

March 2019

The Flame



**The Monthly Newsletter of
First Unitarian Church of
Omaha**

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Sunday Services

Pages 4 & 5

Church Events

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Stewardship
Campaign

Sunday Services

Sunday, March 3 at 10:30am
“Breathing World Peace: Spreading the Seed of Mindfulness to Other People Is a Form of Political Activism”
Forrest Knapp

Sunday, March 10 at 10:30am
“A UU Haggadah”
Rev. Michelle LaGrave
 Religious freedom is always a struggle, even for Unitarians and Universalists. What does it mean, exactly, to be religiously free? Does religious freedom have limits? If so, what are they? Join Rev. Michelle and the Coming of Age class as together they tell some of the stories about how our own faith has struggled to be religiously free.

Sunday, March 17 at 10:30am
“Hearts Broken Open”
Rev. Michelle LaGrave
 What happens when we are able to be vulnerable and allow another person to see the essence of who we are? These are moments in which we can choose to extend grace to one another; a human grace which is just as sacred and as holy as any form of divine grace.

Sunday, March 24 at 10:30am
“Oneness: Thoughts on a Humanistic Theology of Everything”
Rev. Ron Knapp, Minister Emeritus
 Some of you may know that I have been trying to write a book on a theology of everything. I see oneness in life, human being, and universe and earth. This service—with thoughts, readings and music—will be present an overview of that theology.

Sunday, March 31 at 10:30am
“Right Relations and You”
The Right Relations Committee
 What are the responsibilities of members at First Unitarian Church in helping establish a Right Relations Committee? How should individual members take part in creating a climate of right relationship in this congregation?

Sunday Forum

We only have ONE forum each month. The forum will focus on the Soul Matters topic for that month. This month’s forum information:

Sunday, March 3 at 9:30am in the Common Room.
Soul Matters Monthly Topic: “
What Does It Mean To Be A People of Journey”
With Michael McAtee

We UUs love to tell our journey stories. And hear each other’s journey stories. Whereas other religions have newcomers stand up and confess their fallen ways or declare a commitment to one way, we invite each other to talk about how our way is like no other.” —Excerpt from February’s Soul Matters Small Group Packet

Come join us for a taste of the Soul Matters small group experience. Due to forum time constraints and the openness of the venue the following process will be used: 1) Quick review of the SM’s small group covenant and procedures; 2) A group reading of the topic summary and associated questions; 3) Five to ten minutes of contemplation on the materials; 4) Voluntary sharing by individual participants of their chosen question and response; 5) Group discussion focused on previously shared questions and responses. The topic summary and questions can be reviewed by [clicking here](#) or contacting the church office.

Spring Forward

Before you head to bed on **Saturday, March 9** be sure to set your clock forward an hour. It’s time to spring ahead!

Ministerial Musings from the Interim Minister

By Rev. Michelle LaGrave

About a year ago, I went shopping in a local store. I was, as usual, accompanied by my service dog, Bella, who is a mobility service dog. She helps me by picking up things I drop and getting help for me when I need it, among many other tasks. I was surprised to overhear two older men talking about me from the other end of the aisle. They were looking around rather helplessly when one of them said, “She can’t help us, she’s blind” and then turned away to look for help elsewhere. They did this despite the fact that I was wearing glasses and picking up items to look at them before placing them in my cart.



I’ve been noticing lately that we humans often see what it is we expect to see. These two men apparently were familiar with the use of guide dogs for the blind so when they saw a service dog they also saw a blind person. Information that would have contradicted their conclusion was ignored or maybe even not noticed at all. They saw what they expected to see.

Over the years, I’ve noticed that church members sometimes talk about their churches from a similar perspective. For whatever reason and from whatever event in the past life of their congregation, they don’t expect to see much to be proud about in their church and so they don’t; whereas I, as a relative newcomer, can see an array of impressive attributes.

During this time of transition, when the future of this congregation might seem a little less than clear, I encourage you to examine your own expectations. Are there positive aspects of your community you haven’t seen because you don’t expect to? Have you ignored or not noticed certain attributes? What is going *right* in your congregation and what can you do to build on it from there?

In the end, I was glad those two older gentlemen thought I couldn’t help them as it turned out they had been looking for *maxi-pads*. I do wonder, though, if we had exited the store at the same time what the expressions on their faces would have looked like when I got in my car and drove away...

In faith,
Rev. Michelle

Note: Rev. Michelle will be on leave from March 18th to March 31st. If you have a caring issue, please email the church office at admin@firstuuomaha.org or call the office 402-345-3039 ext. 101.

The President’s Letter to the Congregation

Dear Members and Friends,

To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven. We are about to embark upon the most important season of the church year: Stewardship season! The purpose of Stewardship season is to reflect upon the immense value of our church community, and to show how much it means to us by pledging our annual monetary contribution. What we put in as money to support this church and its programs we get back tenfold in the form of community, family, belonging, and spiritual fulfillment, in addition to tangible items such as toilet paper, electricity, paint, books, candles, and much, MUCH, more!

During Stewardship season, many of us shy away from having difficult conversations about money. UUs statistically have one of the lowest percentages of pledging of any denomination. We don’t have any bargaining chips such as threats of hellfire and damnation and sin. For many of us, our personal finances may perpetually be a hot mess due to circumstances or debt. Not everyone can be a pillar, but can you be a brick? Can you be a nail? We need every ten thousand dollar per year pledge, and we need every fifty dollar per year pledge. When you give money to the church, you are writing volume two of our church history, you are paying for the next 100 years of our building, you are helping our congregation last another 150 years.

(Continued on page 9)

Church Events

Stewardship Campaign 2019-2020

The whole month of March. Our annual pledge drive helps the church operate all year long. See pages 6-11.

CommUnity Night

Friday, March 1 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. The main dish is provided by RE. Everyone is welcome to come! The campaign will start with a family viewing and sing along of Mary Poppins in the during CommUnity Night. See page 7.

Young Adult Discussion Group

Sunday, March 3 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Classroom. This group welcomes everyone ages 18-35 from all over the Omaha metro. Questions? Please email: youngadults@firstuomaha.org.

People's Film Festival

Monday, March 4 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *Human Flow*, a film that explores the heartbreaking global refugee crisis. Over 65 million people have been forced from their homes to escape famine, climate change, and war since WWII.

Compassionate Communication Group

Meets the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the Common Room. Using Compassionate Communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg, PhD, we learn to connect with ourselves and others with empathy and to act in greater harmony with our values. Learning to communicate more compassionately, like speaking a new language, takes practice. Contact Suzanne: nvcsuz@gmail.com for details. If you need childcare, please let us know at least two weeks in advance.

Breaking Bread for Believers

Tuesday, March 5 at 6:30pm in the Merritt Lounge. Are you a Believer or a Christian in any form? This group is to share/express Christian beliefs. As Unitarians, ALL religious and spiritual paths should be considered equally valid and therefore need to be represented within our community. This group will give you a sanctuary to hold those spiritual beliefs close to your

heart. In March, we will begin a book discussion on *Understanding the Bible: An Introduction for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals* by John Buehrens. This book is available at the UU Bookstore, Amazon, and on Kindle. If you need a copy or if you have questions, please contact Denise at denise.allain@yahoo.com.

Poster-Making Event

Saturday, March 9, 11am to 2pm in the Common Room. Posters and markers will be available. Email Peg at sjconnect@firstuomaha.org with questions. See more info on page 15.

Spring Forward—don't forget to set your clocks forward an hour before heading to bed Saturday, March 9th.

Leadership Talk Back

Sunday, March 10 at 11:30am in the Common Room. The MTC and the Church Board want to hear from you. Have questions? Suggestions? Please join your church leaders at a table in the Common Room during coffee.

Women's Alliance

Monday, March 11 in the Common Room. Socializing and beverages start at 6:15pm and dinner at 6:30pm. All who identify as women are invited to attend this gathering. Our dinner and program will be provided by the ladies of the Hashem family, the Syrian family that many in the church have been involved with for the past two and a half years. Freewill Donation: We ask for a freewill donation of \$15, which goes to the cost of food and the Merritt Education Fund. Please let us know if you are a first time attendee. Need childcare to join us? No problem! RSVP with your child's name and age. RSVP FOR CHILDCARE NO LATER THAN Monday, March 4. PLEASE RSVP TO ATTEND NO LATER THAN Friday, March 8. Please RSVP via the [Facebook event page](#) or by EMAILING Denise Allain at denise.allain@yahoo.com.

Atheists, Humanists, & Agnostics Meeting (AHA)

Thursday, March 14 in the Common Room. Come at 6pm and bring your

own dinner. Meeting starts at 7pm. Topic: "How Does Humanism Fit into the Unitarian Universalist Church?" Members and friends of our congregation who are curious about Humanism and how it fits into Unitarian Universalism are invited to join us as we take an in-depth look at the three Humanist Manifestos and compare them with the Unitarian Universalist seven principles. Rev. Michelle will open the evening with a few words about her observations and experiences with Humanism within the UU Church.

Young Adult Game Night

Friday, March 15 at 6pm in the Common Room. All are invited to join the Young Adults for this event. We will have childcare! Bring snacks and board games. Questions? Email: youngadults@firstuomaha.org.

Belly Dance Sampler

Saturday, March 16, 2-3:30pm in the Common Room. March 8th is International Women's Day and March is Women's History Month. Ladies, let us celebrate our history and ourselves with dance—belly-dance. Della Bynum will teach some of the foundation movements of belly dance and then everyone will dance them. This is a great way to relax, have fun, and check-in with yourself. Cost: Donation. Reserve your spot and get more details by emailing della@delladancing.com with March 16th on the subject line.

People's Film Festival

Monday, March 18 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *Imprisoning a Generation*, a documentary film following the stories of four young Palestinians who have been detained and imprisoned under the Israeli military and political systems. Their perspectives, along with the voices of their families, combine to form a lens into the entangled structures of oppression that expand well beyond the prison walls.

More events on next page...

Church Events

The 3F Book Bonanza Group

Wednesday, March 20 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. The book we'll read is *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell.

If you have questions, please email: denise.allain@yahoo.com.

The books for April and May are listed below and those meeting will be on the 2nd Friday of the month as usual.

April book: *Alias Grace* by Margaret Atwood; May book: *Future Home of the Living God* by Louise Eldridge.

Women's Religious Studies Covenant Group

Thursday, March 21 at 1pm in the lounge. This group meets the 3rd Thursday of each month. Our book is *Lifecraft* by Forrest Church. We welcome all self-identified women. If you're interested, please contact Rae: raeb1@hotmail.com.

First Steps Class

Sunday, March 24 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Classroom. Join us for an introduction to First Unitarian Church and Unitarian Universalism. This session is run by Carrie, our membership coordinator. All are welcome to attend. See page 17.

CUUPS: Ostara

Sunday, March 24 at 6pm in the Common Room. We'll be creating Vision Eggs to attract and rebirth hope and/or something into your life that you want to manifest or have return, if you have lost it. Vision or rebirthing egg is an old custom dating back to the Druids in Gaul and Celtic areas of current day France and England. The custom honors Ostara, Goddess of Spring and fertility. Questions? Email CUUPS@firstuomaha.org.

Book Club

Monday, March 25 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. Our selection is *This Blessed Earth* by Ted Genoways. Questions? Contact Dave at drichardson821@gmail.com.

Stewardship Brunch

Sunday, March 31 during Coffee Hour. All are welcome! This event is followed by a Kite Festival in Turner Park. See page 8.

Recurring Events

Women's Religious Studies Group

This group meets every Thursday, except for the 3rd week of the month at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. We're reading *Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and the Environment* by Manish Mishra-Marzetti and Jennifer Nordstrom, Editors. For questions, please contact Marcia at mkleise@cox.net.

Dharma Chautauqua

Every Thursday, 6pm to 7:30pm, in the Whitney Young Classroom. More info can be found online: dharma.chautauqua.drycreekhost.net/.

Bridge Group

Meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month in the Conference Room at 11:30am. Contact Scott Kemper at scott.kemper@gmail.com.

YRUU (Youth Group)

Meets every Wednesday at 7pm in the Common Room. For more info, contact Jan at DRE@firstuomaha.org.

Choir Rehearsals

Every Wednesday at 7pm in the Sanctuary. For more info, email: choirdirector@firstuomaha.org.

Parent's Choice Listening Circle

Meets the 2nd Sunday of the month at 11:45am in the Merritt Lounge. For questions or to join, please contact Sarah Eades Hamilton (402-306-6339) seades.hamilton@gmail.com.

AHA Listening Circle--Open to new members!

Meets the 3rd Sunday of the month at 11:45am in the Merritt Lounge. Please contact AHA@firstuomaha.org with questions.

Future Events

CommUnity Night—Special Event Farewell to Jan, our DRE

Friday, April 5 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. This monthly potluck

event is open to everyone. This month, we say farewell to Jan Wilson who is retiring from the church in May. Help us celebrate Jan!

Team Leaders Meeting

Saturday, April 6 at 9am in the Common Room. See page 12.

Memorial Concert for Sid Wilson

Sunday, April 7 at 2pm in the Sanctuary. The Wilson Family invites you to a live classical music concert with professional musicians from the Omaha Symphony. Light refreshments will follow in the Common Room after the concert.

Ware Lecture Showing Event

Thursday, April 11 at 7pm in the Common Room. Brittany Packnett delivered the 2018 Ware Lecture to the UUA General Assembly in Kansas City, Missouri, on June 23, 2018. Together we will view the 45-minute lecture and share insights. Packnett challenges us to examine the ideas presented and our own choices and individual actions or inactions.

Church Annual Meeting

Sunday, May 19 at 10:30am. The Annual Meeting this year will take the place of a Sunday service. See page 14.

“White Fragility” Book Discussion Group

Thursdays, May 30, June 6, and June 13 at 7pm in the Common Room. Join Rev. Michelle LaGrave as we discuss *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo. This book is available from the [UU Bookstore](http://UUBookstore.com), Amazon, and the Omaha Public Library.

Save the Date: The 2019 Pride Parade & Festival is scheduled for Saturday, June 29 this year. Interested? Want to help? Please email Peg at sjconnect@firstuomaha.org.

See page 13 for Heart & Hand Auction Events and Ways You Can Help and Get Involved at Church!

Finance Matters

By Walt Jesteadt, Treasurer

We learned recently that Dixie Lemon will be moving out of Omaha to be closer to her daughter. The Sarah Joslyn Society is only one of her many contributions to the financial health of the church. In her honor, we are reprinting a piece on stewardship that she wrote in 2006.

PLANTING DAFFODILS AND OTHER ACTS OF FAITH AND HOPE

By Dixie Lemon

Sarah Voss in her most recent sermon asked the congregation to call out words which carried within them the concept of hope.

Dozens of responses were made but there are few things more faith-affirming to me than the planting of daffodils. There is a plant inside that bulb; there is a flower that will bloom next spring and many springs afterwards. There are fewer horticultural events that are more certain. Short of not planting it at all, you will have a bloom next spring.

There are many other acts we perform which state to us and to the world that there will be a spring and also a next year. All of the acts of stewardship which we practice are carried out with hope.

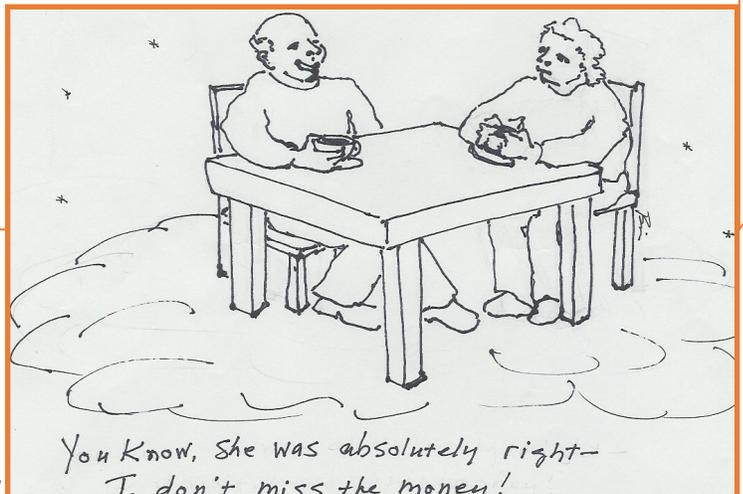
The Preserve Our Building Fund was begun with the belief that the building will continue to exist and that it will need tender, loving care. This is a separate account, started just last year, which sets aside money donated especially for that purpose. You'll be hearing more about that next month.

The Sarah Joslyn Society, our Planned Giving Program, encourages people to leave bequests to the church. Your leaving of a bequest expresses unequivocally the belief that the Church building and the Church community will be here and that future congregations will enjoy it as we do.

The Annual Stewardship Campaign operates with a more immediate vision. It's more along the life span of a daffodil, being concerned with one spring at a time. It arises once a year to address the on-going needs of staff salaries, utilities and the purchase of paper clips and computers. The rest of the year is spent mopping up pledges from the previous year, regrouping, gathering strength and staying out of the limelight so that other events can have their day.

Rest assured, all of these aspects of money handling are still alive. Some of them appear to be dormant some of the time but at the proper time of the year they will arise and give all of us the opportunity to reaffirm our hope in the future.

There will be a spring, and with proper planting there will be blooms.



Cartoon by Eddith Buis

The Stewardship Team Presents
CommUUnity Night



Potluck
Friday, March 1,
5:30 in the
Common Room

**MARY
POPPINS**

Movie and sing-a-long



Everyone welcome!

Eddie's Catering offers breakfast items including vegan options.



Mary Poppins
and

The Stewardship Team
Invites you to:

Drop in for Brunch*

Sunday, March 31
after church

*After the brunch
Kite Flying
in Turner Park
Bring your kite!



(President's Letter, continued from page 3)

As the visioning entity for the church, the board joins you in celebrating all that is good about our church community, but we bear an extra burden of having our actions limited by what is financially feasible for the church. Dreams will remain dreams unless we have the collective will and the collective means to bring them to fruition. What are your hopes and dreams for this church? It is not enough to be thankful for drinking from 'wells we did not dig' and gaining warmth from 'fires we did not build'. WE must be the well diggers and the fire builders. We need to take a step back and realize that what we are building is not just for us. It is for people who have yet to step through our beautiful doors at 31st and Harney. It is for children who have not yet been born. It is for people who have yet to find that First Unitarian Church of Omaha is a welcoming, liberating spiritual home.

You may have heard some of my original songs sung by the Early Morning Risers (EMR) over the years. I wrote the song, "The Fires We Feel," during a stewardship season about our collective responsibility as part of our church community to continue building for the future. This community inspires me, YOU inspire me. Please do your part to keep the fires burning.

The Fires We Feel

by Maria Wallace

We are the bricks
 We are the mortar
 We are the stones that pave a path, a path for all to come
 We are the ones
 We are the seekers
 We are creators of the world inside, inside these walls

We are the church
 We are the people
 We have to tend the fires we feel
 We are the ones
 We are the ones

We are the light
 We are the dark
 We are the beacons shining forth for those, for those who can't see
 We are the legs
 We are the body
 We are arms reaching out to those, to those in need

We are the words
 We are the sounds
 We are the voices singing out to all, to all those in pain
 We are the dreams
 We are the dreamers
 We are the makers of a future that, that we won't see

We are the church
 We are the people
 We have to tend the fires we feel

We are the ones
 We are the ones

With love, Maria Wallace, President

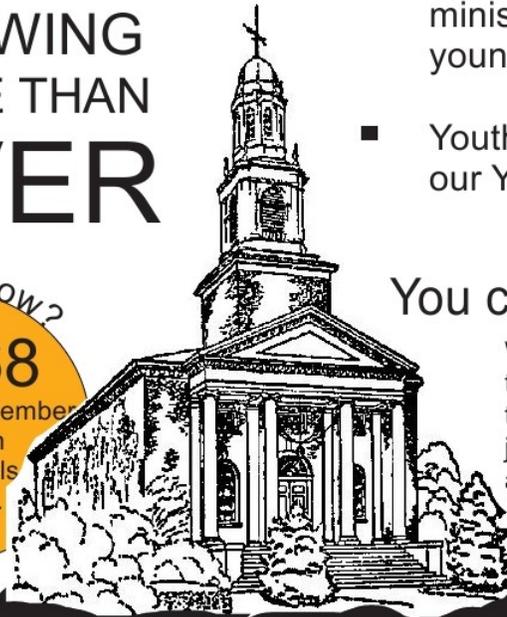


STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN GOAL \$270,000.

Through your stewardship generosity, we are serving more people of all ages!

2019-2020
GROWING
MORE THAN
EVER

- Over the last few years, we've greatly increased participation in our children's ministry and provided childcare for our young families.
- Youthful engagement has blossomed with our YRUU, Young Adults and POPS groups. (Parents of Pre-Schoolers)



You can keep it strong and thriving.

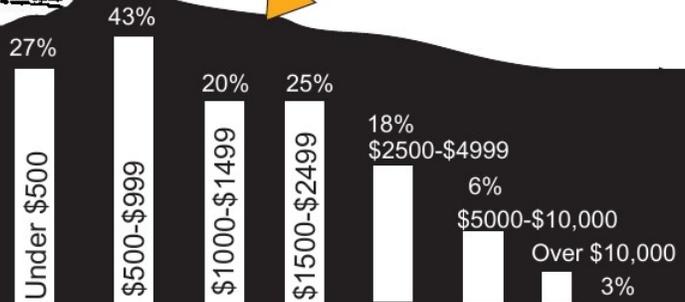
We are seeking a modest 7% increase in pledges to our annual Stewardship Campaign to continue the strong ministries we offer in worship, music, justice and religious education for children and adults.

Did you know?
\$1,568
is the cost per member to maintain current levels of ministry.

More gifts at these levels would make a huge difference.

HOW WE GIVE

Pledge by Household



Stewardship Campaign 2019-2020

By Mary Kay Peters

It's that time again! Kickoff for the 2019-20 Stewardship Campaign is the weekend of March 1st thru the 3rd and will run throughout the month of March! This year our theme is the joy and magic of Mary Poppins! The campaign will start with a family viewing and sing along of Mary Poppins in the Common Room on Friday, March 1st during CommUUnity Night. Kickoff weekend will finish with Sunday Service on March 3rd. The Stewardship Drive will end on Sunday, March 31st with an all-church brunch in the Common Room followed by a Kite Festival in Turner Park. See flyers on pages 7 and 8 of this issue.

We are all living through an exciting and challenging time of transition for our congregation. Rev. Michelle is leading us through this change and helping us to manifest our dreams and our potential for the future of our congregation. This year we are celebrating 150 years together as a congregation, with 100 years in our current Midtown location. Do you realize how special that is? The vast majority of UU congregations these days are located in the suburbs. An inner city location in a building as historic as ours is very rare, especially in the Midwest region. In order to maintain or increase our programs as well as our beautiful building, please consider giving generously this year so we can all continue to enjoy what this wonderful church provides us. As always, we hope to place the emphasis on fun and fellowship for our Stewardship Campaign and have it result in your generous financial support of our church.

Please be sure to read Maria Wallace's letter that starts on page 3 and continues on page 9 and check out a flashback article (written by Dixie Lemon) on page 6.

Ready to make your pledge? Pledge forms are in the church pews starting on Sunday, March 3rd and you can access the Stewardship Campaign web page here:

www.firstuomaha.org/stewardship

[Click here for the pledge form.](#)

Once you have your pledge form finished, mail it to the church office:

First Unitarian Church
3114 Harney St.
Omaha, NE 68131

OR bring your pledge form to church and leave it in the Stewardship Box in the Common Room.

Thank you for your generosity!

Hope in Action

Our church believes in community, and that is what Hope in Action, a sub-team of the Caring Team, is all about. Any one of us might need assistance, and we want to make it easier for you to ask for support and easier for you to offer support when others are in need.

WHO IS SERVED?

Church members, friends, regular attendees and their spouses are eligible for assistance from Hope in Action.

WHO CAN HELP?

Everyone! Hope in Action is an opportunity for everyone in our church community to support each other by sharing knowledge, skills and resources.

Hope in Action will use church communications, including the enews, to let our church community know when help is needed to respond to a request for support. And we will report back to the church community about how we were able to respond. All communication will be done in a manner that maintains the degree of confidentiality requested by the person seeking assistance.

WHAT SUPPORT CAN BE EXPECTED?

Hope in Action is there when people are dealing with a medical problem, need transportation or help around the house, can use assistance with referrals to social service agencies or just need someone to talk to about the ups and downs of life. Our response will vary depending on the type of support that is needed in our church community and what resources we have available.

Although Hope in Action is not able to respond to emergencies, short-term financial assistance may be available for lodging, food, clothing, medication, transportation and utilities. Financial disbursements are not made directly to the person making the request for assistance.

HOW TO ASK FOR SUPPORT

Requests for assistance must be made directly by the person needing help. Hope in Action does not respond to any anonymous or third-party requests for assistance.

Here are the ways you can ask for support from Hope in Action. You may send an email to hopeinaction@firstuomaha.org or use the Hope in Action link on the church website. Or, you may simply complete a Caring Card, located in the church pews and place it in the offering plate.

WHO DECIDES WHAT SUPPORT WILL BE OFFERED?

Hope in Action will use a team approach, so at least three members of Hope in Action must participate in determining the nature of the response.

CHANGE FOR CHANGE

Each week generous people put change in the collection plate. This change goes to the Sunday School kids who decide what to do with the money. In the past they have helped Community Meals and International Bridges for Justice. The kids are now donating this change to the **Neighborhood Ministry Team**, which purchases bus tickets and food cards and gives out blessing bags to people who come to the church door from our area. Your change makes a difference! Thank you for your generosity!

SHARE THE PLATE

Each month one-half of the loose currency collected in the offering plate is donated to a local cause that advances important principles of Unitarianism. Our Share the Plate recipient for March is **YES (Youth Emergency Services) Meal Prep Team**. Each month, church member Kim Callaghan, and her team prepare a meal in the church kitchen and then deliver that meal to YES, which is a shelter for youth in the Omaha area. You can learn more about YES at www.yesomaha.org.

Church Parking Information

Parking is directly west of the church in the surface parking lot or on the street. We want to save the surface lot for those who need to park closer. You may park in the Midtown Crossing Parking Garage to the west of the church lot. The entrance to the parking garage is on Farnam Street. Have your ticket validated downstairs in the Common Room. Please have your ticket validated for free parking—with validation you receive FREE PARKING for the ENTIRE day. Questions? Email the church office at admin@firstuomaha.org. See more info at our website here: www.firstuomaha.org/directions

Team Leaders: Next Meeting to Happen in April

Our next Teams Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 6 at 9am in the Common Room. We are moving to the morning for our meeting—we used to meet Saturday afternoons, but found that time didn't work for many people. We will provide bagels, coffee and juice. If you have an item for the agenda, please email MTC@firstuomaha.org.

Team Leaders: Annual Reports Due Friday, April 12th

It's that time of year again! All teams/committees submit a report to the church office so it can be included in the Annual Packet that is given out at the Annual Meeting in May. This helps the church with its archives and informs the congregation what your team has accomplished in the last year. To submit your report or if you have questions, email the church office at admin@firstuomaha.org.

Ways You Can Get Involved

YES Meal Prep: Volunteers and Donations

Monday, March 18 at 9:30am in the Kitchen. We will make taco salad with rice and beans. In March we will collect feminine hygiene products. Donations can be left in the big YES donation box in the coat area off the Common Room. Every month Kim and her team prepare a meal for Youth Emergency Services (YES) and collect donations for the shelter. See this website for more info: www.yesomaha.org. Want to help Kim? Email kjcallaghan@hotmail.com.

Kitchen Clean-Up—Helpers Needed

Friday, March 22 at 9am in the kitchen. Join the Chalice Guild as we clean up the kitchen. Every few months, volunteers do a clean deep of the kitchen, the appliances and the kitchen hall. Come help us! Questions? Email Kay Lynn at klgoldner@cox.net.

Worship Arts Team Leader Needed

Our wonderful member Denise will be leaving her Worship Arts Team Leader position and we need to find a replacement. We're looking for someone who is organized and passionate about Sunday services. As team leader, you will help Rev. Michelle schedule Sunday services. You will coordinate the worship associates making sure each Sunday service is covered. The worship associates assist in planning the services when necessary and they do get to pick readings and hymns occasionally if the person delivering the sermon requests it. By weaving together different components, a worship service serves the whole—the common good—and offers a shared emotional experience. Each worship component helps the congregation connect to one another and to That Which Is Larger Than Us. Help our church experience Sunday Services by leading the Worship Arts Team. If you are interested, please contact Denise at denise.allain@yahoo.com.

March Heart & Hand Auction Events with Open Seats

Want to support the church AND be entertained? Come to a March auction event! Email auction@firstuomaha.org to sign-up, and get details online at the auction website ([click here](#)). If finances are a challenge, email auction@firstuomaha.org or call 402-916-9741 to arrange a guest seat.

Upcoming Events:

Soup & Salad Dinner

Saturday, March 2nd at 6pm in the Common Room. Warm the soul with soup, salad, dessert and great company! Omnivores, vegetarians, vegans all welcome! Note: This is a full sit-down dinner for adults only. Babysitting provided with RSVP. Cost: \$25/person.

Let's Dance!

Friday, March 8 at 7pm in the Common Room. Come see the Common Room transformed into an 80s prom night with Joe and Lori Schaaf's amazing decorations. From the 80s through today we will Safety Dance while we Shoop and Get Jiggy Wit it and scream Yeah! Cost: \$10/person. (This event was postponed from 2/22 due to weather.)

Music for the Theater

Saturday, March 9 at 7pm in the Sanctuary/Common Room. Come hear Bill Tull and Katrina Schmidt sing an aria each from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and their favorite Broadway pieces from *Ragtime*, *Les Misérables*, *Closer than Ever*, and others. Babysitting provided with RSVP. Cost: \$20/person

The Bourdain Dinner

Thursday, March 21 at 7pm in the Common Room. Bring a dish to share with 10 friends and a story of how that dish connects to a memory from your culture or upbringing. The center entrée and beverages provided by hosts Joe and Lori Schaaf. Come embark on a cultural, personal, and passion-filled journey over tastes, stories, and drinks we will share together. Cost: \$35/Seat.

First Unitarian Church of Omaha — Annual Meeting Notice

The 150th Annual Congregational Meeting of First Unitarian Church of Omaha will take place at the church on Sunday, May 19 at 10:30am. (The meeting will take the place of the service that Sunday.)

Eligible voting members* of the church will adopt an operating budget for the 2019-20 church year; elect a President-elect, members of the Board of Trustees, a Trustee of the Trust Fund, Right Relations Committee members, and Nominating Committee members; hear select reports from church leaders, vote to approve important items on the agenda and reveal our Unitarian of the Year! We will send out a letter to all church members in April with more details.

Childcare will be provided and your Board of Trustees will host coffee hour following the 10:30 a.m. meeting and provide snacks and drinks. We encourage all members to attend this important church event.

If you are not able to attend this meeting in person and would like to view it online, please contact the church office (admin@firstuomaha.org) by Tuesday, May 7th to let us know. We will attempt to stream the annual meeting online for those who cannot attend in person. Please note: our streaming process still faces some technical challenges, and we cannot guarantee that it will work perfectly. We will not stream the meeting unless we have church members who have notified the church office that they need the meeting streamed online.

**Individuals are eligible to vote who have been members of the church for at least three months and have made a financial contribution in their name to the church between April 19, 2018 and April 19, 2019.*

Sincerely,

Board of Trustees
First Unitarian Church of Omaha

Questions? Email the board at board@firstuomaha.org.

An Important Message from The Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee needs YOUR help! This is YOUR chance to suggest future leaders for our congregation and recognize those who have done things that are award-worthy!

Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal. **Who do you see as a leader?**

The following positions need to be filled for 2019-2020:

President-Elect, Capital Trust, two members for the Board of Trustees and two members for the Nominating Committee.

Please Note: Deadline for nominations and recommendations for these leadership roles is **March 1**. The First Unitarian Awards deadline has been changed to **April 1**.

Do you know a nominee for these categories: Unitarian of the Year, Youth of the Year, Young Adult of the Year, Religious Education, Heritage, Keeping the Faith, Social Justice and an Unsung Unitarian?

Make your nominations and submit them to the Nominating Committee. All recommendations submitted by **April 1st** will be considered.

Go here on the church website to make your nomination online:

www.firstuomaha.org/nominating

or fill out the insert in Sunday's order of service or email your nominations to nominations@firstuomaha.org.

Sincerely, The Nominating Committee

(Alan Vovolka - convener, Royal Carleton, Kate Godfrey, Kathi Oliver, Carol Ramsey, Marie Sedlacek, and Ben Wallace)

Poster-Making Event to be held March 9th at Church

The new date to make posters for the Women's March is **Saturday, March 9, 11am to 2pm in the Common Room**. Questions? Email Peg at sjconnect@firstuomaha.org. Posters and markers will be available. Please join us!

The following is from the Women's Day March website:

The Omaha Women's March will be now known as the Omaha Women's Day March. Along with the change of name, we changed the date of the march to March 10th, 2019, 2pm, OMAHA CIVIC CENTER. The Omaha Women's Day March is moving the event date to March 10th to coincide with the weekend of International Women's Day and to acknowledge that the systemic oppression of marginalized groups continues beyond every election. We want to ensure that we uplift, protect, and serve those who are most oppressed in our local community, especially trans women, gender-nonconforming people, black and brown women, and those with both visible and invisible disabilities. Centering voices of the underrepresented is our highest priority in planning this event, and our commitment to the Women's Day March is to create a safe space for the aforementioned groups and all intersections in between and beyond. We are striving to organize an event that is a meaningful call to action for participants to look beyond their own privileges in support of all women, rather than the ones who are presented as most valuable in our society. To sustain an engaged march, we believe we must extend our time to build a committee incorporating all women of the Omaha community. Please follow us on social media to receive updates on the Omaha Women's Day March:

Facebook: OMAWomensMarch

IG: omawomensmarch

Twitter: OMAWomensMarch

Website: <https://omahawomensmarch.com>

Chili Cook-Off 2019 Results

On Saturday, January 26, the annual Chili Cook-Off filled our Common Room with close to 70 chili cookers and consumers. With many types of chili to choose from, there was something for everybody, but it was tough to decide which one was best.

The winners in the meat category were:

- 1st place: Lori Schaaf—Devil's Kiss
- 2nd place: Kathy Scribner—Mole Chili
- 3rd place: Drew Dillon—Coconut Curry

The winners in the veggie category were:

- 1st place: Marijana Alai—Veggie Cheese Chili
- 2nd place: Linda Parker—3 Bean Mole Chili
- 3rd place: Terri Lynn Brewer—Tenderloving Vegetarian Chili

Costume winners were Bob Hess and Emily.

Special thanks to the crew of volunteers who made this year's event a success! Thank you to Collin Hatcher and Nolan DeVries for the music entertainment!



Photos by Katie Ladd and Calvin Rains

A Thank You from Ron Knapp

There was a birthday party for me—on my 85th birthday—following the church service on January 27th. It was a very nice party and though I was in quite a bit of pain at the time, I had a wonderful time. I want to thank all of those who made it such a great day for me.

Ron



Photo by Nellie Chenoweth

2019 Preserve Our Building Fund Drive Report

By Jaime Alexander

Results from the January 2019 Preserve Our Building Fund Drive again reflect our congregation's continued commitment to this cause of having a fund for future significant needs of our sanctuary or building. By the end of January your contributions have totaled over \$4,500. This includes a \$2,000 donation in memory of Dean Christensen who gave so much of his time and treasure to the church. How very fitting!

The POB account balance has now reached \$75,000! You may recall that this includes the \$20,000 allocated for the sanctuary windows project but not yet touched. Architect Bob Perrin's earlier comment that "Removing church windows in the winter is probably not a good idea" now rings very true!

Although solicitation for POB is limited to January, contributions may be made anytime. Remember to write "POB" on your check. You have again been generous. A sincere "Thank you" from POB Drive co-chairs Louise Jeffrey and Jaime Alexander goes to all who contributed to the 2019 Preserve Our Building Fund Drive.

Are You Thinking about Becoming a Member?

Have you been tossing the idea around for a while, but weren't sure it was the right time? Do you want to be involved in the future of the church and our ministerial search?

Now is the time! Our Search Committee is gearing up to look for our settled minister and in order to be able to give your (very important) input you need to be a member of the church.

Becoming a member is very easy. Contact Carrie Helmberger, Membership Coordinator at coordinator@firstuomaha.org.

Set up a time with Carrie to:

- Go over the membership packet
- Make a pledge of record
- Sign the book (either as part of a church service or in private)

Still not sure about joining? That's okay! Maybe you'd like to attend one of our classes:

First Steps

This group meets at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Room (downstairs classroom) on Sundays 3/24, 4/28, 5/12, & 6/30. Gather by the visitors' table or come to the Whitney Young Room. You are invited to join us as we gather together to get acquainted with the basics of Unitarian Universalism and our vibrant community. There are many ways to connect with the church and we look forward to discussing the unique opportunities offered by First Unitarian Church of Omaha. (This is a one-time class—choose the meeting date that works for you.)

Pathways

Next session in September/ October (five consecutive Sundays) at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Room (downstairs classroom).

This class explores who we are and what we believe, and provides opportunities for members of our congregation to share with newcomers what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. Pathways gives newcomers a chance to examine their own personal stories in light of our Unitarian Universalist tradition and heritage. Whether you are new to the church, or have been coming for a while, this is a great opportunity to learn more about this community.

As always, if you need anything, please feel free to contact Carrie at coordinator@firstuomaha.org.

Look forward to seeing you at church!

Carrie

A Note About Religious Education

By Jan Wilson, Director of Religious Education

The date of our Spring Carnival is Sunday, April 21st. Besides hunting for candy-filled eggs, we will have home-made carnival games at stations for all the Easter revelers. We have one side for nursery children, and one side for older ones. This gives the littlest ones a chance at the eggs. Parents generally cheer them on and have a celebratory day with other families.

If joining the activities sounds good to you, we would appreciate help setting up the stations, hiding eggs, etc. Let me know if this is on your Easter bucket list. I will gladly put you to work. Email me at dre@firstuomaha.org. Thank you!

Interim Minister

Rev. Michelle LaGrave
minister@firstuuomaha.org

Director of Religious Education

Jan Wilson
dre@firstuuomaha.org

Membership Coordinator

Carrie Helmberger
coordinator@firstuuomaha.org

Church Administrator

Catharine Dixon
admin@firstuuomaha.org

Sanctuary Singers Director

William Miller
choirdirector@firstuuomaha.org

Organist

Pat Will

Sanctuary Singers Accompanist

J. Gawf

EMR Director

Stan Harper

Minister Emeriti

Ronald Knapp
 Frank Rivas

Nursery Coordinator

Andrea Laudi
childcare@firstuuomaha.org

Custodian

Bobby Medrano

THE FLAME

Deadlines are the 15th of each month.
 Word limit: 200. Send submissions to
admin@firstuuomaha.org.

Editor/Designer: Cat Dixon

Proofers:

Barb Henney, Scott Kemper,
 Lois Norris, Debbie Hunsberger

Flame Mailing Team:

Debbie Hunsberger, Lois Norris,
 Linda Hruska, Kim Callaghan

Meet Our Leaders

Board Members

Maria Wallace (President), Joe Schaaf (President-Elect), Catherine Plumlee (Secretary), Sharon Piehler, Floyd Prine, Carol Ramsey, Tom Seguin, Donna Tubach Davis
 Email: board@firstuuomaha.org

Trustees of the Capital Trust

Ellen Shurson (2019), Daniel Byrd (2020), Bob Hess (2021)

Ministry Team Council

Dave Richardson, Joe Schaaf, Katie Zimmer, Rev. Michelle LaGrave
 Email: mtc@firstuuomaha.org

Nominating Committee

Royal Carleton, Kate Godfrey, Kathi Oliver, Carol Ramsey, Marie Sedlacek, Ben Wallace

Right Relations Committee

Della Byum, Carol Cronin, Nadine Keith, Mark Loscutoff, Tom Seguin (board liaison)

Transition Team

Kathy Alexander, Skip Ciulla, Carol Cronin, Kay Lynn Goldner, John Hruska, Klyde Warren

Ministry Teams and Team Leaders

AHA—Sheri Conner
 Archives—Linda Parker
 Baby Welcoming Team—Becca Hatcher, Katrina Schmidt, & Sara Switzer
 Black Lives Matter—Rene Harper
 Caring—Louise Jeffrey
 Chalice Guild—Kay Lynn Goldner
 CUUPS—Steve Switzer
 Early Morning Risers—Mary Kay Peters & Sarah Copeland
 Fellowship Team—Nadine Keith & Nellie Chenoweth
 Finance Team—Walt Jesteadt
 Garden—Sharon Conlon
 Governance—Kim Dunovan
 Fundraising Team—Donna Neff & Katrina Schmidt
 Hope in Action—Kim Dunovan
 Hospitality Teams—Carolyn McNamara
 House and Grounds Team—open
 Listening Circles—Katrina Schmidt
 Membership Team—Mike McAtee
 Midtown Helping Hands—open
 Office Team—Carolyn McNamara
 Omaha Together One Community—Laurie Gift
 Partner Church Team—open
 Recycling Coordinators—Dave & Evy Rosser
 Right Relations—Nadine Keith
 Social Justice Coordinator—Peg Pidgeon
 Soul Matters—Michael McAtee
 Stewardship Team—Mary Kay Peters & Peg Pidgeon
 Wayside Pulpit—Kim Dunovan
 Women's Alliance—Catherine Plumlee
 Worship Arts Team—Denise Allain
 Young Adult Group—Taylor & Jessica Eman
 YRUU—Jessica & Taylor Eman & Tom Seguin

First Unitarian Church of Omaha

www.firstuuomaha.org

402-345-3039

Church Events

CommUnity Night: Stewardship Event

Friday, March 1 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

H&H Event:

Soup & Salad Dinner

Saturday, March 2 at 6pm in the Common Room. See page 13.

Young Adult Discussion Group

Sunday, March 3 at 11:45am in the WY Classroom. See page 4.

People's Film Festival

Monday, March 4 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Breaking Bread for Believers

Wednesday, March 5 at 6:30pm in the Merritt Lounge.

See page 4 for details.

Compassionate Communication Group

Tuesdays, March 5 & March 19 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Poster-Making Event

Saturday, March 9, 11am to 2pm in the Common Room. See page 15.

H&H Event: Let's Dance!

Friday, March 8 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 13.

H&H Event:

Music for Theater Concert

Saturday, March 9 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 13.

Leadership Talk Back

Sunday, March 10 at 11:30am in the Common Room. See page 4.

Women's Alliance

Monday, March 11 at 6:15pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 12 at 6pm in the Common Room.

AHA Meeting

Thursday, March 14 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

The Flame Newsletter Deadline

March 15 at noon. Send articles to the church office:

admin@firstuomaha.org

Young Adult Game Night

Friday, March 15 at 6pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

WAYS TO HELP: Yes Meal Prep

Monday, March 18 at 9:30am in the kitchen. See page 13.

People's Film Festival

Monday, March 18 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

3F Book Bonanza Group

Wednesday, March 20 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

Women's Religious Studies

Covenant Group

Thursday, March 21 at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

H&H Event: The Bourdain Dinner

Thursday, March 21 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 13.

WAYS TO HELP:

Kitchen Clean-Up

Friday, March 22 at 9am. See page 13.

First Steps Class

Sunday, March 24 11:45am in the Whitney Young Room. See page 17.

CUUPS: Ostara

Sunday, March 24 at 6pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

Book Club

Monday, March 25 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

Stewardship Brunch

Sunday, March 31 during Coffee Hour. See page 8.

Recurring...

Bridge Group

Meets the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month. See page 5.

Parent's Choice Listening Circle

Meets the 2nd Sunday of the month.

AHA Listening Circle

Meets the 3rd Sunday of the month. See page 5.

YRUU (Youth Group) Meetings

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Common Room.

Choir Rehearsals

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Sanctuary.

Women's Religious Studies Group

Meets most Thursdays at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

Dharma Chautauqua

Every Thursday, 6pm to 7:30pm in the Whitney Young Classroom. See page 5.

Soul Matters Small Groups

Various meeting dates. See here:

www.firstuomaha.org/soulmatters

Future Events...

CommUnity Night—Special Event Farewell to Jan, our DRE

Friday, April 5 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

Team Leaders Meeting

Saturday, April 6 at 9am in the Common Room. See page 12.

Memorial Concert for Church Member, Sid Wilson

Sunday, April 7 at 2pm in the Sanctuary. See page 5.

Ware Lecture Showing Event

Thursday, April 11 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

Church Annual Meeting

Sunday, May 19 at 10:30am. The Annual Meeting this year will take the place of a Sunday service. See page 14.

“White Fragility” Book Discussion Group Led by Rev. Michelle

Thursdays, May 30, June 6, and June 13 at 7pm in the Common Room.

See page 5.

Social Media & First U

Find our public Facebook page here:

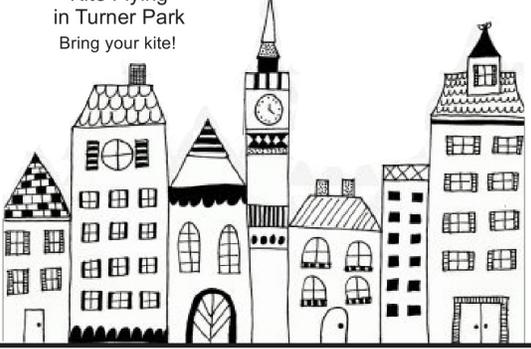
www.facebook.com/firstuomaha/

Find us on Twitter here:

[@FirstUUmaha](https://twitter.com/FirstUUmaha)

Be sure to like the church and follow us!

March is Stewardship Month at First Unitarian Church! See pages 6-8.

<p>The Stewardship Team Presents CommUUnity Night</p>  <p>Potluck Friday, March 1, 5:30 in the Common Room</p> <p>MARY POPPINS</p> <p>Movie and sing-a-long</p>  <p>Everyone welcome!</p>	<p>Eddie's Catering offers breakfast items including vegan options.</p>  <p><i>Mary Poppins</i> and The Stewardship Team Invites you to:</p> <p>Drop in for Brunch* Sunday, March 31 after church</p> <p>*After the brunch Kite Flying in Turner Park Bring your kite!</p> 
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First Unitarian Church of Omaha
3114 Harney St.
Omaha, NE 68131

www.firstuomaha.org