



# In Touch

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Wichita  
founded in 1887

April 2010



## Chamber Concert Features Three Friends

On Sunday, April 18, at 3:00 p.m. at First Unitarian Universalist Church, Laura Clark Martinez, Gabrielle Harvey and Krissy Moler will present a program of chamber music for cello, violin and double-bass. These three young women met at WSU where they played in a quartet together. (Laura says, "A very good quartet.")

Now, they live in different cities, but still enjoy playing together when possible. Laura completed her Master in Cello Performance and is now living in Thornton, Colorado. Gabrielle is working on a Doctorate in Violin at the University of Iowa. Krissy completed her undergraduate degree in Music Performance on the Double-bass and will soon finish her Bachelor of Music Education degree, also from WSU.

The afternoon's program will open with Laura's performance of *Suite for Solo Cello* by Gaspar Cassado. Next, all three women will play 2 Trios from *Appalachia Waltz* entitled: *Chief Sitting in the Rain* and *College Hornpipe*. Following intermission, Gabrielle will perform *Sonata No. 2 for Violin Solo* by the Polish woman composer, Grazyna Bacewicz. The program will conclude with Zoltan Kodaly's *Duo for Violin and Cello, Op. 7*. As usual, a donation of \$5 is suggested to help with the cost of producing this series. Refreshments (including cookies, of course) will follow the concert. Do plan to attend this lovely afternoon of chamber music!

Carol Neighbor

the hour. Alongside the meditation sessions going on with Rev. Carter a couple of rooms over, our building on Wednesday evenings is fairly bursting with serenity!

At our March board meeting, we discussed the 2010 UUA General Assembly, to be held in Minneapolis June 23–27 (visit [uua.org/events/generalassembly](http://uua.org/events/generalassembly)). First UU Wichita has voting delegate slots, and the board will appoint these people at our April meeting. Anyone interested in attending GA and/or in being a voting delegate, please let me know. We also had a preliminary discussion on the process of evaluating our minister and receiving congregational feedback to help us determine our future relationship with Rev. Carter. Our treasurer noted that our income is lower than it should be for this point in the year; we encourage any folks behind on their pledges to catch up before the end of our fiscal year, just around the corner.

About 90 percent of my recent activities have been with the Financial Campaign Committee, this year made up of our board plus church member Pat Felton. Our kickoff dinner is March 27 at 6:30, and we promise a great evening of food and fun. You

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## From the President

I've met with our office manager and committee chairs regarding personnel and procedures, particularly with the music and worship committees, which both have new chairs. I'm also seeking a chair for our membership committee—any persons interested in joining the committee and/or chairing, please let me know.

I have enjoyed attending sits with the Southwind Sangha Buddhists, and especially have enjoyed the difference in my head by the end of

## 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 dead-  
line is Apr.21 to be mailed Apr. 28. Please  
submit items for this issue to:*

*newsletter@firstuu.net*

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

**BASKET OF BARGAINS**  
book sale will close  
March 28th.

**Buy now!!!**

**Remainders will go to  
Goodwill or Friends of the  
Public Library.**

## Minister's Musings

Surprised by Joy

Scrawled across the slide were the words: "Everything was beautiful and nothing hurt." Poised on a park bench I puzzled over this graffiti while my two-year old son tackled the jungle gym. The words struck me as droll. Whoever had scrawled that aphorism had already absconded, leaving behind only this trace to vex me. Was it irony the artist intended? A good case could be made for the ironic because just opposite the park where I puzzled and my son played towered Wesley Medical Center, and within its jurisdiction, each day hundreds of people bear intense suffering. Some are disfigured, some dismembered, some disabled. And many die. The irony seemed inescapable.

With one sharp eye, I monitored my toddler's wobbly acrobatics as he mounted the sliding pond to hazard another descent, and with the other I squinted at the graffiti while meditating on humankind's penchant for self delusion. I mean, honestly, how often has it been your experience that "everything is beautiful and nothing hurts?" We who have lived many years know better, don't we? Everything is not beautiful, and quite a lot hurts. There is always a fly in the ointment. But to be fair, and in an effort to temper my typical "bah humbug!" response, I mused as follows: maybe the words were sincere. Maybe the graffiti artist had just been discharged from the hospital and in the ecstasy of an unexpected turn of events dashed off the words to celebrate. Not everyone has a horrendous experience in the hospital, so it is not inconceivable that one might honestly exclaim: "Reluctantly, I underwent the dreaded ordeal, and lo, "everything was beautiful and nothing hurt!"

Try as I might, I couldn't buy it. Instead, Albert Schweitzer's words flashed to mind: "Happiness is nothing more than good health and a bad memory." Schweitzer probably wouldn't have believed the breezy dictum either. A Unitarian/Lutheran doctor and philanthropist, he was acutely aware of humanity's suffering, and dedicated himself to its alleviation. His witticism points to the age-old wisdom that in this world there are only two types of happy people--the fool and the soul enlightened. Accordingly, all who profess happiness (with the exception of the enlightened) are disingenuous, self-deluded, or foolish. I concluded that the graffiti artist was either a fool or he was putting us on. The world is simply too heavy with suffering.

For seven years, I ministered to the suffering as a hospice chaplain. Did my work make me happy? Yes and no. On the one hand, I was happy to be able to help, and many times I was instrumental in bringing comfort and even joy those suffering. On the other hand, too often, I could do little or nothing to mitigate the anguish of others. Thus my happiness was tainted. Even when I succeeded, there was still a flavor of sorrow and loss. I saw small children bereaved of parents, lovers wrenched apart, people beset with uncontrolled physical or spiritual

*(Continued on page 3)*

### R. E. Corner

Thank you to all who participated in Surprise Friends. It was a joy to see you come together at the service and for 1st Sunday lunch. I encourage you all to continue nurturing your new friendships.

Our Pennies for Peace campaign has been coming along nicely. We've transferred the pennies to a bucket and will continue collecting until the end of March. I will then have the bank count it, give us a money order, and send it to Central Asia Institute. Thank you everyone for contributing. The children and youth have been very excited about this project.

And one more thank you to all those who participated in "Build a Bridge " for the James Reeb Memorial Service. You did a great job!

We will continue with our peace and tolerance curriculum and look forward to Easter and Earth Day celebrations in April.

It's great to see all of you in church on Sundays! Keep comin' because you know "It's much more fun when you are there!"

Denise Jackson-Simon  
Director of Religious Exploration

WayCoolSundaySchoolWayCoolSundaySchoolWayCoolSu

### UU Singles Potluck & Game Night

**Sunday, April 4, 5:00 p.m.  
at the church**

**No RSVP required**

**Everyone is welcome!**

### Minister's Musings *(Continued from page 2)*

pain die without resolution or respite. Often I wished I could have met and helped years earlier those anguished souls whom I was now meeting too late.

Is this all to say that life, at its root, is miserable? Not at all. Despite its being pied with joys and sorrows, life lived courageously, with a willingness to confront fear, gives rise to a surprising joy. But before we can be surprised by joy, we must affirm that our own mortality is at odds with our heart's fondest desire: to live forever in health, beauty, and joy. Honesty about and practical inquiry into the factors that give rise to our existential dilemma will awaken the impulse toward spiritual realization. And it is this realization only that will surprise us with joy and snuff out our existential angst. Only then can we say with the wise (and not the self-deluded) that everything is beautiful and nothing hurts.

Rev. David Carter

### Lost & Found

**Lost & Found items are lingering on the shelf above the coat rack at First UU. Please check to see if there is anything of yours.**

**After Sunday, April 4, all of the items will find a new home at Wichita Goodwill.**

### The Reeb Award in 2011 and beyond...

Consider adding to the Reeb Award Fund so that it can be given annually, rather than every few years. Donation envelopes are available on the information table outside the office and on the Reeb Book Collection shelf in the library. Any amount is welcomed! Make checks to First UU with Reeb Award in the memo line.

*Note: This year, the financial commitment committee has asked people who were involved in First UU as kids and have since moved away to tell us how their lives were affected by our church. Sam Thompson, Janet Thompson's son, was a youth with First UU in the 1970s and early 1980s. He writes the second in a series of testimonials.*

## **My Church, My Mother's Church: Sam Thompson**

I was seven years old the summer we moved to Wichita. It was impossibly hot compared to Marietta, Ohio, and Riverside was filled with older retired folks. Our landlord's dad, who lived down the street, introduced me to some of the neighborhood kids who flocked to his garage for a "bottle-a-pop." It was 1965, and Wichita was segregated and *very* conservative. There was a big billboard on Highway 54 sponsored by the John Birch Society that said "Impeach Earl Warren." Wichita was the buckle of the Bible Belt, and we knew we weren't in Ohio anymore.

I started second grade and my best friend (a man I still know and consider a friend) attended Olivet Southern Baptist Church. His family was very kind to me, and I spent a lot of time with them. I remember spending an afternoon cracking rocks open with a hammer. Jay showed me a cavity he found and suggested "maybe this is the serpent's footprint!" Serpents? Feet? What is this you speak of? Jay's family invited me to attend Sunday school with him, and when I told my mother, Janet, she responded without skipping a beat: "Oh, didn't I tell you? This Sunday we're going to visit the Unitarian Church!" Thus was I saved from fundamentalism.

Mom and I attended First Unitarian Universalist Church from the time I was 7 until I went to college, and Mom continued to be a member until she had to come to Iowa due to the effects of Alzheimer's Disease a few years ago (a decision no amount of social finesse could defer). During that time, I attended Sunday school, where we learned a good deal about other religions and were encouraged to develop our own personal spirituality and to decide for ourselves what we thought. When I decided I'd rather come to the meeting house and listen to Don Vaughn and, later, Greta Crosby, I was wel-

comed and included. I was encouraged to sing with the choir, and to sing as part of many services. My love of music was nurtured by the many warm, accepting people in this village, and I came to love the fellowship, and to look forward to Sunday mornings, as well as Friday night choir practices and subsequent choir parties. What I remember most was the feeling that I was welcome, accepted, and loved by folks who were genuinely interested in me, my ideas, and my passions.

This community of UUs was for me a great extended family. (Do you remember when we voluntarily allowed ourselves to be assigned to "extended families" who met and had supper and got to know each other?) I would love to mention all the people I appreciate, one by one, many of whom are not with us anymore, but all of whom were kind, interested, funny, challenging, and most of all individuals with defined, thoughtful points of view. If I name names, I know I'll leave someone out, or worse, go on and on and on (which I do enough, thank you). Suffice to say that along the way I became comfortable with my own spirituality, with my own relationship with mystery, and with sharing this with my somewhat more concretely religious friends. I learned to respect others and accept that there are many ways up the mountain. I learned the power of ambiguity, a necessary lesson for a secular humanist youth.

I'm not a regular church attender, nor do I belong to a UU church here in Iowa. There's a great old People's Church here, started by a group of Free Thinkers who became Unitarians when the Unitarian Church in Chicago agreed to pay off their debts. There are lots of old radicals who attend there, and when Mom moved here I took her a few times. She cried during the service, she missed all of you so. It was not just for the loss of your fellowship she cried, of course. Creeping dementia is a curse, not in the least because for a good while you can measure the course of your own decline. People's Church was too clear a reminder for her.

I used to work as a social worker in a rural high school in a county south of here, and one of the kids I talked to a lot was a young man who was

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## My Church *(Continued from page 4)*

very religious in a fundamentalist way. He wanted to be a minister, and I daresay he became one. He practiced a lot with his peers and tried over and over again to engage me, to witness, to find out what I believed so that he could assure that I was saved. He was a nice kid, and I gently parried his frequent questions, letting him know that I was fine. One day he gave up all subtlety and blurted: “Mr. Thompson, *where* do you worship?”

“Everywhere I go,” I responded. “Everywhere I go.”

To quote a famous UU wag, I am not a member of an organized religion. I am a Unitarian. Please accept my loving and sincere thanks for welcoming me and allowing me to grow up among you.

With love,  
Sam Thompson  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

## From the President

*(Continued from page 1)*

should see other evidence of the committee’s efforts around the church (literally!) very soon. You also will hear from visiting stewards about our mutual wishes and needs. Many of you have already pledged—as of mid-March, more than one quarter of our membership—and we’re already almost one-third of the way to our campaign goal of \$157,308. Thank you! I’m excited about the interactive fun we’ve got planned as we reach out to one another to discuss our priorities and how we can make them happen—together. I’m floored at the energy and time the Financial Campaign Committee and our stewards have put into this year’s campaign. I am very grateful—and proud—of every one of them, and especially of all of you in your pledges and participation. Shine on!

Annie Welsbacher  
President

## Surprising ways to reuse aluminum foil

*Excerpted from an article by Jeff Yeager, The Green Cheapskate, and brought to you courtesy of the Green Sanctuary Committee!*

### Sharpen scissors and garden shears:

Fold used foil so that it's six to eight layers thick, then cut thru it a few times with dull scissors to instantly sharpen them. To sharpen hefty garden and pruning shears, fold the foil so that it's even thicker.

### Reduce static cling:

I don't understand how it works, but if you throw a crumpled piece of aluminum foil into the clothes dryer, it seems to magically reduce static electricity. A true miracle of cheapskate science.

### Make shoe/boot forms:

Wad up balls of old foil and stuff them into leather boots and shoes to help them keep their form when you're not wearing them.

### Texture paint and plaster:

Use crumpled up foil to add interesting texture to painting and plastering projects. Also when you're painting, old foil is handy for masking doorknobs and other fixtures you don't want painted and for wrapping your paintbrushes and rollers in during a lunch break.

### Deter pets and other animals:

For no apparent reason, our cat started using our fireplace instead of her litter box. We put a couple of sheets of used aluminum foil on the floor of the fireplace – which cats, dogs, and other animals can't stand – to break her of that bad habit. Hang strips of used foil on strings around the garden to deter birds, deer, and other unwanted pests, too.

### Protect young plants:

Make a collar out of used foil to fit loosely around the stems of young tomato plants and other plant starts in order to keep cutworms and other insects at bay.

### Make metals shine:

Scrub rust off of steel and chrome with a wad of aluminum foil instead of using steel wool – it works even better.

<http://www.ultimatecheapskate.com/articles/>

## 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. Tue, 4/27, 6:30 pm. Beltane potluck. Bring food to share. 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. Tue., 4/13 7:00 pm. Information: Kathy Hull, 267-3860.

**Eclectic Readers** group meet the 3rd Friday of the month at 11:30 a.m. at the church. Contact: Anne Bailey, 943-3861.

**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 every month at 6:30. Bring a vegan dish to share. Contact Dianne Waltner, 946-1115 or [dwaltner@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dwaltner@sbcglobal.net), for additional information.

**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.

**Membership Committee** meets the 4th Sunday at 10:00 am.

**Personnel Committee** meets the 4th Sunday at 10:15 am in the library.

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

**Music Committee** meets the 1st Sunday during 1st Sunday Lunch.

## Every Week at First UU:

**Southwind Sangha** Zen Buddhist Meditation meets at the church. Introductory session, 7 pm, first Wednesday. Also meets 8-9 am on Sundays, 7-8 pm on Wednesdays and 6-6:45 pm on Thursdays. Half day retreat on third Saturdays, 8 am to 12 noon. Information: <http://www.southwindsangha.org/>, or Kathryn Riley, 84-8819 or Del Smith 612-0826.

**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 southwest corner R.E. room. Current topic: Questions of Value. Corey Swertfager, 201-6921

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

On the second Wednesday evening in April the **Book Discussion** Group will be talking about Abigail Adams, wife of our second President, John Adams, mother of our sixth President, John Quincy Adams, and an early Unitarian. We did not choose a specific book since there have been many written about her life so you are free to borrow a book of your own choosing. Join us at the home of Joe Brewer beginning at 7:30 on April 7, 2010

On Friday, April 16, **Eclectic Readers** will meet at the church at 11:30 for lively discussion and lunch. We will discuss *Charlatan* by Pope Brock. It is about the Goat Gland Doctor who operated for a time in Kansas. For May we will be reading *The Soloist* by Steve Lopez. This is an open group. If you are available over the lunch hour, we'd love to have you join us.

## April 18 Movie Night Pick: *Waltz with Bashir*

This Israeli film is at once a memoir, a history lesson, investigative journalism and war documentary. The director, Ari Folman, decided to use animation in order to record his personal dreams, hallucinations and distorted memories of his experience as a soldier in the Lebanon war of 1982. The core of *Waltz with Bashir* is a series of conversations between the director and other middle-aged Israeli men (photography), each telling his own story of his part in the Lebanon war and the Sabra and Shatila massacres. The "flashbacks" to the actual events of the war are done in animation, blending literal images with surreal flights of fantasy, humor and horror.

A.O. Scott, the New York Times film reviewer, notes that *Waltz With Bashir* has attracted a lot of attention and also controversy. The director pursues the ethical questions surrounding a historical catastrophe and its aftermath, specifically the massacre of Palestinians by Lebanese Phalangist fighters at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. He probes the responsibility of the ordinary soldiers who were nearby, "witnesses and (mostly inadvertent) accomplices to the killing." (Subtitled, Running time: 1 hour 27 minutes.)

Vivien Minshull-Ford will introduce the movie at 7 pm and facilitate the discussion afterward. Decaf coffee provided. Bring snacks to share.

# April 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6pm Buddhist Meditation	2 OFFICE CLOSED	3
4 8am Buddhist Med 9:30am Adult RE 12pm First Sun Lunch 12:15pm Music Com 5pm Singles Potluck	5 OFFICE CLOSED 6pm Buddhist Discussion Group	6 6pm Meditation and Book Discussion 7pm Tai Chi 7pm Green Sanctuary Committee	7 6pm Children's Meditation 6:30pm Meditation Class 7pm Buddhist Med	8 6pm Buddhist Meditation 7pm Aesthetics Committee	9	10
11 8am Buddhist Med 9:30am Adult RE 10am 2nd Sun Singer 12:15pm Leadership Council	12 6pm Buddhist Discussion Group 6:30pm Meatless Mondays	13 7pm New Moon Circle 7pm Meditation and Book Discussion 7pm Tai Chi	14 6pm Child's Meditation 6:30pm Meditate Class 7pm Buddhist Med 7:30pm Book Discussion at Brewer's	15 6pm Buddhist Meditation 7pm Private Event-NOW 7pm Worship Comm	16 11:30am Eclectic Readers Group	17 8am-12pm Buddhist Silent Retreat
18 8am Buddhist Med 9:30am Adult RE 9:30am RE Committee 9:30am Seeking Circle 3pm Chamber Concert	19 6pm Buddhist Discussion Group 7pm Movie Night	20 6pm Meditation and Book Discussion 7pm Tai Chi	21 NEWSLETTER CALENDAR DEADLINE 6pm Child's Meditation 6:30pm Meditate Class 7pm Buddhist Med 7pm Board Meeting	22 6pm Buddhist Meditation	23	24 10am Caring Committee 12pm-6pm Private Event- Allen/Santry Wedding
25 8am Buddhist Med 9:30am Adult RE 10am Membership Committee 10:15am Personnel Committee	26 6pm Buddhist Discussion Group	27 6pm Meditation and Book Discussion 7pm Tai Chi 7pm Full Moon Dance and Beltane Potluck	28 9:30am Newsletter Mailing 6pm Child's Meditation 6:30pm Meditate Class 7pm Buddhist Med	29 6pm Buddhist Meditation	30	

First Unitarian Universalist Church  
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## Sunday Programs at First UU

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

- 3/28** *The Art of Suffering* - Rev. David Carter  
An illustration of the redemptive, transformative and medicinal power to be found through suffering
- 4/4** **Spring poetry/equinox**  
Readers: Amy Geyer, Suzanna Matthews & others
- 4/11** *Motherhood in Fiction and Fact* - Rev. David Carter
- 4/18** *What if????* - Inga Taylor
- 4/25** *Onboard Spaceship Earth* - 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.