

First Unitarian
Universalist
Church of
Wichita

Founded 1887

In Touch is the
newsletter of the First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of Wichita and
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Member of Unitarian
Universalist Association

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

In Touch

July 2024

President's Letter Transition with Thanks - Corey Swertfager

As I transition from President-Elect to President, I am filled with gratitude for the many hands that sustain the spiritual home we call First UU. Thank you to outgoing board members Celestra Snyder, Miika Thorn, and Jim Buchhorn; continuing board members Magda Garrett, Charles Merrifield, Louis Goseland, and Vivien Minshull-Ford; incoming board members Ellen Burd, Linda Jordan, and Rev. Joe Mohr.

And a huge thank you to outgoing President, Ned Lakin, for his enthusiasm and dedication to bringing structure to this UU herd of cats. You're a tough act to follow, Ned!

During my time as President, I will continue projects initiated by Ned: the expansion of church safety policies and procedures, a mortgage payoff drive, and the enlargement of First UU's welcoming net. I will also be working with our office admin, Jon Ramirez, to rekindle our First UU Google Drive to enable easy sharing of info and provide training sessions about how to utilize it. Anne Bailey and I will share treasurer's duties. And I'm sure there will be some fires to put out (hopefully not literally)—what presidency is complete without them?

Emergency Plan Map

- Anita Culp

A new Emergency Plan Map that shows where these things are located is now posted throughout the church.

The nursery and corner classroom are designated storm shelters with fortified walls, no windows, and doors that latch. (Fun fact: the restrooms also have fortified walls, but their doors do not latch, so they are not identified as storm shelters.) Three fire extinguishers are in the kitchen, sanctuary, and hall just outside the nursery. First Aid kits are in the kitchen and both restrooms.

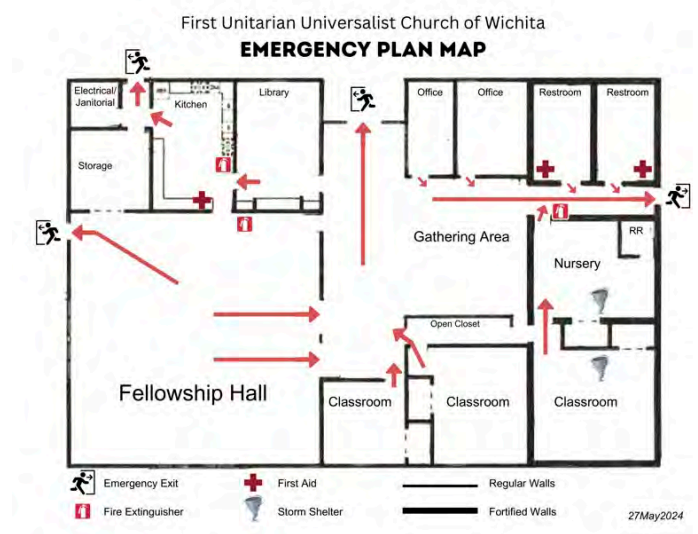
Most of the emergency exits are obvious ones: double front doors, east door at the far end of the restroom hallway, west door and two double-doors in the sanctuary, and the north kitchen door.

But what about the door to Betty's Place in the children's RE room? This is not an emergency exit because Betty's Place has locked fence gates and thus is a trap because it is not easy to remember a lock code during an emergency.

So what are the best ways to quickly leave the church?

- From the corner classroom, pass into the connecting nursery door to help with little ones.
- From the offices, restrooms, nursery, or corner classroom, exit out the hallway side door, which will avoid overwhelming the front door exit.
- Likewise, the library and kitchen people can exit out the kitchen door to avoid overwhelming the front door.
- People in the sanctuary can exit out the west door or through the two double doors into the lobby and then out the front doors. (The single door to the lobby is not an exit because it opens inward.)
- People in the lobby, the meditation room, and the children's RE room can exit out the front doors. Parents can find their children outside.

Look for the new Emergency Plan Maps and take a minute to familiarize yourself with this important information.



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From the Worship Committee

- Annie Welsbacher

This July we offer a smorgasbord of services, with flowers, laughs, and the mysteries of AI.

On July 7, Linda Jordan leads us in a flower communion service; bring garden flowers, greenery, anything growing from the earth, to create a diverse garden. Joe Mohr sings.

On July 14, Josh Saxe, cybersecurity specialist with Meta, will speak on AI. Corey Swertfager plays guitar.

On July 21, Rev. Joe Mohr returns, and Ish Farid sings.

July 28 is Humor Sunday; Melanie Jenney leads us in a morning of laughs. Trevor Stewart plays the Chapman Stick.

From the Children's RE Director

- Anna Jenney

Children's Religious Exploration will receive lessons from congregation members in July and August. Join us to learn new skills and have fun! If you're interested in leading a lesson, sign up at the sheet attached to the office window.

From the Music Committee

- Jana Rambo

The Music Committee continues to manage special service music. If you or a musician you know would like to play for a service, please let us know. We have showcased such instruments as the violin, cello, piano, trumpet, tuba, voice, and Chapman Stick. We also schedule occasional concerts and work with the pianist on scheduling or technical issues as they arise. We have been fortunate lately in recruiting excellent pianists and substitutes to step in when Ish is away.

Interested in joining the committee? Let us know. We meet via Zoom the fourth Wednesday of each month at 4 pm.

First UU Pagan Circle -Anne Bailey

The Pagan Circle will meet on Saturday, July 27, 6-9 pm for an early celebration of the first harvest, or Lughnasadh, which happens on August 1, this year.

Also known as Lammas, this is a Gaelic festival marking the beginning of the harvest season. Historically, it was widely observed throughout Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man. Traditionally it is held on August 1, or about halfway between the summer solstice and autumn equinox.

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.

Why I Belong to First UU

- Ellie Shore

Editor's note: This is the second in a series of articles adapted from past Sunday service Stewardship Moments.

Here is my "Top Five List" of reasons we should pledge to First UU.

Number 1: First UU is a welcoming place. A hymn we sing says that we are a gentle, loving people. Personally, I prefer to think of us as "interesting," but the point is that we are welcome here from the moment we walk in the door.

Number 2: No Dogma. The Seven Principles promote acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth and a free search for meaning. If you don't want to search for meaning, that's ok too. What we don't have to do is accept a specific set of religious beliefs and practices.

Number 3: They feed us! Boy, howdy, do they ever feed us! Our kitchen has got to be one of the busiest and tastiest church kitchens in Wichita. Every month there's a terrific meal, and before services there's coffee, sometimes with cookies.

There are activities where the focus isn't necessarily eating but there's always food: the Third Thursday lunch, Vegan First Monday, Book Club lunchtime meetings, Pagan potlucks, and Film Group showings. Which leads us to Number 4.

Number 4: Lots of things to do. Wanna be on a committee? Well, there's the Board of Trustees, the Caring Committee, the Technology Committee, the Social Action Committee, the Worship Committee, the Music Committee, the Gardening Group, the Pagan Group, and more.

Alternately, you can volunteer for lots of time-limited activities. The annual Rummage Sale and collections for Bags of Blessings and the holiday Mitten Tree. The Justice Together team. Gardening and watering. Occasional projects such as a past collection for an Afghan family and fundraisers for Haitians and others in need.

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Eclectic Readers

- Anne Bailey

We will meet on the third Friday, July 19, beginning at 12 noon to enjoy our brown bag lunches followed by discussion at 12:30 pm. Please note the new noon gathering time.

The Wichita Public Library is a branch of the city's website system, which was hacked by cyber criminals in early May. Although it was restored with minimal glitches by mid-June, it was still not fully functional when decisions needed to be made for this month.

Therefore, the books for discussion in July will be your choice of a romance novel. We call ourselves the Eclectic Readers, but we have long ignored this category. There are many sub-genres of "romance": time travel, science fiction, even – believe it or not – hockey romance. Find something that suits your taste.

Don't forget that as wonderful as libraries are, you always have other source options for months like this one offering open-ended selections. You might already own a book in the given category that you have not read or wish to re-read. And new and used book stores – including our own First UU Library – might have something to your liking.

See you at noon on July 19.

Why I Belong to First UU continued

Number 5: Things break and need fixing. When I sold my house, friends asked, "How did you do on the sale?" I didn't know how to answer. If they meant "did you sell the house for more than you bought it for" – yes. But if they meant "did you make a profit" – heck no! Owning a building is a constant, expensive battle against entropy.

We need to keep our building in good shape. You wouldn't want to sit here on a hot day in July – or, given climate change, a hot day in February – without air conditioning.

And what about our beloved kitchen? It's full of appliances! How would they feed us if the refrigerator/freezer broke?

For this and many other reasons, we need funds to keep our peaceful, welcoming place running. Our annual pledge drive is in the early spring, but we accept money any time of year. Thank you for giving to First UU.

July 2024

| | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| | | 1 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z) | 2 4p Worship Committee (Z) 7p UU Craft Group (Z) | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 10a Membership Class |
| 7 (Z) - Meeting via Zoom (+Z) - Meeting In-Person and via Zoom firstuu.net/events | | 8 6p Vegan Potluck 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z) | 9 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry | 10 7p Leadership Council (Z) | 11 12p Fridays for the Future | 12 | 13 10a Caring Committee |
| 14 9:45a Adult Rel Ed (+Z) 11aa Children's Rel Ed 11a Worship Service (+Z) | 15 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z) | 16 6p Board of Trustees (+Z) 11p Newsletter deadline | 17 | 18 11:30a UU Friends Lunch | 19 12p Eclectic Readers | 20 | 9a Gardening Group |
| 21 9:45a Adult Rel Ed (+Z) 11aa Children's Rel Ed 11a Worship Service (+Z) 12:15p Social Action Group | 22 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z) | 23 10:30a Renaissance Food Pantry | 24 4pm Music Committee | 25 | 6:30p UU Film Group | 26 | 6p Pagan Circle |
| 28 9:45a Adult Rel Ed (+Z) 11aa Children's Rel Ed 11a Worship Service (+Z) 12:15p Music Committee | 29 6:30p Zen Friends (+Z) | 30 | 31 | | | | |

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 people power.

The caring committee extends deepest condolences to Dee Schmidt, who recently lost her brother.

In addition, former church member Mike Felton passed away recently.

We hold the bereaved loved ones of these two individuals in our hearts.

Summer has arrived, and with it brings the need to stay well and identify ways to beat the heat. Stay indoors as much as possible; restrict outdoor activities to early morning or evening. Drink plenty of water, wear sunscreen, and protect eyes by wearing your 'sunnies.'

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, 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

- John Findling

On Friday, July 26, at 5:30 pm, the UU Film Group will show "Blazing Saddles," one of the most highly regarded films of veteran director Mel Brooks. Released in 1974, the film celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, but in many ways, it's just as fresh and funny as ever.

The film is a spoof of the West of 1874, starring Cleavon Little as the totally unlikely sheriff of a small western town, Harvey Korman as the standard local villain, and Madeline Kahn as a Marlene Dietrich-style temptress. Gene Wilder, Slim Pickens, Dom DeLuise, and pro football player Alex Karras also have prominent roles. This film was voted number six in the American Film Institute's poll of the top 100 comedies. So if the political campaign has left your sense of humor badly depleted or you just want a fun evening watching a truly funny film, please join us on July 26, and feel free to bring movie snacks to share.

Board Bits

- Corey Swertfager

1. Election results from the June 9th First UU Annual Meeting:

- President-Elect: Ellie Shore was unanimously affirmed
- Board members: Ellen Burd, Linda Jordan, Rev. Joe Mohr
- Nominating Committee: John Findling, Kirk Mitchell, Rachel Rutledge
- Budget for church fiscal year 2024-25 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025) was unanimously approved
- Unitarian Universalist Association's proposed bylaws revision: First UU members overwhelmingly voted to reject the revision, but also voted to approve all four additional amendments

2. June 19th board of trustees meeting discussions:

- Annual Meeting results
- The unfilled dates for covering children's religious exploration classes while Anna Jenney and Gabby Garrett take their break in July and August
- Progress of getting First UU employee retirement plans updated
- Ideas to reduce the number of mailed paper newsletters
- The need for additional church safety policies and procedures

July Anniversaries

- Anita Culp, Membership
Committee

This member joined First UU Church during the month of July (with years of membership given). We celebrate your membership and look forward to your continuing participation in our church life. Lynn Way (4).

Membership Committee

- Anne Bailey

The Membership Committee will offer our Inquirer's Class on Saturday, July 6. This class is for people who are interested in joining our church or in finding out more about Unitarian Universalism.

We will meet at the church at 10 am. The class will begin with a history of our local church and the roots of our UU faith. We will break at noon for lunch and resume about 12:30 pm to continue with a video about the national organization. We will conclude with a tour of the building. We will then close with an offer to become official members of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita.

If you would like to take part in this class, please call the church office at (316) 685-3481 or call Anne Bailey at (316) 650-4905. We need to know the number of participants so that sufficient materials can be prepared. Please plan to bring a sack lunch.

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.

First Unitarian
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America

- Claude McKay 1189-1948

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,
And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,
Stealing my breath of life, I will confess
I love this cultured hell that tests my youth!
Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,
Giving me strength erect against her hate.
Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.
Yet as a rebel fronts a king in state,
I stand within her walls with not a shred
Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer.
Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,
And see her might and granite wonders there,
Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,
Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.