



# In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita  
founded in 1887

December 2009

## **White Elephant Gift Exchange All Church Party**

**Saturday night, December 5, 2009**

**arrive around 6:30 to graze**

**Gift Exchange starts around 7 pm**

**Snacks, cookies  
Delicious hot beverages**

**Sponsored by Membership Committee**

What is a "white elephant" gift exchange?

Everyone brings a WRAPPED tacky, funny, silly or dreadfully boring gift. We play a game that involves passing and swapping and stealing each other's "unique" gifts. Every person takes home a different gift. . . Alternately, you may add your gift to a Goodwill pile that will be provided.

We will chat and eat and drink. We may play a game or two.

This is our third year and it is always FUN. We will take a small offering for the use of the church. So.....bring yourself, friends and family, your favorite snack food and a wrapped gift for each person (we will have extras too in case of emergency) and we'll see you there!

## **Mini-Catalog Booksale: The End is Near!**

Book orders made during the November Booksale will be sent the first week of December and will arrive by mid-December in time for holiday giving. In addition to the UUA mini-catalog books, display copies of three special order books may be ordered through Sunday, November 29th. Those books are: *Dissent in Wichita* by Gretchen Cassel Eick; *Self-Observation* by Red Hawk; and *World Peace Diet* by Will Tuttle.

Some new books by First UU members and friends are still available for immediate purchase. If you cannot be at the church when it is normally open for office hours or Sunday services, call Del Smith (316-612-0826) to arrange an appointment.

And, as always, the Chalice Bookstore in the Library offers used books at prices which cannot be beat.

Proceeds from sales of new and used books benefit First UU's operating fund. Del Smith



## **Holiday Decorations**

The Aesthetics Committee welcomes donations of live poinsettias for the church for the holiday season, as well as greenery (greenery should probably be fake due to allergies to live pine). The AC asks that anything else be submitted to them for approval before being displayed. Of course, this applies only to the gathering space and sanctuary. RE rooms and other areas are not overseen by AC. Thanks. Questions? Contact: Susan Hund-Milne, 832-1599, susanhm@cox.net

## In Touch

with The First Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Wichita

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*The deadlines for In Touch and for the  
monthly Calendar are the third Wednesday  
of each month. The next deadline is  
Dec. 16 to be mailed Dec. 23. Please  
submit items for this issue to:*

*newsletter@firstuu.net*

*or bring items to the church office.  
Late submissions may be omitted.*

## More Things in Heaven and Earth

Phone tag again! My attempts to contact my friend in Dallas for advice had failed. When days later we met and conversed, I was finally satisfied. The encounter, however, took place not over the phone but in Wichita while I lay asleep in bed. Some days later, my friend and I had occasion to talk again, only this time there was an intervening phone and I was wide awake. Unlike the earlier conversation, though, over the phone my friend never once touched on the point he had made in our dream encounter. Yet, when I made mention of the inner “dream” meeting, he endorsed as accurate the answer I had retrieved from sleep. Because this friend is above deceit, I accepted his statement. But I wondered *what happened?*

Another friend of mine has served for years as dean of one of America’s leading Ivy League schools. When we worked together as educators in New York decades ago, she became de facto head of our department without challenging or even arousing the awareness of the titular department head who had been happily functioning as a corporate puppet. But she re-directed the department toward innovative pedagogy. One time, she privately shared with me a revelation, claiming that while her body slept, her awareness often arrayed itself in subtle, ethereal form, and, then, in the company of other similarly empowered beings, she would counsel unhappy souls on the verge of suicide. She and her astral companions would entreat the soul to accept alternate strategies to obviate the death wish. Had I not been fully aware of her personal integrity, her professional acumen, her erudition and cognitive genius, her effective leadership skills, her disciplined lifestyle, and her consummate artistry as both poet and musician, I would have dismissed such an account as the mental detritus of a compulsive liar or deluded fool. But in her case, I could only file the disclosure under “could well be,” and leave it at that.

As a young boy, award-winning author and Unitarian Ray Bradbury met a traveling magician named Mr. Electrico who talked to him about reincarnation and immortality. In later years, Bradbury wrote: "I don't know if I believe in previous lives, I'm not sure I can live forever. But that young boy believed in both, and I have let him have his way. He has written all my stories and books for me." We have much cause to wonder, do we not? Was it not the Bard himself whose Hamlet averred: *There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy?*

Rev. David Carter

## Fair Trade and Ethical Tea Products for Christmas

The first Sunday in December we will have a new order of Fair Trade coffees, chocolates, and teas that will make excellent Christmas presents. In addition, we will have our first order of ethical teas from a specialty tea supplier with a broader range of teas. These new teas should make for some very attractive presents. Before you finish, or perhaps even begin, your Christmas shopping, please take a look at the products that we will have to offer. I think we have assembled an impressive collection. Remember that all products are purchased by the church and all proceeds (minus taxes) go to the church. I hope to raise \$1000 for the church through this effort, and you can help by picking up tasty items for your family and friends.

Charles Merrifield

## RE Corner

We've adopted an attitude of gratitude in our RE classes this month as we continue our work on peace and justice. We just completed a church community project and on the 29<sup>th</sup>, we will be creating a scrap wool garland to adorn our holiday food tree.

It is essential that all children and youth try to come to church through December as we will be rehearsing material for the intergenerational service on the 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be a special rehearsal on Saturday, December 19 from 10:00-12:00. Be on the look out for an e-mail reminder.

Once again, we're asking the congregation to bring canned goods, hats, gloves, and scarves in December to add to our tree. These will all be donated.

Have a safe and joy-filled Thanksgiving holiday.

Peace and Love,

Denise Jackson-Simon

WayCoolSundaySchoolWayCoolSundaySchoolWayCoolSu

## Getting on the Private Email Listserve

If you want to be on the private email listserv to exchange email messages that pertain to the business of the church, you can do so by going to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WichitaUUExclusive>, then clicking on the [Join this Group](#) button that is on the right hand corner of the screen. That action will tell Charles Merrifield that you wish to join the email group. If you are a member or friend of the church that is in the membership book or church directory or who can otherwise be verified, Charles will throw the necessary switches and lower the drawbridge for you to join the group. Charles may not check the listserv every day, so it may be a few days before you are accepted. To reduce wait time, send Charles an email at [cmerrifield@cox.net](mailto:cmerrifield@cox.net) that you have requested membership in the email group.

Charles Merrifield

## President's Report, November 2009

This month the board began hatching plans for our annual stewardship campaign. Together we determined to make this a joyful, ongoing activity involving the heart of our whole congregation, not just an exercise in assessing expenses and income. What can your church do for you? How can each of you help to bring your visions into reality?

I hope that we can view fiscal-year budgeting as an opportunity to define who we are, and then shape the dollars around that definition, rather than the other way around. As someone who, like many UUs, detests talking about money, I can honestly report to you that thus far in our (admittedly very early) process of campaign planning, the process actually has been fun! We've begun to shape thematic ideas, and, in addition to sparking creative pleasures, this process has allowed me to think about why and how I have been enriched by my membership in this church—a thinking (and feeling) process that I hope we all will experience throughout the year.

On other matters: Elaine Bulatkin is our music committee's new chair, and Jean Vaughn has joined the committee. We have invited church pianist candidates to audition. The music committee has requested funding for a dolly for the piano, to minimize problems with tuning after it is moved, and the musicians who performed at our recent Sunday chamber music concert generously donated their modest payments toward such a purchase.

I am grateful to President-Elect Trina Wheeler for stepping in until we can complete our search for a permanent building chair, and to Anne Bailey and Brent Weeks, our go-to help-mates on recent building-related concerns.

I followed with interest the recent listserv parking lot discussion, which mirrored board discussions over the past months and years. Charlie Jenney and Dave Lombard are working together to install a gate on the Bainbridge entryway, and Amy Geyer is working to install additional signage and handicap space allocations.

We plan to begin honoring volunteers at our twice yearly meetings, with a nomination at midyear and awards ceremony at the annual meeting. Many folks perform church tasks that most of us never even knew needed doing. These quiet champions, as well as the more visible ones, are who I hope we can honor when we meet twice annually in the dead of winter and again in the flowering of summer.

Shine on!

Annie Welsbacher

# Interfaith Peace Symposium

## A Workshop for Leaders of Faith Communities and Seminaries

*How Can Religious Congregations and Theological Schools  
Respond to the Challenges of Human Security?*

Meadville Lombard Theological School  
Chicago, Illinois  
December 12 and 13, 2009

Sponsored by

Meadville Lombard Theological School  
and  
Global Action to Prevent War

Featuring:

**Sharon Welch of Meadville Lombard Theological School**

**Susan Thistlethwaite of the Center for American Progress and  
Chicago Theological School**

**Robert Johansen of the Kroc Institute at the  
University of Notre Dame**

and a group of diversely skilled workshop facilitators

This event directed at US members of Global Action to Prevent War, interfaith youth leaders, the Association of Chicago Theological Schools, and the leadership of Unitarian Universalist congregations, is uniquely positioned both to provide insight on human security challenges for pastors-in-training and to help congregations better fulfill their local and global peacemaking responsibilities.

***UU ministers and peace leaders especially are encouraged to attend***

Enrollment is limited.

For more information or to indicate your plans to participate please contact:

Dr. Robert Zuber, Global Action, [zuber@globalactionpw.org](mailto:zuber@globalactionpw.org)  
or phone 212-818-1815

Dr. Sharon Welch, Meadville Lombard, [swelch@meadville.edu](mailto:swelch@meadville.edu)  
or phone 773-256-3000

**A Peace Ministry Network Event**

## Have you met Courtney Johnson? (new member 3/22/09)

Many years ago, Courtney Johnson felt that no religion was “the right fit” for her. She had tried Episcopalian and Methodist churches, but had never become fully involved, and remained a skeptic. She had grown up in a liberal-minded family, for whom religion was not a strong factor. In fact, it was this very open-mindedness— and Courtney’s skepticism-- that led her mother to suggest Unitarian Universalism.

After moving to Wichita about ten years ago, Courtney made occasional visits to Wichita First Unitarian Universalist Church but was not sure that she wanted to join. “I kind of dipped my toe in the water,” she explains. She began attending regularly last summer: she particularly wants her two children, now aged 5 and 7, to have a liberal religious experience. The main quality of UU members that attracted Courtney is “their respect and regard for people, regardless of their differences.” In addition to singing in the Family Choir with her children, she has joined the Stewardship Committee and is also interested in Religious Education. Courtney is a psychologist in private practice, specializing mainly in eating disorders and weight management. She works part time in order to spend more time with her family.

Vivien Minshull-Ford

Expecting life to treat you well  
because you are a good person  
is like expecting an angry bull  
not to charge  
because you are a vegetarian.

—Shari R. Barr, humorist

## Tips for a Greener Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is only a few days away. As one of the biggest, most-involved meals you’re likely to cook all year, a little advance planning can go a long way in making sure that your meal is as eco-friendly as it can be. Check out these tips:

### 1. Don't use disposables for the table...

Naturally you want to make clean-up easy, but try to avoid throwaway plates, cups, utensils, and napkins — no matter how many people you are expecting. Now's the time to bring out that china and nice glasses you rarely use. If you don't have enough of one pattern, feel free to mix and match (I like to alternate place settings of different patterns so that it looks intentional), and borrow what you don't have from one of your guests. Consider cloth napkins, too. Not only do they add elegance to the table, but they're better for the environment than paper ones.

### 2. ...Or for leftovers

I've always been amazed at the yards and yards of plastic wrap and aluminum foil that you can waste when wrapping up the leftovers. Instead, sort through all of your reusable plastic food storage containers now, match lids to bases, and put them somewhere accessible for the big day.

3. Supplement your side dishes at the farmer's market  
Hit your farmer's market now to get the best selection of locally grown and/or organic produce. Look for leafy greens for a sautéed side dish, root vegetables to roast, or even beautiful fall fruit (like apples or pears) to either use as a centerpiece, or to bake into a pie or a tart. Supporting local farmers is always an earth-friendly move, and having food from your foodshed on Thanksgiving can really help reinforce the message of the holiday.

### 4. Decorate with nature

While you're busy in the kitchen on Thanksgiving morning, send the rest of the family out to the yard or a local park to search for seasonal table decorations. Pinecones, Osage oranges (aka hedgeapples), or beautiful fall leaves piled in a bowl or on a platter can make a lovely centerpiece, and they're much more environmentally friendly than store bought decorations.

Any of these steps, however small, will not only help you host a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner, but will also help the environment.

Melanie Jenney

[From RecycleBank.com]

## Every Month at First UU:

**Full Moon Dances** are open to both women and men. Join in the dance to connect with the earth's power, celebrate the elements, and discover your personal power. Information: Kathy Hull 267-3860.

**New Moon Circle** meets at the church. Intended to complement the Full Moon Dances, we offer this time to gather on the New Moon for study, meditation, and ritual exploration of earth-centered spiritual growth. Information: Kathy Hull, 267-3860.

**Eclectic Readers** group meet the 3rd Friday of the month at 11:30 a.m. at the church. Contact: Marsha Ebaugh, 683-4782

**Book Discussion Group** meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Joe Brewer, 2531 N Roosevelt. You are welcome to attend whether or not you have read the book. Information: 686-8575

**Ethical Eating** group meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30pm with a potluck veg\*n meal followed by discussion. We are currently discussing the book *The World Peace Diet* by Will Tuttle. Information: Dianne Waltner, [dwaltner@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dwaltner@sbcglobal.net) or 946-1115.

**Family Choir** meets at 10 a.m. the 2nd Sunday to practice the song for that service. All ages welcome. Information: Denise Jackson-Simon, 644-2022

**Monday Movie Night** meets the Third Monday at 7 p.m. Critically acclaimed movies. Vivien Minshull-Ford, selects the films and leads the discussion after each showing. Series coordinator, Del Smith, 612-0826.

**Dinners for Eight.** Date varies. Contact Nancy Milner, 685-7682.

## Every Week at First UU:

**Southwind Sangha (Zen Buddhism): Introduction to Zen Meditation** the first Wednesday of every month, 7 pm. **Meditation** on Sundays (8 am); other Wednesdays (7 pm); Thursdays (6 pm) and on third Saturday (8 am-12 noon). **Discussion Group**, Monday (6 pm). Contacts, Del Smith, 612-0826, Meditation Sessions; Don Riley, 258-7622, Discussion Group.

**Tai Chi** classes. Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Cost: \$5.00 per class. Dress comfortably. Information: David Larsen, 612-4726 or [davidlarsen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davidlarsen@sbcglobal.net)

**Adult RE** meets Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the library. Current topic: The Old Testament.. Corey Swertfager, 201-6921

**Meditation and Book Discussion** Tuesday, 6 p.m., Bob Feleppa, 304-9170

**The Book Discussion Group** will be discussing *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman*, (*Adventures of a Curious Character*) on Wednesday, December 9, beginning at 7:30, at the home of Joe Brewer. A series of anecdotes shouldn't by rights add up to an autobiography, but that's just one of the many pieces of received wisdom that Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman (1918-88) cheerfully ignores in this engagingly eccentric book. You are welcome to join us even if you have not read the book. Please call 686-8575 for further information about our group.

**The Eclectic Readers Group** will be discussing *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi at its 11:30 am meeting on December 18. Bring a lunch if you wish. If you want to "read ahead," the group will read *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel for discussion on December 18. There are many copies available throughout the Wichita Public Library system.

## December 21 Movie Night - *HEDWIG & THE ANGRY INCH*

Movie Night regular Jenny Findling chose *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* for December 21. The 2001 American musical film won the Best Director and Audience Awards at the Sundance Film Festival as well as numerous other awards. The plot involves a fictional rock and roll band fronted by an East German transgendered singer. (No summarization will be attempted.) Anne Bailey, a Movie Night regular, enthusiastically recommends it to anyone who enjoys movies which are off the beaten track.

Join us at 7 pm in the Gathering Space for an interesting movie, with the discussion led by Jenny Findling. Decaf coffee available. Bring snacks to share.

**Reminder** - There will be no Green Sanctuary Committee meeting in December.

# December 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 6pm Meditation and Book Discussion 7pm Tai Chi 7pm Full Moon Dance	2 6pm Membership Committee 7pm Buddhist Meditation	3 6pm Buddhist Meditation 7pm Financial Commitment Committee	4	5 6:30pm White Elephant Gift Exchange
6 8am Buddhist Med 9:30a Adult RE 12:15pm First Sunday Lunch	7 6pm Buddhist Discussion	8 6pm Meditation and Book Discussion 7pm Tai Chi	9 4:30pm Communication Team 7pm Buddhist Meditation	10 6pm Buddhist Meditation 7pm Aesthetics Committee	11	12 9am-12pm Xmas Potluck for KEC Group
13 8am Budd. Med 9:30a Adult RE 10am Sun. Sing. 12:15 Lead Coun	14 6pm Buddhist Discussion 6:30pm Meatless Monday	15 6:00p Meditation and Book Discussion 6:30pm New Moon Circle 7:00p Tai Chi	16 7:00p Buddhist Meditation 7:30p Book Discussion at Brewer's	17 6pm Buddhist Meditation	18 11:30a Eclectic Readers	19 8am—12pm Buddhist Silent Retreat 10am-12pm Children's Rehearsal
20 8am Buddhist Med 9:30am Adult RE 9:30am RE Comm. 12:30p Seek Circle 5pm Vegan Holiday	21 6pm Buddhist Discussion Group 7pm Worship Committee 7:00p Movie Night	22 6:00p Meditation and Book Discussion 7:00p Tai Chi	23 <b>7pm Board Meeting</b> 7pm Buddhist Meditation <b>NEWSLETTERCAL- ENDAR DEADLINE</b>	24 6pm Buddhist Meditation	25 OFFICE CLOSED FOR HOLIDAYS	26 10am Caring Committee
27 8am Buddhist Meditation 9:30am Adult RE	28 6pm Buddhist Discussion Group	29 6:00p Meditation and Book Discussion 7:00p Tai Chi	30 9:30am Newsletter Mailing 7pm Buddhist Meditation 7pm Full Moon Dance	31 6pm Buddhist Meditation		

First Unitarian Universalist Church  
7202 E 21st St N  
Wichita, KS 67206

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See our website  
at  
[Firstuu.net](http://Firstuu.net)

## Sunday Programs at First UU

**Every Sunday: 9:30a Adult Religious Exploration**  
**11:00a Children's Religious Exploration**  
**11:00a Worship Service**

11/29 ***What we are thankful for*** - Annie Welsbacher  
12/6 ***Singlehood*** - Jason Dilts  
12/13 ***UU History Part 2*** - Rev. David Carter  
12/20 **TBA**  
12/24 **Evening service**  
12/27 **On Giving** - Rev. David Carter

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### ***Vision Statement***

It is our vision:

To be a growing, inclusive, vital congregation that encourages shared values amidst differing beliefs and nurtures creative exploration of intellectual and spiritual paths.

To be a visible community leader that promotes human equity and compassion, and celebrates life through the arts.

### ***Mission Statement***

Our mission, consistent with Unitarian Universalist principles, is to provide a joyful, safe, healing environment where diversity is embraced. We will inspire and uplift the whole person through enriching programs and services for all ages, and serve the larger community through social action and active promotion of the arts.