

December 2017

The Flame



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

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Chili Cook Off 2018

Church Services

Sunday, December 3 at 10:30am

Belonging: A Generation of "Nones"

What does it mean to belong to a church community? Join us to learn about this seminarian's experience as an atheist and lifelong UU, and grapple with the question of what it means to join a religion.

About the speaker: Sally Fritsche is a lifelong UU from Columbia Missouri, in her third year at Harvard Divinity School. She is studying to be ordained as a minister and is considering a call to college campus chaplaincy. Since graduating from Grinnell College in 2013, she has worked as a chaplain, a nonprofit organizer, and a summer camp director. During the school year, she spends time leading UU history tours for visiting youth and taking naps in the library. She is excited for these next few years in the Boston area, and for the future of our faith community.

Sunday, December 10 at 10:30am

"Change"

Rev. Frank Rivas

As the natural world adjusts to dark and cold, so does our inner world. Learning to dance the changes.

Sunday, December 17 at 10:30am

"A Time for Sanctuary"

Come hear members of our community speak on Sanctuary and why it is needed.

Sunday, Dec. 24 at 10:30am (morning)

"Stories, Songs, Slippers and Sips"

Join us in the Common Room for an informal Sunday morning service. Dress comfortably or in pajamas! Sip hot chocolate, listen to different holiday stories, and sing your favorite holiday songs! There will be an opportunity for you to share your special holiday memory, be it an ornament, a story, a song, a heartbreaking memory, or a tradition. Musician: Stan Harper; Worship Associates: Maria Wallace and Kathy Alexander

Christmas Eve Service (evening)

Sunday, Dec. 24 at 7pm

"Lessons and Carols"

An intergenerational celebration of miracle and wonder. This service features the First Unitarian Choir and the Early Morning Risers.

Sunday, December 31 at 10:30am

"Trust"

Rev. Frank Rivas

On the last day of a difficult year, we envision a future that serves the earth and its people.

Sunday Forums

Forums are held at 9:30am in the Common Room. If you have a topic you would like to share, please contact the Forum Coordinator, Bebe at forum@firstuomaha.org.

Sunday, December 3 at 9:30am

Thoughts Along the Journey: from Fundamentalism to Humanism with Ed Kelly

I will be addressing several of the questions I have received via email—for example—what attracted me to Fundamentalism and where am I now? And, what effect did my military service (during the Vietnam War) have on my journey.

Sunday, December 10 at 9:30am

Changing Immigration Practices and Supporting Our Neighbors with Jeri Thurber and the Sanctuary Task Force

The Sanctuary Task Force will present information on what it would mean for our church to join the New Sanctuary Movement. We will discuss what sanctuary is and how we could support those in sanctuary. We will also discuss other ways we can help support our neighbors facing raids and/or detention by USCIS.

Sunday, December 17 at 9:30am

Come Learn about Yule with CUUPS

Stephanie Lewis, Stephen Switzer, and Katrina Schmidt will compare pagan traditions with their Christmas counterparts as well as explain the yuletide and its meaning for pagans.

Note: There is no Sunday Forum on December 24th or December 31st

Rev. Elations

Monthly Column from our Minister, Rev. Frank Rivas

I received an email from an active member who was frustrated at the number of conflicts within the congregation. She named several, and I could have named others.

I found myself torn between two conflicting responses. On the one hand, conflict is inevitable in any living organization just because we each see things differently. On the other, I too have felt an edge—an intolerance of difference—in some of these conflicts, and conflicts with an edge take a toll on our spirits. I answered her email from both perspectives.

Yes, we each see the world differently, but our differences never justify demeaning the other. We each deal with outside issues, issues in our personal lives as well as the weight of our national struggle, but we can leave these at the door. We owe to one another mindfulness. We can take a moment to breathe and to recognize the humanity of the one who stands before us. We can listen.

Winter is a season of change, not always comfortable change. Trees lose their leaves, plants go dormant, and mammals burrow or somehow manage to find warmth. Our consciousness shifts, and like our ancient ancestors, we await the return of the sun. The shortest day of the year is also the day of hope, of faith, of celebration. May this be a time to reaffirm human community. May this be a time of generosity and a time of quiet splendor.



Choir photo by Maria Wallace

Church Events

CommUnity Night

Friday, Dec. 1 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. If you haven't participated before, CommUnity 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. Kids are free to play. If you can't bring anything or you are feeling too rushed to grab or make something last minute COME ANYWAY! There is always plenty of food and what we really want is YOUU!

Teams Meeting

Saturday, Dec. 2 at 2pm in the Common Room. These meetings are for Team Leaders and volunteers to discuss future plans for the church. Anyone is invited to attend. If you have an agenda item for this meeting, please email the Ministry Team Council (MTC) at mtc@firstuuomaha.org.

First UU Young Adults Group

Sunday, Dec. 3 at 11:30am in the Whitney Young Room. This group welcomes everyone ages 18-35 from all over the Omaha Metro. We'll begin our new series: "Becoming: A Spiritual Guide for Navigating Adulthood."

Conservative/Liberal Dialogues

Last session Sunday, Dec. 3 at 2pm in the Common Room. For more info, go to: <http://www.firstuuomaha.org/events/conservative-liberal-dialogues->

People's Film Festival

Monday, Dec. 4 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *The Coming War on China*. John Pilger reveals what the news doesn't--that the world's greatest military power, the US, and the world's second economic power, China, both nuclear-armed, are on the road to war. The film is a warning and an inspiring story of resistance.

Lunch with the Minister

Thursday, Dec. 7 at noon in the Common Room. We meet once a month. The topic for this lunch: "How do UUs deal with Christmas trees, carols, and Santa?" Pack a lunch and come join us!

Wingert Baby Shower (offsite)

You won't want to miss Kerri and Seth

Wingert's Baby Shower! It's Saturday, Dec. 9 from 10am to noon (so it doesn't conflict with the holiday dinner) at 227 Arbor Court (Village Green Townhouses clubhouse—right by the Lauritzen Gardens). Be sure to park in "visitor" spots on Bancroft Street or in the big overflow field for the Lauritzen Gardens. The Wingerts would especially appreciate gender-neutral gifts (as they don't know the sex of their baby), tons of baby books, secondhand gifts, and/or donations to Planned Parenthood. They are registered at Amazon and Target.

Holiday Dinner

Saturday, Dec. 9 in the Common Room with social hour at 5:30pm and dinner at 6:30pm. See page 6 for registration form. RSVPs are due by Dec. 1st to the church office.

Examining Whiteness: An Anti-Racism Curriculum

Tuesday evenings from 6-7:30pm in the Common Room. Last session is Dec. 12. You can contact Andrea with any questions: dreahayes@gmail.com/402-709-8523.

Women's Alliance

Monday, Dec. 11 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. Women, and those who identify as women, of First and Second Unitarian are invited to attend our annual white elephant gift exchange. Socializing and beverages at 6:30pm. Heavy appetizers and desserts will be served around 7pm with the gift exchange following. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share along with a wrapped gift. Re-gifting is strongly encouraged!! We ask for a donation of \$15, which goes to the Merritt Education Fund. First time attendees are considered guests of Women's Alliance. Please consider joining us! Every year Women's Alliance helps the community through donations. This year's recipient is WCA (Women's Center for Advancement). While their wish list asks for many items, we are collecting diapers, pull-ups, new or gently used women's clothing, luggage, backpacks, new socks and undergarments, deodorant and shampoo. Items can be dropped off to a collection box in the Common Room. Please consider donating.

Please RSVP to Jeri Thurber: jeri.thurber@gmail.com or RSVP to the Facebook event. Please include whether you will bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

The Women's Religious Study Covenant Group

We do not meet in December.

Young Adult Game Night

Friday, Dec. 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.

Leadership Talk Back

Sunday, Dec. 17 at 11:30am in the Common Room. The church board and Ministry Team Council (MTC) want to hear from you and discuss issues that are important to you.

First Steps: Get to Know Unitarian Universalism & Church

Sunday, Dec. 17 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Room. Join us at the Welcome & Engagement Table in the Common 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. Questions? Contact our Membership Coordinator, Carrie, at coordinator@firstuuomaha.org.

CUUPS Yule Ritual

Sunday, Dec. 17 in the Common Room. Arrive 6-6:15, Ritual starts at 6:30pm. Potluck to follow, please bring a dish to share. Childcare available. Led by Cassi Moucka. Yule will be an ecstatic dance celebration of the birth of the Sun King, in a very modified version of Gabrielle Roth's "Sweat Your Prayers" model.

More events on next page...

Church Events Continued...

People's Film Festival

Monday, Dec. 18 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *Joyeux Noel (Merry Christmas)*. On the Christmas Eve of 1914, in the Western Front in France in World War I, the Scottish, the German and the French troops have a moment of truce and share moments of peace and friendship.

Examined Life Group

Tuesday, Dec. 19 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. We will deal with issues surrounding the giant U.S. technology companies: Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google. Should these online monopolies be broken up because they have too much power to control our lives? On what basis should they be regulated? For background information read Noam Cohen's recent NYT article: *Silicon Valley is Not Your Friend*. Interested? Contact Jack at jackheidel@yahoo.com.

Taoism Discussion Group

Tuesday, Dec. 26 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. 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. Questions? Contact Geoff Erickson at gerickson03@gmail.com.

Recurring Events

NAMI Connections

Meets every Wednesday at 1pm in the Whitney Young Room. This is a peer-run group for persons living with mental health challenges. This group will meet every Wednesday at 1pm. If you have questions, please email Terri Lynn at quburr77@outlook.com.

YRUU—Youth Group

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Common Room. Our weekly youth group at church meets September - May. Need more information? Contact the advisors at yruumaha@gmail.com. Note: No

YRUU meetings on Dec. 20 and Dec. 27.

Choir

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Sanctuary. Would you like to join the choir? Contact our Choir Director William at choirdirector@firstuomaha.org. Note: In December, we do not rehearse on Dec. 27.

Women's Religious Studies Group

This group meets every Thursday, except for the 3rd week of the month at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. This group explores a wide range of religious beliefs through reading and discussion. New members welcome. We're reading *The Demon-Haunted World* by Carl Sagan. Contact Marcia at mkleise@cox.net. Note: We do not meet 12/28.

Refuge Recovery Group

Every Thursday, 6pm to 7:30pm, in the Whitney Young Classroom. A new chapter of Refuge Recovery, "a Buddhist path to recovery from addiction," is being organized by Forrest Knapp. Refuge Recovery is a program that "does not asks anyone to believe anything, only to trust the process and do the hard work of recovery." For further information, see refugerecovery.org or email Forrest Knapp at: forrestknapp@yahoo.com.

Dungeons and Dragons Group Meeting

Meets the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month in the Common Room at 12:30pm. Questions? Contact Roman at RobertmNoriega@gmail.com, 402-769-4260.

Bridge Group

Meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month in the Conference Room at noon. If you've played before, come for some entertainment and time at the game table. Novices welcome too. Contact Scott Kemper at scott.kemper@gmail.com.

Future Events

Announcing the POPs Schedule for 2018! All parents of preschoolers (from littles through primary grades)

are invited to attend POPs (Parents of Preschoolers) Potluck Nights to connect with other parents from both First and Second Unitarian communities. Childcare is provided on-site (please RSVP in advance at least one week prior). Grown-ups gather together for food, fun and fellowship while kids eat and play in the nursery. For questions or to RSVP, contact Sarah Eades Hamilton (seades.hamilton@gmail.com) or call/text: 402-306-6339). Mark your calendars now. All dates are Saturdays from 5:45pm-9pm:
Jan 6—Second Unitarian Church (Address: 3012 S. 119th St., Omaha)
Feb 10—First Unitarian Church
March 24—Second U
April 28—First U
June 9—Second U
Sept 29—First U

Atheists, Humanists, Agnostics (AHA) Gathering

AHA will NOT be meeting during the month of December. Next meeting: Thursday, Jan. 11 in the Common Room. Dinner that evening will be a hot soup potluck from 6pm to 7pm. We will serve a variety of hot soups to include a vegan variety; you bring a side dish to accompany it. During dinner we will discuss plans for an AHA spring service. Round table/group discussion 7pm to 8:30pm. We will have round table/group discussion about the atheist, humanist, and agnostic moral compass. Join us for a cozy evening on a cold January night.

Chili Cookoff—Save the date!

Saturday, January 27 in the Common Room. See page 10 for details.

Book Club

Monday, Jan. 29 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. The book for this month is *We Were Eight Years in Power; An American Tragedy* by Te-Nehisi Coates. Questions? Contact Dave at drichardson821@gmail.com. We do not meet in December.

See page 6 for the Holiday Dinner RSVP form and Upcoming Heart & Hand Auction Events with open seats.

See page 7 for Ways You Can Help & Get Involved.

Annual Holiday Dinner

Saturday, December 9 in the Common Room
Social Hour at 5:30pm; Dinner at 6:30pm

A fabulous, delectable menu prepared by Attitude on Food
(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 **Friday, 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:

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.*

Heart & Hand Auction Upcoming Events with Open Seats

Tarot 101: Sunday, Dec. 3 from 4 to 6 pm (Heart & Hand Event)

This is an auction event with open seats. Curious about Tarot Cards? Come learn the basics of reading tarot and oracles cards, as well as other ancient and modern methods of divination. Taught by Cassi Moucka, the class will have a Jungian basis. Babysitting free with RSVP. \$15/seat, sold on the Auction website ([click here](#)) or go through the church website). All proceeds to the church. Email: auction@firstuuomaha.org.

A Kyle Knapp Christmas: Saturday, Dec. 16 at 7pm (Heart & Hand Event)

Enjoy a lovely night of live music by talented acoustic guitarist, song-writer, and story teller, Kyle Knapp! Many of you are already familiar with Kyle's music, but if not, check out his website: www.kyleknapp.com. Known both locally and regionally, Kyle's music often is inspired by family, relationships, faith, and awareness of social concerns. A perfect UU evening of music and fun. Babysitting provided with RSVP. Seats: Unlimited—Sold as individual seats. Fixed Price: \$15/seat. Email: auction@firstuuomaha.org.

Ways You Can Get Involved & Help

Audio Team: Helpers Needed Join the Sound Team. If you can use a laptop or a smart phone, you can help with the sound system! Contact the church office today to find out how you can get involved. Help us make Sunday mornings sound even better. You are needed. Email: admin@firstuuomaha.org

Community Meals Volunteers Needed We need volunteers for Saturday, December 23rd! See page 12 more info.

YES Meal Prep Friday, December 29 from 9am to noon in the Kitchen. We'll serve vegetable beef soup, rolls and dessert. Dessert donations would be welcomed! Want to come help in the kitchen? Or can you donate a dessert? Please contact Kim at kjcallaghan@hotmail.com.

Heritage Task Force -- Join us! We're still looking for volunteers to help with our church anniversaries that are coming up. Interested? Here are the team chairpersons and contact info: Archives Team Leader - Linda Parker: lparkerlib@gmail.com; Events Planning Team Leader - Janet West: jmasonwest77@yahoo.com; Communications Team Leader - Gary Emenitove: gemenitove@cox.net; Book Advisory Team Leader - Dave Richardson: drichardson821@gmail.com

Mitten Tree In the month of December please bring your mittens, gloves, hats, scarves and socks to decorate the tree in the sanctuary. The items are donated to those who are in need. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Claire Memorial United Methodist Church Neighborhood Christmas Give-Away
Address: 5544 Ames Avenue, Omaha. Items most needed: clothing, blankets, small appliances, and dishes. **Claire Memorial will accept items: Monday, December 4, starting at 5:30pm.**
Give-away times: Thursday, December 7, 7am - 2pm, 4pm - 7pm;
Friday, December 8, 7am - 2pm, 4pm - 7pm; Saturday, December 9, 7am - 11am.
Questions? Email Janet West at jmasonwest77@yahoo.com.



Notes from Religious Education

By Jan Wilson, Director of Religious Education

Religious education is a thrill. I can't think of anything better than a room full of energetic kids and adults who get a kick out of teaching them. We have enjoyed learning about Judaism through the high holy days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. We learned that the Day of Atonement is the holiest day of the Jewish year.

October was dubbed Artober. My art teacher ways came to the fore with a study of Marc Chagall who was a Jewish child in a world becoming dangerous for boys like him. His images tell the tale of a people metaphorically crucified by their Christian neighbors. Paul Gauguin wrestled with demons, temptation, and biblical imagery. Mr. Gauguin mainly lost his battle with Christian temptation but painted some beautiful visions of Tahiti. Henri Matisse came to his religious height at the end of his life when he designed the chapel next to his studio including the walls, the furniture, and the priests' vestments. The children created a mural worthy of Matisse which hung in our sanctuary.

Renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci taught us bible stories represented by his sculptures. Leonardo wrote backwards because he was left-handed. We gave that a try. Raphael, a younger contemporary of Leonardo, enjoyed fame in the new wealth of the Italian Renaissance. He introduced us to images of deities, Jesus and Mary lifting off into the clouds. We observed that all three of the Abrahamic religions contain ascension into the sky. For eons, humans have supposed the sky was the home of the gods.

In November we extended our awareness of the Renaissance with a field trip to St. Cecilia's Cathedral. I think our young people were awed at the splendor of the spaces, colors, sounds and smells of Omaha's cathedral. We hope to experience other houses of worship as the year progresses.

First Unitarian Church Leadership

What Does the Board Do?

The board of our church is a group of eight people nominated by our Nominating Committee and elected by our congregation whose function is to keep the church on track with our mission and forms our vision for our future. It also includes our minister and our church administrator as non-voting members. It is the board's function to insure that we stay true to what the congregation identifies as their values and their reasons for belonging to our church. In most churches that is called a mission statement. Our mission statement also serves as a reminder of why we exist and how we identify ourselves to visitors and our larger community.

It is also the board's function to protect and allocate the financial resources of our church and to make major decisions that are consistent with the well-being of our community, our values and our physical space. The board also receives regular reports on the major activity and staffing of our church and initiates major projects that are consistent with our mission. We also solve major policy or by-law problems that arise over specific situations that are problematic or need attention or are a by-product of expanding our membership or our vision. We also evaluate the role of the minister and the well-being of the congregation and assess what areas need change or attention.

All members and friends are welcome at all of our board meetings. The fourth Sunday of each month our Board members wear blue ribbons and are available for discussion or questions at our board talk back in the Common Room. You can email the board at board@firstuomaha.org. See all the board members on our website here: <http://www.firstuomaha.org/leaders>.

What Does the Ministry Team Council (MTC) Do?

These are three members elected by the group of volunteer teams and the board and the congregation. It also includes our church administrator, our minister and our director of religious education as non-voting members. Its responsibilities involve support and help to all the volunteer teams in our church and the allocation of staff, volunteer and financial resources for our activities. The MTC is also the group that serves to problem solve most of the issues that come up in the church. This group is the nuts and bolts of how our church functions and the decisions that need to be made routinely as well as special events. This is a time-consuming, large job with authority to make difficult decisions about allocation of resources at the same time remaining true to the mission of our church as we define it.

The MTC sets the agenda for the larger Teams Meeting which is held every two months. This meeting is for all church volunteers and team leaders that can attend.

Catharine Dixon, our church administrator is the person who discerns whether an issue belongs to the MTC or the board and she consults with the minister or the board president if it is unclear.

New MTC Members:

Dave Richardson was voted on by the team leaders via a special email vote in October. Diane Withem's term has now ended. Also, on the MTC is Nellie Chenoweth, placed on the MTC by the board. Maria Wallace, who took over Wendy Hessler's president-elect position in September, is on the MTC. Reach the MTC by emailing MTC@firstuomaha.org.

Women's Alliance Bake Sale Report (11/19/17)

By Kathi Oliver

The Women's Alliance would like to thank everyone who contributed to our annual pre-Thanksgiving Day bake sale! It, again, was a HUGE success!! Because of your generous donations, the bake sale received an additional \$503.50 to support the Merritt Education Fund. This fund's purpose is to broaden personal development directly related to church functions. Some examples can include (but are not limited to): help with costs to attend General Assembly, Leadership School, or Mid-America District meetings; broadening talent (musical, religious education, technical school, etc); or help with costs for a college course to further one's education to advance in their career. Thank you to all who baked, purchased, volunteered, mingled, and purchased again!! And a special THANKS to John Wagner for being our trusty cashier again!

Report from the Partner Church Team

By Janet West

2018 will be the 450-year anniversary of the founding of the Transylvanian/Hungarian Unitarian Church and the passage of the first statement of religious freedom and religious tolerance in the western world. First Unitarian Church will join with other American and UU churches throughout the world, to participate in a joint church service of celebration on Sunday, January 14, 2018. The Partner Church Team is responsible for this service at First Unitarian Church. The Team will modify the model service to fit our Partner Church history. More details later.

There are two seats left for the pilgrimage trip to Transylvania, our partner church in Firtosmartonos Transylvania, and Budapest. For more information, email Janet West: jmasonwest77@yahoo.com.

Repair of Sanctuary Windows Update

By Bob Perrin

The initial phase of repairing the sanctuary windows is nearly complete with Dean Christensen and Bob Perrin working with craftsmen on each phase.

A few members have noticed the sanctuary window close to the organ has a temporary replacement lower sash section. Tim Earl constructed a replacement sash while he removed the original sash for repairs. To date, we have tried several methods of removing the original glass to replace the dry rotted bottom rail of the sash. John Leclerc is using a steam method of heating the small areas which soften the putty for easy removal, leaving the glass and wood sections undamaged. A few discoveries of interest during this process have been:

- Evidence of the original wood surfaces treated with linseed oil prior to any paint application,
- Scars to the center areas of the interior wood from a pole used to raise the windows,
- The interior muntins are friction fit with no mechanical or adhesive fastening system, and
- An approximate 2/1000 inch layer of dust mixed with insect parts along the muntins only at the lower edge of each pane of glass that first appeared to be mold.

This sash has been very carefully repaired with re-glazing, finish paint, and reinstallation in the next few days to complete this initial test case.

We are anticipating to continue this procedure until all the sanctuary windows have been repaired.

Photos below by Bob Perrin.



Chili Cook-Off 2018

Saturday, January 27 2018 at 6pm in the Common Room

Eat Chili With All the Fixins! Free cornbread & soft drinks! Cash bar!

Tickets: \$6/person
 Children under 10 FREE
 \$12 family maximum
 Childcare provided, but please make a reservation
 so we know how many kiddos we have to wrangle.

Many folks come dressed up as cowboys and cowgirls or as cows and horses—
 use your imagination!

Please contact Rev. Frank if you need financial assistance to participate.

Enter Your Chili into the Competition

“Lasso” your recipe & start cookin!

Please bring your chili in a heated dish/crockpot along with a ladle to serve. (Please keep additional condiments to a minimum.) Arrive at 5:30pm to register your chili. Enter the NAME of the chili at check-in. Do NOT include the name of the chef!

Bringing chili for the contest? Your admission is free!

Sign-up online here: <http://www.firstuomaha.org/chili-cook-off>



Sanctuary Task Force Update

By Dan Boster

In September, the Board put out a call for church members to form a Sanctuary Task Force. Some of us here at First Unitarian began to research and work to explore the idea of First Unitarian Church becoming part of the movement to provide sanctuary for immigrants and migrants. This group came together after being inspired by a sermon delivered by Cyndi Simpson at Second Unitarian Church and witnessing the changing landscape of attitudes toward immigrants in the Trump administration.

To begin their work, members of this team read the “Sanctuary Toolkit” provided by the Unitarian Universalist Association for congregations that are considering offering sanctuary. In addition, the task force has compiled a wealth of information from national and local groups engaged in this work.

On October 10th, members of the Sanctuary Task Force attended our church’s board meeting for a brainstorming session and to get the board’s ideas about the direction our work could take. They presented several ideas about the idea of sanctuary and the process for moving forward with this type of process. Members of the task force took on different aspects of the work, and it is ongoing.

In early November, we contacted members of OTOC and the Omaha Area Sanctuary Network to ask them for ideas about how we might get started. This contact provided the opportunity for us to meet with Larry Jensen from the Network on November 8. At this meeting, the team learned a great deal of helpful information. At this point, there are many possibilities for how First Unitarian could get involved in the Sanctuary Movement.

On November 14, some of us met again with the Board to discuss what we’ve learned so far. The rest of the congregation can expect to hear more about all of this in the coming months, including a presentation and discussion forum on Sunday, December 10 at 9:30am in the Common Room (see page 2).

If you are interested in learning more or joining the team, please contact Jeri Thurber at jeri.thurber@gmail.com.

Wayside Pulpit Quotes

Do you have a favorite quotation, proverb, or inspirational message that you would like to share with passersby on Harney Street?

The Wayside Pulpit needs you! We are replacing our worn but well-loved signs with new wisdom.

Please submit your quotes to Kim Dunovan at kimberly.dunovan@gmail.com.
Who knows? Someone driving by may see your message and change the world!

Please note: we will not be able to print every quote received.

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.

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 Saturday for Community Meals:

Saturday, December 23

Please mark your calendar and contact me if you are interested in helping. We will need people to help with desserts, cooking, serving and cleaning up. Thank you to everyone who has already helped with meals earlier this year. Thanks! Diane Withem, dianewithem@gmail.com

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 December with Community Meals. See the column to the left for more information.

Inclement Weather Cancellations

In the event of bad weather and service is cancelled, the church office will email everyone on our enews list, update the church webpage, post in the church Facebook group and on the church Facebook page. The church will also alert the local news stations about the cancellation.



Share the Plate Recap

Each month one-half of the loose currency collected in the offering plate is donated to a cause that advances important principles of Unitarianism. Here are the recipients of the program for 2017. The amounts collected in November and December will be in the February 2018 newsletter.

2017 Share the Plate Recipients

January — Habitat for Humanity — \$518
 February — Community Meals — \$452.50
 March — OTOC — \$352.50
 April — Community Meals — \$427
 May — PFLAG — \$318.50
 June — NAMI — \$252.50
 July — OTOC — \$411
 August — Siena/Francis House — \$237.50
 September — Project Everlast — \$363
 October — Community Meals — \$527
 November — OTOC — \$327.50
 December — Community Meals — *pending*

The Ministry Team Council (MTC) has chosen the recipients for the 2018 year. They are:

January: [Habitat for Humanity](#)
 February: [Partner Church](#)
 March: [OTOC](#)
 April: [Community Meals](#)
 May: [PFLAG](#)
 June: [NAMI](#)
 July: OTOC
 August: [Siena/Francis House](#)
 September: [Planned Parenthood](#)
 October: Community Meals
 November: OTOC
 December: [YES \(Youth Emergency Services\)](#)

If you know a nonprofit that would be a good fit for the Share the Plate program please email the MTC (mtc@firstuomaha.org)

The form to fill out here is here:

http://docs.wixstatic.com/ug-d/6ac81d_60d1e8c496734397b892cbca2823df70.pdf

Parking at Church

Parking is directly west of the church in the surface parking lot or on the street. If you are able to park in the Midtown Crossing garage to the west of our parking lot, it would leave our small parking lot for visitors and those who need to park closer to the building. 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. Find the ticket-validating machine on the south side of the Common Room on the bookcase. **You must have your ticket validated for free parking.** Questions? Contact the church office at admin@firstuomaha.org.

KIOS — Thank you!

2017 KIOS Bundled Donations This year, KIOS bundled contributions totaled **\$4,345**, for which First Unitarian Church will be acknowledged as underwriter a total of 133 times in 2018 on *Morning Edition*, which airs M-F, 6-9 a.m., *All Things Considered*, which airs M-F, 3-5:30 p.m., *Wait, Wait...Don't tell me!*, which airs Sat., 10-11 a.m., and *Prairie Home Companion*, which airs Sat., 4-7 p.m.

Thank you to these members and friends who have been so generous in their support!:

Beth Conover, Bob Perrin, Bruce & Kate Godfrey, Carol & Floyd Prine, Carol Ramsey, Carolyn McNamara & John Wagner, Clyde Kramer, Dave Olson, Dave Richardson, Diane & Ron Withem, Dianne Otte, Dixie Lemon, Donna Neff & Walt Jesteadt, Douglas Lee-Regier, Eddith Buis, Harriet Major, Jaime Alexander, Janet West, Jeri Thurber, Jody & Greg Petrow, John & Linda Hruska, Kay Lynn & John Goldner, Kerri & Seth Wingert, Kim Dunovan & Jerre Tritsch, Lana Hammel, Linda Hess, Lois Norris, Mark Lotscutoff, Mary Green, Michael McAtee, Roman & Christina Noriega, Ron & Anne Knapp, Sharon Conlon & Jack Heidel, Sheri Conner, Skip Ciulla, Tim & Deb Duggan, Tony & Sandy Host, William & Sandi Bruns

Holiday Shopping? Do You Shop on Amazon?

Follow this link to www.smile.amazon.com and when you make a purchase, Amazon will donate a percentage to First Unitarian Church of Omaha through the AmazonSmile program.

Steps: 1. Visit www.smile.amazon.com

2. Search for First Unitarian Church of Omaha then select the organization's name. Be sure to confirm you are selecting the correct organization, as many charitable organizations have similar names.

Or just use this direct link: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-0388142>

3. Add items to your cart and pay. It's That Easy! When you shop at AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping as Amazon.com with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to First Unitarian Church of Omaha. You use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

Questions? Contact Donna at donnaau@gmail.com.



Outside Opportunity at Second Unitarian

Second Unitarian Church of Omaha is hosting their fourth annual mini leadership school on Saturday, Dec 2nd from 8am to 4pm. Go this link of the Second Unitarian Church website for more information: <http://www.2uomaha.org/2017/news/leadership-development-seminar-u-2-can-leader>.

To reserve a seat or find out more information, email: leadership@2uomaha.org.

What is OTOC?

Omaha Together One Community (OTOC) teaches people to become effective leaders, explore their legitimate interests, do solid research, engage in sometimes tough, but always respectful public discourse, hold elected officials accountable and create positive change through collective action. Through the practice of these skills, people build relationships of trust and, by acting collaboratively, become part of solving their own problems.

OTOC Philosophy: We believe in relationships. The issues we work on come out of small-group gatherings called "house meetings", where people share their stories about issues they'd like to see changed and have energy to work on. We are driven by the testimony of concrete experience, not pre-conceived ideology.

We believe in citizen leadership. We identify, bring together and develop leaders across our communities, so that we can accomplish more together than we could apart.

We believe in ownership. We accept no money from government sources. The organization is funded by dues from its member institutions, in addition to some foundation and business support. This allows the organization to belong to, and be accountable to, the

institutions that make it up. We believe in practical solutions. We work on concrete issues that we can do something about. Once potential issues are identified, community leaders do research to develop practical, achievable solutions.

Community organizing demands time, talent, discipline and commitment. Those willing to do the work experience personal growth and transformation. These leaders have witnessed the impact OTOC has made on their congregations and the city. See more here: <http://otoc.org/>.

Automatic Contributions—Electronic Funds Transfer

Did you know that you can have your contributions to the church made automatically? Electronic fund transfer will allow you to designate the amount of the money to be transferred biweekly or monthly from your bank account to the church's account. Your bank statement will provide an itemized list of the transactions. The contribution statement you receive from the church periodically will show each contribution as well.

It's easy to start automatic contributions! You only need to complete and sign a form and then return it to the church office along with a voided check.

Please contact the church office for the form or just go to this link to print out the form: http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/6ac81d_fede6d3edd6da6c28a23b9fb995c9eff.pdf

You can start the process any time. After that your contributions will be automatic. They will continue until you notify us to stop. Thank you for your generosity! Questions? Contact our treasurer Walt Jesteadt. Email: treasurer@firstuomaha.org.



Halloween Heart & Hand Auction a FUNdraising Success!

By Donna Neff, Auction Co-chair

Auction outcome: The Auction on Oct 27th was a barn-buster, for attendance (overflowing the Common Room), donations (213 items, including a record 43 social events), and funds raised for the church operating budget (over \$16,500 when auction bills are paid)! Katrina Schmidt, new auction co-chair, helped fuel this success with her energy, ideas and hard work!

Costume and raffle winners: Lois Norris won the “Big Basket of B” raffle. In heated competition, winners in the costume contest were: Pun Fun-Kerri and Seth Wingert as “Cereal Killers,” Thrift-Store Thriller-Sarah Copeland as “Greta Gremlin,” and Spook’s Choice-Terri Lynn Brewer as “Midnight, the Black Cat.” It was a fowl evening, as MCs Nellie Chenoweth and Kathi Oliver kept us on track, with the help of chickens, both live and in costume.

Post-auction website: Go to the auction website, which will remain active, to **buy unsold seats to auction events**, see fun auction eve pictures, check the events calendar, and see all the generous donors, hard-working volunteers and auction items for this year. Look for the auction button on the main church webpage (or [click here](#)).

Bills and Post-auction follow-up: Auction bills and summaries to donors were send out via email by mid-November. This doesn’t always work, so contact us if you didn’t receive yours. **Please pay auction bills as soon as possible.** To set up a series of payments, just let us know. There will be regular follow-up to help assure all these wonderful events and items purchased are enjoyed. For any auction-related issues or questions, please email auction@firstuomaha.org or call Donna (402-699-3183) or Katrina (402-916-9741).

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

Photos below by Bob Hess and Scott Kemper



This poem relates to the Justice Odyssey Terri Lynn Brewer will give on Sunday, December 17, 2017.

Those Forgotten Nebraskans: Mental Illness

Sowers Seeds

In prairies' grass the eyes see the meadowlarks soar.
 Upon the field the goldenrod glows,
 a gentle breeze whispers a song.
 Yet lost are those whose ears cannot feel
 The whispering breeze through the goldenrod blowing
 And here we stand, from the sowers seeds, lest we forget
 The lost meadowlark, whose scattered minds want song
 Those scattered past the prairies peaceful luster,
 It's the goldenrod forgotten.
 O' Nebraska, place the souls, so special, full of life, whose only life we see as disgrace.
 Forget them no more; give them grace, one cherished
 Nebraska, loving their home as the cranes land.
 Nebraskans, those people you have hidden, whose
 Thoughts are not just right, these Nebraskans too,
 Love the meadowlarks song, the breeze as it blows
 Thru the prairie grass goldenrod, now be pleased,
 Our settled souls from the sowers seeds _____

By Terri Lynn Brewer

First Unitarian Church of Omaha Statements

Mission

Fostering the Whole Person, Compassion, and Justice

Vision

An inclusive Community that Listens, Engages, Inspires, and Acts

Covenant

We covenant to:

- Listen to understand and grow
 - Seek and value all voices
 - Model respect and kindness
 - Assume good intentions
- Resolve conflicts directly and compassionately
 - Contribute time, talent, treasure
 - Respect people's time
 - Celebrate, support, appreciate

Why I Am a Member of First Unitarian Church of Omaha

First note by Bebe McCammond

Since moving to Nebraska from Oregon, I had felt isolated from people that have the same values that I do. I'm 44 years old and this is the first time in my life that I've become a member of a church.

It's the first time I've found a church that welcomes challenges with answers. Answers that didn't involve them opening a bible—which I believe was written by man. Answers that said, "What you believe is as valid as what I believe." Answers that involved actually doing something to help others, not just giving that lip service. I feel welcome when I come to the services; I don't feel like I'm being preached at. I don't have to hide that I am a liberal, a feminist, and an atheist.

I also know that if I want to keep coming to this church, I have to support it as much as my time allows. I'm head of the forums and a member of a hospitality team. I help with the chili cook off. I'm on the planning committee for our trip to Romania to visit our partner church. I also just help out where I can—stuffing blessing bags, setting up and cleaning tables, or anything that I see that needs an extra pair of hands.

Second note by Janet West

I started attending First Unitarian Church in February 1974. I did not join until 1987, but I began teaching Sunday School immediately. I loved my time with the kids and my fellow teachers—Anne Knapp, Loretta Johnson, and Carol Christensen. My own children sang in the church's children's choir in blue choir robes with white bows.

I went to Transylvania, Romania first in 2005. Meeting Transylvanian Unitarians expanded my view of Unitarianism to include the Eastern European church. Transylvanian Unitarianism has a rich historical tradition that is more directly connected to the Protestant Reformation than is American Unitarianism. Even given the geographic and centuries of separation, American Unitarians and Transylvanian Unitarians are truly Unitarian cousins.

For years, but particularly now, First Unitarian Church has been for me, a refuge from much of what is going on in our community, country, and world. Most UUs are rational, caring, people who work for diversity and fairness while enjoying each other's company and having a SUPER time.

New to Our church?

Join us for an informal introduction to Unitarian Universalism and our community.

The First Steps Class will take place on **Sunday, December 17 at 11:45am** in the Whitney Young Classroom (downstairs on the west side of the church by the nursery).

If you are interested, RSVP to Carrie at coordinator@firstuuomaha.org or stop by the Welcoming Table (in the Common Room downstairs) on the 17th and we'll get you to the right room.

Grab a cup of coffee and we will see you there!



Minister

Frank Rivas

minister@firstuomaha.org**Director of Religious Education**

Jan Wilson

dre@firstuomaha.org**Membership Coordinator**

Carrie Helmberger

coordinator@firstuomaha.org**Church Administrator**

Catharine Dixon

admin@firstuomaha.org**Organist**

Pat Will

Choir Director

William Miller

choirdirector@firstuomaha.org**Choir Accompanist**

J. Gawf

Pianist

Stan Harper

Minister Emeritus

Ronald Knapp

Nursery Coordinator

Jenny Hastings

childcare@firstuomaha.org**Nursery Aide**

Gale Callaghan

Custodian

Bobby Medrano

Nominating CommitteeMolly Dewell, Dave Olson,
Kathy Oliver, Carol Ramsey,
Marie Sedlacek, Ben Wallace**THE FLAME**

Deadlines are the 15th of each month.

Word limit: 200. Send submissions to

admin@firstuomaha.org.Editor/Designer: Cat DixonProofers: Lana Hammel,
Scott Kemper, Lois Norris,
Debbie HunsbergerFlame Mailing Team:Debbie Hunsberger, Lois Norris,
Linda Hruska, Kim Callaghan**First Unitarian Church**www.firstuomaha.org

402-345-3039

Meet Our Leaders

Board MembersAlan Vovolka (President), Maria Wallace (President-Elect), Catherine Plumlee (Secretary), Geoff Erickson, Linda Parker, Floyd Prine, Joe Schaaf,
Donna Tubach-DavisEmail: board@firstuomaha.org**Trustees of the Capital Trust**

Evelyn Whitehill (2018), Dean Christensen (2019), Daniel Byrd (2020)

Committee on Ministry

Bruce Godfrey, Collin Hatcher, Carol Ramsey, Donna Tubach-Davis

Ministry Team Council

Rev. Frank Rivas, Nellie Chenoweth, Dave Richardson, Maria Wallace

Email: mtc@firstuomaha.org**Ministry Teams and Team Leaders**

AHA—Sheri Conner

Archives/Heritage Task Force—Dave Richardson & Janet West

Baby Welcoming Team—Becca Hatcher, Katrina Schmidt, & Sara Switzer

Black Lives Matter—Rene Harper

Caring—Louise Jeffrey

Chalice Guild—Kay Lynn Goldner

Community Meals—Diane Withem

CUUPS—Kathy Alexander

Early Morning Risers—Mary Kay Peters & Sarah Copeland

Fellowship Team—Judith Wright, Nadine Keith & Nellie Chenoweth

Finance Team—Walt Jesteadt

Forums—Bebe McCammond

Garden—Sharon Conlon

Fundraising Team—Donna Neff & Katrina Schmidt

Hope in Action—Kim Dunovan

Hospitality Teams—Carolyn McNamara

House and Grounds Team—Pierce Carpenter

Listening Circles—Katrina Schmidt

Membership Team—Mike McAttee & Janet West

Midtown Helping Hands—open

Office Team—Carolyn McNamara

Omaha Together One Community—Janet West

Partner Church Team—Janet West

Recycling Coordinator—Jeri Thurber

Social Justice Coordinator—Laura Thomas

Stewardship Team—Mary Kay Peters & Peg Pidgeon

Wayside Pulpit—Kim Dunovan

Women's Alliance—Catherine Plumlee

Worship Arts Team—Maria Wallace

Young Adult Group—Collin & Becca Hatcher

YRUU—Geoff Erickson & Carolyn Miller

Church Events

CommUNITY Night

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

Teams Meeting

Saturday, Dec. 2 at 2pm. See page 4.

Private Wedding

Saturday, Dec. 2 at 4pm.

First UU Young Adults

Sunday, Dec. 3 at 11:30am in the Merritt Lounge. See page 4 for details.

Conservative-Liberal Dialogues

Last session Sunday, Dec. 3 at 2pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Tarot 101 (H&H Auction Event)

Sunday, Dec. 3 at 4pm in the Common Room. See page 6.

People's Film Festival

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

Examining Whiteness: An Anti-Racism Curriculum (6-week course)

Last classes: Tuesdays, Dec. 5 and 12 at 6pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Lunch with the Minister

Thursday, Dec 7 at noon in the Common Room. See page 4.

Wingert Baby Shower

Saturday, Dec. 9 at 10am—offsite. See page 4.

Holiday Dinner

Saturday, December 9 with social hour at 5:30pm and dinner at 6:30pm. See page 6 for reservation form.

Women's Alliance

Monday, Dec. 11 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Board Meeting

Tuesday, Dec. 12 at 7pm in the Whitney Young Room.

Flame Deadline

Submit your newsletter articles to admin@firstuomaha.org by December 15th at noon.

Young Adult Game Night

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

A Kyle Knapp Christmas Concert (H&H Auction Event)

Saturday, Dec. 16 at 7pm. See page 6 for more information.

Board Talk Back

Sunday, Dec. 17 at 11:30am in the Common Room. See page 5 for information.

First Steps Class

Sunday, Dec. 17 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Room. See page 19.

CUUPS Yule Ritual

Sunday, Dec. 17 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Dec. 18 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 5 for details.

Examined Life Group

Tuesday, Dec. 19 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

Community Meals

Saturday, Dec. 23. Offsite. See page 12.

Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, Dec. 24 at 7pm. See page 2.

Taoism Discussion Group

Tuesday, Dec. 26 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. See page 5 for details.

YES Meal Prep

Friday, December 29 from 9am to noon in the Kitchen. See page 7.

Recurring...

Women's Religious Studies Group

Meets most Thursdays at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5. No meeting 12/28.

Refuge Recovery Group

Thursdays at 6pm in the Whitney Young Room. See page 5.

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.

NAMI Connections

Meets Wednesdays at 1pm in the Whitney Young Room. See page 5.

YRUU (Youth Group) Meeting

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 5. No meetings on 12/20 and 12/27.

Choir Rehearsals

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Sanctuary. See page 5. No rehearsal on 12/27.

Future Events...

POPS (Parents of Preschoolers)

Saturday, Jan. 6 at Second Unitarian Church. See page 5.

AHA Discussion Group

Thursday, Jan. 11 at 6pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

Chili Cook Off

Saturday, Jan. 27. See page 10.

Book Club

Monday, Jan. 29 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

**You are invited:
Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service
December 24 at 7pm**

**Featuring the First Unitarian Church Choir,
the Early Mornings Risers, a Brass Ensemble,
and organ music by Patricia Will**



**First Unitarian Church of Omaha
3114 Harney St.
Omaha, NE 68131**

www.firstuomaha.org