

November 2016

The Flame



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

Sunday Services &
Forums this Month

Ways to Help

Congregational
Meeting Scheduled

Sunday Services — All are welcome

Sunday, November 6 at 10:00am

“Confronting the Psalms”

Rev. Frank Rivas

I approach ancient writings both as a cultural anthropologist would and with the assumption that the ancients have something to teach us. I invite you to do the same.

Sunday, November 13 at 10:00am

“Changeful and Constant”

Rev. Frank Rivas

The opening paragraphs of the first Humanist Manifesto refer to both “the changefulness of religious thought throughout the centuries” and the observation that “religion itself remains constant in its quest for abiding values.”

Sunday, November 20 at 10:00am

“I Contain Multitudes”

Rev. Frank Rivas

In “Song of Myself,” Walt Whitman wrote, “Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself, I am large, I contain multitudes.” A prelude to a Unitarian celebration of Thanksgiving.

Sunday, November 27 at 10:00am

Water Ceremony

This year's water ceremony will focus on sharing intentions for our beloved community. Please bring a small amount of water to add to our communal basin during the ceremony itself. (Water will be provided for those who forget and visitors.) This intergenerational service is offered by Mystic Sojourn CUUPS.

After the Sunday Service this month

Foyer Dedication

Sunday, November 6 after the service.

As a tribute to the committed people that put so much time and expense into redoing the entrance to our sanctuary, we are hosting a brief dedication after our church service on Sunday, Nov. 6 and hope you can help us acknowledge the people who worked seamlessly and consistently to make this happen. It is an effort and a result worth our celebration!

Team Fair

Sunday, November 13 after the service.

Visit our Team Fair after the service during coffee hour to see our awesome volunteers and team members show off the many ways they minister. Expect yummy treats, silly costumes, and fun displays. Maybe you'll find the perfect spot where you can fit in.

Women’s Alliance Bake Sale

Sunday, November 20 during coffee hour. Be sure to pick up great treats for yourself and your Thanksgiving guests!



Sunday Forum: Myths and Misconceptions of BLM (Black Lives Matter)

Sunday, Nov. 20 at 11:45am (after the bake sale).

Presented by: Morgann Freeman

Answering questions and putting to rest rumors and fallacies about the Black Lives Matter movement.

Rev. Elations

Monthly Column from our Minister, Rev. Frank Rivas

Later this month we'll each have a chance to weigh in on returning to a single service, but I'm choosing to submit my ballot early. I love it. The pews are filled, so now it feels as though we're participating in something significant (we are). Other adjustments—gathering with children, to story for all ages, and the forum—also seem to be going well. The fall Pathways classes are filled to overflowing—with energy to match.

There are, however, issues to address. The time of the forum (11:20) is awkward. The time forces people to decide between an interesting topic and an opportunity to chat informally during coffee hour. Many of us want both. Further, the time has forced us to cancel forums when they interfere with other scheduled activities, like the bake sale and the team fair. Consistency would help people to get in the habit of attending. These issues can be addressed by moving the forum to 9 o'clock in the Common Room (musicians use the sanctuary for rehearsal before the service). Yes, it's early, but it would be more consistent and would allow people to attend both forum and coffee hour.

The other issue is that we still haven't found enough volunteers to stream the service each week. Streaming allows the homebound to participate in the service electronically, and, in the winter, when our numbers are high, it would allow us to have a live feed of the service in the Common Room in case there is an overflow crowd. If you're comfortable with technology, please consider volunteering.

One more observation that's separate from the Sunday program. Both the board, charged with monitoring the health of both congregation and finances as well as envisioning our future, and the ministry team council, charged with coordinating the volunteer efforts that make our church possible, are effective. Thanks to all who contribute in the sanctuary, in the classrooms, in the office, on the grounds, and at Spielbound.

Blessings,
Frank

Time to Fall Back

It's officially time to say goodbye to summer as Daylight Savings Time 2016 ends in the US. We will need to set our clocks back one hour before heading to bed on Saturday, November 5. Remind your friends.

Church Events

Examined Life Group

Tuesdays, Nov. 1 and 15 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. After two meetings, this group has grown to eight attendees. There is room for 2 or 3 additional persons. It is a group determined to become democratic with each participant presenting a topic related to how we assess ourselves personally and as members of society. The ultimate aim is to foster mutual understanding between ourselves and the others attending. We meet the first and third Tuesdays. Interested? Contact Jack at [jjackheidel@yahoo.com](mailto:jackheidel@yahoo.com).

CommUUnity Night

Friday, Nov. 4 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. If you haven't participated before, CommUUnity Night is a fun, laid-back all church event. We gather for a potluck of side items (the main dish will be provided by R.E.) and we don't worry about who is bringing what. If you can't bring anything or you are feeling too rushed to grab or make something last minute COME ANYWAY! There's always plenty of food and what we really want is YOUU!

Blessing Bag Day

Saturday, Nov. 5 at The Inclusive Life Center. See page 6 for details.

Daylight Savings Time

Set your clocks back one hour before heading to bed Saturday, Nov. 5. Fall back!

Foyer Dedication

Sunday, November 6 after the service. As a tribute to the committed people that put so much time and expense into redoing the entrance to our sanctuary, we are hosting a brief dedication after our church service. We hope you can help us acknowledge the people who worked seamlessly and consistently to make this happen. It is an effort and a result worth our celebration!

Mystic Sojourn CUUPS

Sunday, Nov. 6 at 6pm in the Common Room. As we approach election day, tension, anxiety, and fear are running high. In this ritual, we will not only face our fears, we will dance with them. Non-pagans and first time visitors are welcome in the common

area at 6pm. Ritual starts at 7pm, followed by a potluck feast.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Nov. 7 at 7pm in the Common Room. Movie: *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy.* Go here: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt5347158/> to read more.

BLM Book Discussion Group

Monday, Nov. 7 at 7pm in the Whitney Young Classroom. We will explore the book *Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving. Go to this webpage for info: <http://www.debbyirving.com/the-book/>. Amazon link: <https://www.amazon.com/Waking-White-Finding-Myself-Story/dp/0991331303>.

Election Day

Tuesday, Nov. 8, 8am to 8pm. The church will serve as a polling place. If you must visit the church, please park in the Midtown Crossing Parking Garage.

Tolerant Atheist Group

Thursday, Nov. 10 at 7pm in the Common Room. We welcome all who are curious. Our discussion will be kicked off by brief comments from attendees at our Oct. meeting wherein we started discussing our views for TAG and its role in our lives. Discussion deepened to the question of how our Atheism (in a broader sense, Humanism) affects our dealing with death, suffering, and meaning. The doors open at 6pm for those interested in "Bring Your Own Dinner", socializing and conversation. Questions? Contact: tag@firstuuomaha.org.

Community Meals

Saturday, Nov. 12 at First Baptist. Help us serve a meal to our neighbors. See page 6 for details.

Team Fair

Sunday, November 13 after the service. Visit our Team Fair after the service during coffee hour. Find a place for you. See page 13 for details.

Arts and Crafts Night

Sunday, Nov. 13 at 7pm in the Common Room. Bring your current

project and supplies and join us for some artistic fellowship! Contact Kate Godfrey at coachkate@cox.net or 402-880-1327 for details.

Women's Alliance

Monday, Nov. 14 at 6:30 in the Common Room. Women, and those who identify as women, are invited to attend with socializing and beverages starting at 6:30pm and dinner following at 7pm. Nadine Keith and Janet West will present information about First Unitarian's Partner Church in Firtosmartinos. At the end of the fiscal year, Women's Alliance donates to their scholarship fund. The cost of dinner is \$15, which goes to the Merritt Education Fund, the Partner Church scholarship, and other First U activities. If this will be your first time at a WA get-together, please be our guest! Our dinner selection by Eddie's Catering will be: roast beef in gravy with mashed potatoes, eggplant parmesan and Italian medley. Desserts provided by Ann Van Hoff and Nadine Keith. RSVP by Nov. 9 via phone: 402-214-2718 or RSVP via email: kathryn.oliver@outlook.com.

YES Meal Prep

Tuesday, Nov. 15 at 10am in the kitchen. See page 6 for details.

The Women's Religious Study Covenant Group

Thursday, Nov. 17 at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. Elaine Wells will facilitate Chapter 11, "Happiness" in *Listening Hearts*. All self-identified women are welcome. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Harriet Major at [402-391-0248](tel:402-391-0248) or hmajor323@cox.net.

Class: White Privilege 101

Friday, Nov. 18 at 6pm in the Common Room. Social Justice Empowerment Network: White Privilege 101 goal is to teach language, concepts, skills and tools to be able to recognize and effectively understand how privilege presents itself in every day life. Ten spots are available. RSVP to sweetnlow@cox.net.

Church Events Continued...

Young Adult Game Night

Saturday, Nov. 19 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. Join the young adults for some fun and games. No need to RSVP. Just show up!

Women's Alliance Bake Sale

Sunday, November 20 during coffee hour. See last page of this Flame.

First Steps Class

Sunday, Nov. 20 at 11:15am in the Whitney Young Room. Gather at the visitors table in the Common Room. You're invited to join us as we gather together to get acquainted with the basics of Unitarian Universalism and our vibrant community. We look forward to discussing the unique opportunities offered by First Unitarian Church of Omaha.

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Sunday, Nov. 20 at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. See page 7 for details.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Nov. 21 at 7pm in the Common Room. Movie: *Consumerism & The Limits to Imagination*. Go here for details: <http://shop.mediaed.org/consumerism--the-limits-to-imagination-p79.aspx>.

Annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner

Tuesday, November 22, 6-9pm. This annual tradition of volunteering by serving our neighbors happens again this year and you can help! See page 6 for more information.

Board Talk Back

Sunday, Nov. 27 at 11:00am in the Common Room. The church board wants to hear from you and will have a table set up in the Common Room to discuss issues that are important to you and the congregation.

Book Club

Monday, Nov. 28 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. The book selection will be posted in the enews For more information, contact Dave at richardson.david@westside66.net.

Omaha Polyamory Discussion Group

Monday, Nov. 28 at 7pm in the

Common Room. We meet every fourth Monday from 7pm-9pm. We invite any who embrace and support ethical non-monogamy-based loving relationships. We strive to offer a safe place to meet and discuss topics, issues, and hardships we face as polyamorous individuals and families. If you have any questions, please contact Susan at [iabdosh@msn.com](mailto:iamdosh@msn.com).

Taoism Discussion Group

Tuesday, Nov. 29 at 6:30pm in the Common Room—note: we meet the 5th Tuesday this month. Join us to discuss anything and everything related to Taoism! As Taoism is best understood through practice rather than theory, the goal of this group is to provide a participatory space to explore how Taoism is applied in daily life, with an emphasis on experience. With our direct experiences as a reference point, we can then delve into the main texts of Taoism. This group will be led by Geoff Erickson, gerickson03@yahoo.com.

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. New members welcome. Our book is *The Battle for God* by Karen Armstrong. For information, please contact Rae at raeb1@hotmail.com.

Lunch With the Minister

Thursdays at 11:30am in the Common Room. All are invited to join Rev. Frank for a "bring your own brown bag lunch." No RSVP required. We will not meet on Thanksgiving.

Dungeons and Dragons Group Meeting

Meets the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month in the Common Room at noon. All D&D role players are invited. If you have questions, contact Roman at rmnoriegal@cox.net, 402-769-4260.

Bridge Group

Meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month in the Conference Room at 11:30am. If you've played before, come

for some entertainment and time at the game table. Novices welcome too. Contact Frank McKee at hartmckee@aol.com.

Young Adult Discussion Group

First Sunday of each month at 11:30am at Delice (3201 Farnam St. Suite #6112). Calling all people aged 18-35 within this age range. We'll be covering any topic that we think is relevant to who we are and our lives.

CUUPS Book Study Group: 12 Wild Swans

8:45am on the 3rd Sunday of the month in the Merritt Lounge. CUUPS will lead a book study on *The 12 Wild Swans: A Journey to the Realm of Magic, Healing and Action* (available from Amazon & other sellers). In this book, renowned leaders in the Wicca movement use a fairy tale to teach about the "reclaiming" model of witchcraft that blends magic, personal growth.

Drop-In Meditation

Tuesday mornings between 8am and 9am. Come to relax, breathe, or just enjoy some peace and quiet in our beautiful sanctuary. This is very informal, with people arriving and leaving at different times, so bring your fob to let yourself in. If you need a fob, please contact the church office at admin@firstuuomaha.org.

Save the Date:

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, Dec. 4. See page 9 for complete announcement.

Save the Date: Holiday Dinner

Mark your calendars for Saturday, Dec. 10 for our annual holiday dinner. See page 8 to make your reservation for the dinner. Reservations are required.

Ways to Help & Get Involved

3rd Annual Blessing Bag Day is scheduled for Saturday, November 5th at The Inclusive Life Center (1941 South 42nd St. Suite 124, Omaha)

10am-12pm will be item drop-off time with 12pm-2pm being used to build the bags! First Unitarian gives out Blessing Bags at our church door. These bags hold socks, gloves, hats, toiletries, snacks and much needed items. Can you help us collect all the things we need to make these bags happen? On blessing bag day we will collect ANY donations of used/new clothing that will be given directly to the Siena/Francis House. We need YOUR help! For details, please visit <http://inclusivelife.org/blessingbag> or visit our FaceBook event for details: <https://www.facebook.com/events/321423061535132/>. You may email Royal at info@inclusivelife.org for more information. Thank you!

Community Meals

Saturday, Nov. 12 at First Baptist Church.

We will be serving chicken alfredo, salad, and bread. We will need dessert makers for the cookies and bars. We will need volunteers to help with prep, serving and clean up. Want to help? Contact Diane at dianewiththem@gmail.com or call 402-679-8916.

YES Meal Prep

Tuesday, Nov. 15 at 10am in the kitchen. We'll be serving pizza and salad. Dinner needs to be delivered at 2pm. Kim needs at least two volunteers. Please email Kim at kjcallaghan@hotmail.com to volunteer. Thank you!

Annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner: Tuesday, Nov. 22

6pm to 9pm -(additional times will vary for volunteers)

Details: We will once again be hosting our annual Community Thanksgiving Meal. We anticipate a full guest list of those who may be without shelter, family or simply in need of experiencing community and love on this bountiful holiday. We expect 100 guests who will join us for a family-style homemade Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings. We will need your help to make this another wonderful event happen with donations of prepared food, in-kind supplies and donations of cash to help us with various expenses. We will again be seeking Table Ambassadors to provide conversation starters and act as hosts to the guests at your table.

If you are interested in participating by volunteering the day of event, cooking in advance, or making a cash donation please reach out to Lori Schaaf via email at lhefeli@gmail.com. Thank you so much for creating change, making space and sharing love.

—Royal Carleton & Lori Schaaf

Website:

<http://www.inclusivelife.org/thanksgiving>



TDOR 2016
OMAHA

TDOR Omaha

PRESENTS:

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Doors open at 6:00pm

Program begins at 6:30pm

Dessert and Beverage Reception to follow

SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 20TH, 2016

4 TABLE SPACES AVAILABLE FOR GROUPS OR ORGANIZATIONS TO
PROMOTE SERVICES INCLUSIVE TO THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY.

PLEASE EMAIL info@inclusivelife.org to reserve.

Rev. Frank Rivas, First Unitarian Church

River City Mixed Chorus

Candle Lighting/US Names Shared

State Sen. Adam Morfeld

Kate Parrish, River City Gender Alliance

Alleta, Transgender History

Cei Loofe, Spoken Word

Rev. Susan Ellis, Music/Closing Words

Host, Chaplain Royal, *The Inclusive Life Center*

Accompanist Joe Reed

First Unitarian Church of Omaha

3114 Harney Street

Parking lot and 3 free hours in the Mid-Town garage available

tdoromaha.com

Annual Holiday Dinner

Saturday, December 10 in the Common Room
Social Hour at 5:30pm; Dinner at 6:30pm

A fabulous, delectable menu prepared by Pleasure Your Palate Catering
(Vegetarian & vegan selections included)

Cost is \$22.00 per person which includes the tip for the servers and clean-up
so that our faithful volunteers can take a much needed break and enjoy the evening.

**Please make reservations with your check to First Unitarian
to arrive in the office by December 1. Put your check and this form
in the offering plate or mail both to the church office.
Your check is your reservation.**

Please circle what you are able to bring:
Wine Appetizer Dessert

Name(s) _____

Please make your childcare reservation when you RSVP for the dinner.
Pizza and all the fixings will be provided.
Yes, I will need childcare _____ # of children _____ ages _____

We want everyone to be able to come and celebrate.
However, if confidential financial assistance would make it possible
for you to attend, please contact Rev. Frank Rivas.



Congregational Meeting

Sunday, December 4, 2016 at 11:30am

The congregational meeting on December 4th will consider two issues. First, whether the church should continue with one service on Sunday mornings, or return to two services. This will include discussion of whether forums should continue to happen at 11:20, after the Sunday service, or be moved to 9:00am, before the Sunday service. Church members should remember to vote on these issues based on what is best for the whole church. Leaders and members with specific duties on Sunday mornings, are invited to speak at the meeting about how the outcomes affect their functions.

Everyone's feedback is welcome at any time before the December 4th meeting. Please seek out Kabin Thomas or Alan Vovolka after church, or whenever it's convenient, to discuss the one-service experiment. Other board members are also available, especially during board talk-backs the last Sunday of each month. You may also email the board any time at board@firstuuomaha.org.

The second issue that needs a congregational vote is approving money to repair the sanctuary windows which are urgently needing repair. We need a quorum present (20%) of our congregation to spend any church money over \$15,000, so we need authorization to spend whatever money is necessary from Preserve Our Building funds and other church money. Please plan to attend on December 4 as 20% of the membership must be present to conduct church business.

A letter will be sent to all church members announcing this meeting on November 10. The next board talk back is scheduled after the Sunday service on Sunday, Nov. 27 in the corner of the Common Room. Board members wear blue ribbons so they are easy to identify and a table in the Common Room is reserved for the Board talk back with a sign.

Immigration As a Unitarian Issue

If we bring the national mess on immigration conveyed in the recent Holland Lecture down to a more personal issue for us a congregation, it may come down to how well we understand the impact and isolation of families who immigrate to our culture, so that we can better connect with them when they come to our church.

I lived in Germany for a time in my early twenties and incredibly underestimated the shock and loneliness involved in living outside of the familiar rituals and customs I knew as a member of my own culture. Being an outsider is very different as a visitor than it is when you are permanently rooted in a culture you cannot fully comprehend. The subtleties of language, social greetings, and manners become fraught with anxieties that you are not able to fully connect with people you desperately want to engage. Immigration to another culture is an amputation of almost everything familiar. However people desire the change, there is enormous grief for what they leave behind.

We as a church are involved in attempting to be helpful to some Syrian refugee families with Ellen Shurson and Louise Jeffrey's guidance and we occasionally have people from other cultures as members who are here because they want connections that assuage the loneliness of being without familiar family members, friends, and community. Even moving from another part of this country can be a change in culture, and maybe it is simply a matter of being more sensitive to what the loneliness and estrangement can mean to people who move here and then join our community often leaving who and what they love behind them.

So, maybe, maybe, we can extend our hands, our homes, our hospitality, to pay forward what others did for our grandparents, great grandparents when they came often alone to start over with strangers. They are too often expected to speak our language, and adapt to our customs with no expectation we take interest in their traditions, their countries and their cultures.

My wish for us is that we extend a special generosity for all of our immigrants and understand the courage that brings them to us.

Jackie Anderegg, President

A Note from Jan, Director of Religious Education

The Coming of Age Program

Every year in the spring the youth who have participated in the Coming of Age program give a statement of belief for the congregation.

This program is designed for youth in the ninth grade. Youth are given the guidance of an adult advisors/advocates who partner with them to discover their personal belief system. Some of these beliefs will shift slightly and some profoundly as the young person goes through life. This statement is the culmination of many weeks of conversations and self reflection with advisor and youth.

We honor both the youth that venture into this process and the adult mentors who give of themselves to act as models of acceptance and tolerance and all things Unitarian Universalist. We will be seeking adult mentors and youth in the coming months. This will be an opportunity for growth and insights in the area of spiritual awareness and lasting friendship.

Let me know if you have a youth who wishes to participate, or if you are an adult that would like to make a meaningful contribution in the life of a young person.

Jan Wilson, DRE dre@firstuuomaha.org

Overview of Sunday School and Activities

Birth-Kindergarten — 10am—12:30pm. Nursery open. Parent/guardian sign in and out.

Kindergarten-Grade 5 — Kids begin Sunday in the service at 10am and leave the sanctuary with their teachers. K-2nd grade meets in north classroom (Jan's office). 3rd-5th meets in middle classroom of RE wing. After class time, we will have special programming until 12:30pm.

Grades 6-12 — *10:00—12:30pm. Spielbound time! Game choice and discussion with teachers. Youth at church walk over to Spielbound Game Café with Ryan Cook meeting at west RE door after the 10am service. Otherwise, parent responsible for drop-off. Supervision provided 10am to 12:30pm.

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@firstuuomaha.org or use the Hope in Action link on the church website. You may call the church office and press ext. 105 to leave a telephone message for Hope in Action. Or, you may simply complete a Caring Card located in the church pews and place it in the box in the church foyer.

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.

Community Meals

Every Saturday churches in our area join together to cook a meal, serve their neighbors and bring a sense of community to our neighborhood at First Baptist Church. Our church has committed to the following Saturdays for Community Meals in 2016:

**November 12
December 3
December 24**

We will need people to help with desserts, cooking, serving and cleaning up. See page 6 for information about the meal on November 12.

Thanks!
Diane Withem,
dianewithem@gmail.com
Community Meals Leader

Share the Plate This Month: OTOC (Omaha Together One Community)

Each month one-half of the loose currency collected in the offering plate is donated to a cause that advances important principles of Unitarianism. Our Share the Plate recipient for November is Omaha Together One Community (OTOC). To learn more about OTOC, visit the website: <http://otoc.org/>.

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 blessings bags to people who come to the church door from our area. Your change makes a difference! Thank you for your generosity!

Team Fair Sunday, November 13

After the service join us in the Common Room for the fun, the treats, and the laughs! Visit our Team Fair after the service during coffee hour to see our awesome volunteers and team members show off the many ways they minister. Expect yummy treats, silly costumes, and fun displays. Maybe you'll find the perfect spot **where you can fit in.**



Sarah Joslyn Society

On Sunday, October 23, the Sarah Joslyn Society welcomed its members at the annual luncheon in the common room. The Society, which was started in 2004, recognizes those members who have made the decision to remember First Unitarian in their wills. The delicious meal, prepared by Deb Duggan, Sandy Host, Louise Jeffrey and Diane Withem, included stuffed peppers, corn casserole, tossed mixed green salad, and biscuits, followed by fudge chocolate cake with ice cream. Recognized were those Society members who passed away during the past year: Dick Holland, Shelton Hendricks and Frank Norris.

If you would like to learn more about how to join this distinguished group in time for next year's fabulous feast, please contact Deb Duggan at 402-553-5477 or debduggan1117@gmail.com.

Outside Opportunity

Bring Forth the Kingdom: Addressing Poverty in Our Community

Saturday, November 5 at First United Methodist Church, 7020 Cass Street, 8am to 12:30pm. Sponsoring Churches: Clair Memorial United Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church. To register: <http://www.fumcomaha.org/kingdom> (scroll to the bottom of the announcement to register).



Annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner: Tuesday, Nov. 22

Every year First Unitarian serves a meal to our neighbors. If you are interested in participating by volunteering the day of event, cooking in advance, or making a cash donation please reach out to Lori Schaaf via email at lhefeli@gmail.com.

Thank you so much for creating change, making space and sharing love!

—Royal Carleton & Lori Schaaf

Website:

<http://www.inclusivelife.org/thanksgiving>

See page 6 in this newsletter for more information as well.

Photo collage by Kathi Oliver

Halloween Heart & Hand Auction

Friday, October 28, 6-10pm

<http://www.firstuuomaha.org/handh>

Watch for Auction outcome news. Since this *Flame* will precede the Auction, check other church news for who *won the prizes* for the top 3 costumes, who *won the raffles* for the Craz-“C” Container (filled with \$130 of “c”reative items) and Early Bird Bidding (shop early at the Silent Auction). And reports of *how close we will come to our goal* of raising \$17,000 for the church operating budget.

Thanks to our generous donors, buyers, and our hard-working volunteers! There will be a post-Auction bulletin board in the Common Room with lots of fun Auction pictures and recognitions. A special thanks to Kabin Thomas, our Auction MC, and his merry assistants for a fun evening!

Guest Seats for Auction events: Some of you had big hearts and purchased extra “guest” seats for auction events. Thank you! Please invite your guests yourself, or contact the Auction or Caring Teams for help distributing them. Same with inquiries about whether guest seats are available.

Bills and Post-Auction Follow-up: If you are an Auction donor or buyer, watch your email closely the next few weeks. We will use regular mail only if no email (saves both stamps and trees). Buyers will receive a summary of their purchases, their bill, and options for payments. Donors will receive a summary of their donation and who purchased it. (The email comes from our auction software, Auctria, so monitor your “spam” folder also.)

Please pay auction bills as soon as possible. To set up a series of payments, just let us know. Payment by credit card (CC) is now possible, with a small added CC fee. The Auction Team will be following up all year to help assure all the events and items purchased are enjoyed. Questions? Contact auction@firstuuomaha.org or call Donna (402-699-3183).

Again-on behalf of the FUNdraising Team and our church--THANK YOU to all who participated!



Two Signs of the Times

By Dave Richardson

Recently, the church has suffered two separate agonizing experiences with our “Black Lives Matter” banner. The initial decision to put up the banner(s) was debated in an open forum in typical Unitarian fashion. The overwhelming majority of church members favored placing the banner in front of the church.

The first disturbing incident was the defacing of the words on the banner. After the banner was replaced, it was subsequently stolen. The acts represent more than just acts of vandalism, theft and destruction of private property. They represented an attack on free expression, which is of course one of the hallmarks of Unitarianism. These acts can be seen as a “sign of the times” that political discourse has given way to acts of anger and retaliation.

Church members may be surprised to learn that this is not the first time that signs at our church have been controversial. Thirty-five years ago an attempt to place a sign on church property was rejected by the Omaha Planning Board. The wooden sign was a precursor of the current brick and mortar Wayside Pulpit which was erected a few years later. The nature of the original sign and the controversy surrounding it is vastly different than the acts of anger and retaliation that caused the loss of the “Black Lives Matter” banner. In retrospect, there were some interesting parallels. It is however, the differences that illustrate how things have changed when it comes to dealing with controversial issues and free expression.

I have tried to avoid editorializing in these articles about church history. Generally speaking, it is not the task of an archivist to write polemical pieces. I will engage in some advocacy statements in this article. Let’s take a backward glance at the older incident.

In December of 1981, Ron Knapp and Jack Perry appeared before the City Planning Board seeking relief from a board ruling that the sign referred to earlier was not esthetically sound and it violated “set back” regulations. The Planning Board rejected the church’s appeal, refusing to look at documents related to the design and rationale for the sign.

In a letter to Mayor Mike Boyle, Ron called attention to the unfairness of the decision. He particularly was concerned by the arrogance and rude indifference of the board toward the church’s request. He noted that the condescending manner of the board was a

violation of the “Rule of Law.” The board’s decision was based on their own prejudices rather than the merits of the case. At a second meeting with the Planning Board a compromise was reached which allowed the church to put up the sign for six months. Ron felt that the compromise may have been a mistake on our part. It represented an infringement of “the free exercise of religion.” In a subsequent sermon he referred to the incident as an example of how power can be used to diminish the voices of dissent and the right to petition for redress of grievances. He also discussed the concept of “America as an idea” not just an area with “fixed borders”

This concept informs the discussion of both incidents and their consequences. Instead of using a venue for redress of grievances or discourse on a controversy many have turned to retaliatory acts or violence. The 1981 incident does illustrate that sometimes those in power can use that power to further their own agenda rather than the public good. But, it shows how disputes can be settled by compromise. Even if the compromise isn’t satisfactory to all parties. The right of dissent is an important part of the “idea of America.” But, this dissent should not be expressed by desperate vigilante-like acts of retaliation as was the case with the most recent event.

Just as the past is prologue to the future, the present can give focus to the past. We are a church that holds the right of free expression to be paramount. We should be vigilant when that right is impinged upon by the arrogant use of vested power and especially when that right is attacked by anonymous vandals.



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Questions? Contact Donna at neffd@cox.net.

Joslyn Historic Tour Features First Unitarian Church

Friday and Saturday, Nov. 11 and 12, 10am to 4pm in the Sanctuary. This year you can tour the Joslyn Castle and three other historic properties—including the stunning Cornerstone Mansion (Offutt House), the First Unitarian Church, and the Bakhit home located at 38th and Burt. In addition, the Castle will be beautifully decorated for the holiday season and a truly special gift boutique featuring a wide variety of vendors will be located within the Castle so you can get a jump start on your holiday shopping! A shuttle will be available at no charge to transport you among the destinations. Tickets can be purchased online. Cost is \$20 per person. For more information, go here:

<http://joslyncastle.com/events/?ee=148>.



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THE FLAME
Deadlines are the 15th of each month.
Word limit: 200. Send submissions to
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Meet Our Leaders

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House and Grounds—Pierce Carpenter
Membership—Caitlin & Tom Seguin
Neighborhood Ministry—Royal Carleton
Office—Carolyn McNamara
Omaha Together One Community—Janet West
Partner Church—Janet West
Religious Education—Sheri Conner
Social Justice—Lori Schaaf
Women's Alliance—Nellie Chenoweth
Worship Arts Team—Megan Gustafson
Young Adult Group—Anne Rodriguez
YRUU—Adam Sagert and Caroline Miller

Church Events

Examined Life Group

Tuesday, Nov. 1 and 15 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 4 for details.

CommUUnity Night

Friday, Nov. 4 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. See page 4 for details.

Private Wedding

Saturday, Nov. 5 at 3pm in the Sanctuary

Foyer Dedication

Sunday, Nov. 6 at 11am in the Sanctuary. See page 4 for information.

Young Adult Discussion Group

Sunday, Nov. 6 at 11:30am at Delice (offsite) See page 5 for details.

Mystic Sojourn CUUPs

Sunday, Nov. 6 at 6pm. See page 4 for details.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Nov. 7 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4 for details.

BLM Discussion Group

Monday, Nov. 7 at 7pm in the Whitney Young Room. See page 4.

Election Day (Church Polling Place)

Tuesday, Nov. 8, 8am to 8pm. See page 4.

Board Meeting

Tuesday, Nov. 8 at 7pm in the Common Room

Tolerant Atheist Discussion Group

Thursday, Nov. 10 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4 for details.

Joslyn Castle Historic Tour

Friday, Nov. 11 and Saturday, Nov. 12, 10am to 4pm in the sanctuary. See page x for details.

Community Meals

Saturday, Nov. 12, offsite. See page 6 for information.

Arts & Crafts Night

Sunday, Nov. 13 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 5 for information.

Women's Alliance

Monday, Nov. 14 at 6:30 in the Common Room. See page 4 for information.

YES Meal Prep

Tuesday, Nov. 15 at 10am in the kitchen. See page 6 for details.

Flame Deadline

Submit your newsletter articles to admin@firstuuomaha.org by Nov. 15 at noon.

The Women's Religious Study Covenant Group

Thursday, Nov. 17 at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

Class: White Privilege 101

Friday, Nov. 18 at 6pm in the Common Room. See page 4 for information.

Young Adult Game Night

Saturday, Nov. 19 at 7pm in the Whitney Young Classroom. See page 5 for information.

CUUPS Book Study Group

Sunday, Nov. 20 at 8:45am. See page 13 for information.

Women's Alliance Bake Sale

Sunday, Nov. 20 during coffee hour. See page 2 for details.

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Sunday, Nov. 20. See page 7 for information.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Nov. 21 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 5 for information.

First Steps Class

Sunday, Nov. 20 at 11:15am in the Whitney Young Room. See page 5 for information.

Thanksgiving Dinner

Tuesday, Nov. 22 at 6pm in the Common Room. See page 6 for details.

Board Talk Back

Sunday, Nov. 27 at 11:00am in the Common Room. See page 5 for information.

Book Club

Monday, Nov. 28 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5 details.

Polyamory Discussion Group

Monday, Nov. 28 at 7pm in the Common Room
See page 5 for details.

Taoism Discussion Group

Tuesday, Nov. 29 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. See page 5 for details.

Recurring...

Drop In Meditation

Every Tuesday at 8am in the sanctuary. See page 5.

YRUU Meetings

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Common Room.

Choir Rehearsal

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Sanctuary. Does not meet on Wednesday, Nov. 23.

Lunch with the Minister

Every Thursday at 11:30am in the Common Room. Does not meet on Thanksgiving. See page 3.

Women's Religious Studies Group

Meets most Thursdays at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 4 for information. Does not meet on Thanksgiving.

Dungeons & Dragons Group

Meets the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month. See page 5.

Bridge Group

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

Upcoming...

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, Dec. 4 at 11:30am. See page 9.

Holiday Dinner

Saturday, Dec. 10. See page 8.

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE ANNUAL

BAKESALE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH

IMMEDIATELY AFTER SERVICE

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