it has showy, fragrant white blossoms and in the fall red, orange, and yellow bright leaves.

Our new tree is a reminder of the love and happiness Carol brought to her family and her church.



## First UU Pagan Circle

The Pagan Circle will meet on Saturday, June 22, 6–9 pm for a celebration of the Summer Solstice, which occurs on June 20 this year.

We will also Celebrate Midsummer, which falls on June 24. Also known as Litha, this holiday occurs during the Summer Solstice between June 19 and 22. More commonly referred to as Midsummer's Night, Litha is believed to be a time when faerie folk pass into the human world at twilight and offer blessings. Litha is a time to celebrate the abundance and beauty of Mother Earth.

We will enjoy a potluck meal at 6 pm before the ritual, which will begin at 7. Please bring a dish to share; we will use paper plates to cut down on cleanup chores. Or just come at 7 for the ritual.

Feel free to call Anne Bailey (316-650-4905), Linda Jordan (316-512-6652), or Donna Morris ((316-573-9101) if you have questions about this gathering.

## The Eighth Principle and Article II Proposed Changes

- Jon Ramirez

First UU and other UU congregations will vote at the June 2024 General Assembly on proposed Article II changes. The Eighth Principle, which states a commitment to dismantling racism, plays a key role in the proposed changes.

On the UUA website, a FAQ on Article II notes ongoing support of the Eighth Principle Project community and encourages congregations "to continue working to adopt it." It states that the proposed Article II revision "takes language directly from the Eighth Principle and has incorporated its sentiments in the covenant."

In 1997, the General Assembly voted to become an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural institution. Paula Jones, founder of ADORE (A Dialogue on Race & Ethnicity), former president of DRUUMM (Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries), and a multicultural consultant, began a discussion on whether the Seven Principles lead to our church's dealing with racism and other oppressions at the systemic level. Jones and others developed the Eighth Principle to challenge UUs to strongly commit to developing anti-racism efforts and hold ourselves accountable for doing such.

The Eighth Principle states, "We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

Initially, Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) and DRUUM endorsed the Eighth Principle. As noted in an April 2023 article in "UUA World," in 2018, four UU churches had added an explicit commitment against racism to our existing seven principles. Four years later, about 200 UU congregations and organizations had amended their tenets to add a version of this eighth principle.

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## Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

On June 21, the Eclectic Readers will at noon to enjoy our brown bag lunches followed by discussion at 12:30 pm. Please note the new 12 noon meeting time.

The book for discussion will be your selection of a biography, autobiography, or memoir. Because the Wichita library is not able to function as normal due to the hack of the city's databases, libraries have limited services, including the ability for us to reserve a set of books or access information online. (Libraries are still open for walk-in service and check-out.) Or you can select a book you already own that you have not read or wish to re-read. And, of course, our own First UU Library or one of Wichita's many new and used bookstores might have a title to your liking.

See you at noon on June 21.

## *The Eight Principle and Article II Proposed Changes continued*

As part of this principle is the notion of a Beloved Community (when people of diverse backgrounds come together in an interdependent relationship of community) and being accountable (when an internal mechanism is adopted to ensure that people do what they say they will regarding racism and oppression). Learn more about those two concepts at [8thprincipleuu.org/](http://8thprincipleuu.org/).

Regardless of the GA outcome on the Article II proposed changes, I plan to begin discussions in our congregation on considering adopting the Eighth Principle within our Bylaws and other formal documents.

On a related note, at the UUA level, a Mosaic Congregation designation ([uua.org/mosaic](http://uua.org/mosaic)) similar to a Welcoming Congregation designation ([uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/program](http://uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/program)) is being developed. Once that program is finalized, I also plan to share this with our congregation for consideration.

For any questions on the Eighth principle or on the Mosaic program, please reach out to me at (316) 684-3481 or [mosaic@firstuu.net](mailto:mosaic@firstuu.net).



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 people power.

## Ripples from the Caring Committee

-Magda Garrett

The caring committee reminds everyone to take extra caution as the weather temperatures rise. With the arrival of summer, both heat and humidity can be dangerous. Stay indoors during the hottest part of the day, wear protective clothing and sunscreen, and don't forget your sunglasses. Also, drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.

The Caring Committee maintains a small emergency fund 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 card, it will be distributed as needed. The Caring Committee is a good steward of your donation. Thank you in advance.

The monthly UU Friends lunch bunch day is the third Thursday of the month at 11:30 a.m. Plan to join when you can. Lunch turnouts have been great and the food and fellowship most enjoyable. Watch for updates about this and other events in the weekly e-newsletter Update, the UU email listserv, and Sunday service bulletins.

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 at (580) 729-0781.

If you can help with occasional transportation to medical appointments for congregants, or if you need medical transportation yourself, contact Jana Rambo at (316) 686-4215.

Donate to the committee's emergency fund through the church office at (316) 684-3481.

We as the Caring Committee are interested in the joys and sorrows members wish to include in this newsletter. Please contact me, Magda Garrett, at (316) 765-3352.

What touches one of us touches us all.

## UU Film Group

- Vivien Minshull-Ford

On Friday, June 28, at 6:30 pm, the Film Group will present the 2009 film “Little Miss Sunshine.” The film questions our society’s obsession with hustle culture and toxic winner mentalities. Its spectacular ensemble cast includes Toni Collette, Abigail Breslin, Greg Kinnear, Paul Dano, Steve Carell, and Alan Arkin in his last film, for which he took Best Supporting Actor.

The Hoovers are a dysfunctional family driving 800 miles to California in an aging VW bus so that Olive, the youngest child (Abigail Breslin) can enter the Little Miss Sunshine beauty pageant. The misadventures encountered on the way are epic and hilarious – but nothing approaches the horrors of the pre-teen beauty pageant itself. In this blend of tragedy and comedy, the family members focus their energies on supporting Olive and discover their need for each other’s support. Come and join us for this wonderful film – and bring movie treats if you like.

## Tidbits from the Board of Trustees

May 22, 2024

- Ned Lakin

1. We set the Annual Business Meeting date for June 9, 2024.
2. We reviewed and suggested a few changes to the proposed budget for next fiscal year. Treasurer Corey Swertfager will make the changes for the presentation at the annual business meeting.
3. We approved Charles Merrifield and Jon Ramirez to be our delegates to the UUA General Assembly. They had both served as our delegates to the Mid-America Regional UUA Meeting earlier this year. We also agreed that a method for selecting delegates needed to be firmed up for future years, and that the delegates chosen would be obligated to vote the will of the congregation at the General Assembly Annual Meeting. Corey said that he would formally undertake defining this process during his term as president of the congregation.
4. We discussed what would happen with the church treasurer’s position when Corey becomes president on July 1. Corey felt that he, Anne Bailey, and Jon Ramirez could, together, handle the treasurer’s tasks going forward.
5. We agreed that the board would continue to be involved in decisions about our church statements and actions on issues such as Covid or other public health issues.
6. We agreed on the need to inform our congregation about the proposed changes the UUA is pursuing on Article II of the UUA Bylaws, because the changes being considered would have major implications for our Unitarian Universalist “way of doing religion.” The changes being suggested seem to be based on a sense that the current “individualism” of belief among us, and the role of the UUA in “serving” congregations – rather than “assisting” congregations who are bound by covenant to each other and the UUA – makes our way of religion less effective in dismantling racism and other social ills. Our Adult RE efforts will be to inform our members about the impact of these changes, in anticipation of our congregation voting on whether or not to support the Bylaws changes proposed by the UUA at our annual business meeting on June 9.



## Membership Committee

- Anne Bailey

### June Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership Committee

These members joined First UU Church during the month of June (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life. Sandy Roberts (11), Stuart Boehmer (8), Andrew Davis (7), Kay Davis (7), Jayne Henry (7), Ann Barclay (5), Scot Barclay (5), and Jesse Borosky (1).

The purpose of the Membership Committee is to promote and develop the growth of church membership and to strengthen and sustain our current members.

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 and be a part of our committee. Please talk to Anne Bailey or LaRilla Combs about getting on the schedule to be a greeter.

If you would like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism or the Wichita Church or are looking for an opportunity to join First UU, we will offer an Inquirer's Class in the near future, probably on a Saturday at the church. You may sign up for the class by calling the church office and we will let you know the specific time and date. The plan is to meet at 10 am to learn about the history of the Wichita church and UU history, take a break for lunch, and then watch a video, learn what it means to be a member, and take a tour of the building in the afternoon. Please call the Church office at (316) 685-3481 to let us know you are interested in joining the class. Or call Anne Bailey at (316) 650-4905 if you have questions.

First Unitarian  
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## Record-Setting Rummage Sale

- Marcia Ellsworth

A big thank you to all who helped with our Annual Rummage Sale. Every year we are amazed at the enthusiasm of the visitors and volunteers who contribute to its success.

This year was better than ever – as was the profit. Total amount brought in was our record: \$5,500! Thank you to all participating. That includes workers, bakers, gardeners, cashiers, greeters, packers, dishwashers, pricing folks, marketing experts, donors, and those who staged the tables! It was a great team!

Hopefully, no one left without finding a few gems for themselves at bargain prices. Anything that did not sell moved on to the local Medical Loan Closet. That organization is planning a garage sale to benefit those in need of medical supplies. And if you didn't make it to the sale, there are a few items in the Adult RE room waiting to be snatched up.

UUs know how to make good things happen. Thank you for your time, talents, and generosity.