

March 2018

The Flame



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

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Sunday Services

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Stewardship
Campaign 2018

Church Services

Sunday, March 4 at 10:30am
“Counting Our Blessings”

Rev. Frank Rivas

We are an extraordinary church community, and we need to commit ourselves to extraordinary ministry.

Sunday, March 11 at 10:30am

Rev. Roger Bertschausen, Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council

A sermon to complete our Partner Church ReFresh weekend.

Sunday, March 18 at 10:30am

“Reform Shul”

Rev. Frank Rivas

Most of us think of the Reformation as something that happened in the 16th century, but if religion is to survive, we must constantly be in the process of reform.

Sunday, March 25 at 10:30am

“The Fleshiness of the Sacred”

Rev. Frank Rivas

The sacred is not separate at all from this wondrous, mortal flesh.

Reminder: Change Your Clocks!

Don't forget to “spring forward” one hour before you head to bed Saturday, March 10.

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, March 4 at 9:30am

The Stewardship Campaign with Walt Jesteadt & Mary Kay Peters

Ever wonder how our church budget compares to other UU churches? Where does the money come from and where does it go to? Get all your questions answered and then some.

Sunday, March 11 at 9:30am

Take a Trip to Alaska with Scott Kemper

A tiny sample of a really big state. Katmai, Denali, Chugach, Valdez, glacier bay, odds and ends.

Sunday, March 18 at 9:30am

Help Support a Local Youth with Maren Larsen & Shawn Miller, Youth Emergency Services (YES)

Have you ever wanted to mentor a local youth? Do you have four hours a month to ensure positivity and hope for a youth who faces many challenges in their young life? Learn how you can become a mentor and make a difference in your community today.

Sunday, March 25 at 9:30am

Reiki Healing Energy: Anyone Can Learn It! with Douglas Lee-Regier

No belief system needed. We will practice focusing positive energy in this brief introduction.

Rev. Elations

Monthly Column from our Minister, Rev. Frank Rivas

When I spoke optimistically about our final months together, I forgot how difficult leave-taking is. For example, when I hear people talk about my replacement, I recoil. I want to stand up and say, “Hey, I’m still your minister, and I’m right here.” I know that planning for the future is part of the process, but it’s uncomfortable. I remind myself that I promised to be fully present, and that I asked the same of you.

I’ve also heard a couple of angry words where previously the same disagreements might have had less emotional valence. I’ve found myself thinking, won’t it be nice to be retired so that I don’t have to deal with this kind of thing? Then I remember that I promised not to invent things to be angry about, and I asked the same of you.

Parting is work.

Here’s the bottom line. We have done good work together. We have done so respectfully, even lovingly, and it shows. Now that our relationship has an expiration date, we prepare ourselves for separation. The easy way is to distance ourselves, but the life-affirming way is to remain present and to say our goodbyes. No one loves leave-taking, but it’s the only way to part without regret.

I think of the Emily Dickenson poem:

My life closed twice before its close—
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me.

So huge, so hopeless to conceive
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.

Blessings,
Frank

Notes from Religious Education

By Jan Wilson, Director of Religious Education

Is it possible that spring is around the corner? Easter will be on April 1st this year, which means we have an early Easter carnival for the kids on their favorite spring celebration. We will once again have our children’s egg hunt and games on the east lawn and I will fret whether the weather will cooperate.

In February, we visited the mosque that is part of the Tri-Faith campus. The children have made prayer rugs and lanterns, as well as going on a pretend pilgrimage to Mecca. They have learned about the five pillars of Islam and have made food for the needy according to pillar number three.

We look forward to our summer camp, which will have an ancient Greek theme. I can use any white sheets you wish to donate for togas. Seriously.

I am ever grateful for the lovely joys and concerns I hear in our weekly Sunday school check-in. They are so sweet and genuinely innocent. All the reasons we have to despair pale when compared to the pure joy of these faces.

Church Events

Stewardship Campaign 2018-2019

The whole month of March with various dates for Feedback Circles. See page 6.

CommUnity Night

Friday, March 2 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. If you haven't participated before, this 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. There is always plenty of food and what we really want is YOUU.

First UU Young Adults Group

Sunday, March 4 at 11:30am in the Whitney Young Room. This group welcomes everyone ages 18-35 from all over the Omaha Metro. Join us as we continue our series in the UUA publication *Becoming: A Spiritual Guide for Navigating Adulthood*.

People's Film Festival

Monday, March 5 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *The Zookeeper's Wife*, which is the real-life story of a working wife and mother who became a hero to hundreds during World War II.

3F Book Bonanza

1st Wednesday of each month. Next meeting: March 7 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. Mystery, Adventure, Fantasy, Love, Life—the JOY of reading. Come join us as we enter the world of fiction and read our way through the year. We will meet the first Wednesday evening of each month. For March we'll read *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Please reach out to Denise (denise.allain@yahoo.com) if you have any questions.

Lunch with the Minister

Thursday, March 8 at noon in the Common Room. We meet once a month. Pack a lunch and come join us.

Atheists, Humanists, Agnostics (AHA) Gathering: Faith, Hope & Humanity in a Godless World

Thursday, March 8 in the Common Room. Doors open at 6pm for "Bring

Your Own Dinner" conversation. The meeting starts at 7pm. In times of darkness in the world, people of religion have relied on faith in their god to give them hope and allow them to persevere. Where do atheists, humanist, and agnostics place their faith? From where do they draw their hope for the future? Please join AHA for a lively round table discussion. Questions? Email aha@firstuuomaha.org.

Young Adult Game Night (Partner Church ReFRESH)

Friday, March 9 at 6pm in the Common Room. Open to all and childcare is provided! Come join the Young Adults for a night of board games, potluck, and fellowship. Game night is being moved to the second Friday of the month for March so we can be joined by Rev. Roger Bertschausen, the Executive Director of the UU Partner Church Council. Ya'll come!

Partner Church "ReFRESH" Weekend Event

Saturday, March 10 at 9am-noon in the Common Room. Join Rev. Frank, Rev. Roger Bertschausen, Director of the UU Partner Church Council, and the Partner Church Team to discuss our relationship to the church in Romania. See page 8 for details.

First Steps: Get to Know Unitarian Universalism & Church

Sunday, March 11 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Room. Meet 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 UU. See page 17 for more details.

People's Film Festival

Sunday, March 11 at 7pm. We'll watch *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*.

Women's Alliance

Monday, March 12 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. Women, and those who identify as women, are invited to attend with socializing and beverages to start at 6:30pm with dinner following at 7pm. Our program will be presented by Adam Sagert and is titled "Vermicomposting (Composting with Worms.)" Adam is founder/owner of

WeCompost, an urban compost pickup service that allows residences and small businesses in Omaha to recycle organic and compostable materials at their home or work. He will teach us how to make at home compost from kitchen scraps, paper, and a handful of worms. Learn everything you need to know from building the compost bins to getting the worms. Our dinner for March will be Italian and we will post more details in the enews. Please RSVP with VEGGIE or MEAT.

We ask for \$15 which goes to the cost of food and the Merritt Education Fund. First-time attendees, please be our guest and let us know if you're a first-time attendee. Need childcare to join us? When you RSVP please include your child's name, age and any dietary needs. Macaroni & cheese will be provided to the children unless you note a dietary restriction with your RSVP. PLEASE RSVP by MARCH 8TH by EMAILING Jeri Thurber at jeri.thurber@gmail.com.

Women's Religious Studies Covenant Group

Thursday, March 15 at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. This group meets the 3rd Thursday of each month. We welcome all self-identified women, and if you are interested, please contact Rae at raeb1@hotmail.com.

People's Film Festival

Monday, March 19 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *The Women's Balcony* which tackles complicated subjects with intelligence, compassion, and wit.

Black Lives Event: Lecture by Leonard Zeskind, author of *Blood and Politics: The History of White Nationalism from the Margins to the Mainstream* (Farrar Straus & Giroux)

Friday, March 23 at 7pm in the Sanctuary. Leonard Zeskind, president of Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights in Kansas City, will be speaking about the state of the white supremacist movement and also about the 14th Amendment, which is commemorating its 150th anniversary this year. More information about the speaker is available at: <http://www.irehr.org/leonard-zeskind->

Church Events Continued...

POPS (Parents of Preschoolers)

Saturday, March 24 at 5:45pm at Second Unitarian Church (Address: 3012 S. 119th St., Omaha). All parents of preschoolers are invited to attend POPS Nights to connect with other parents from both 1st and 2nd Unitarian communities. Childcare is provided. Grown-ups gather for food, fun and fellowship while kids eat and play. For questions or to RSVP, contact Sarah Eades Hamilton (seades.hamilton@gmail.com) or call/text: 402-306-6339).

Leadership Talk Back

Sunday, March 25 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.

CUUPS Ostara Celebration

Sunday, March 25 at 6pm in the Sanctuary and Common Room. Open to all, we welcome you to celebrate the coming of spring with our Ostara Ritual run by Stephanie Lewis and Katrina Schmidt. Childcare will be provided. Ritual will be followed by a potluck dinner, with business meeting during. Fun Facts: Eggs, rabbits, and sweets originate with Ostara and only later came to be associated with Easter.

Book Club

Monday, March 26 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. The book selection will be in the enews soon. Contact Dave at drichardson821@gmail.com.

Taoism Discussion Group

Tuesday, March 27 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 yruuomaha@gmail.com.

Choir

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Sanctuary. Would you like to join the choir? Contact our Choir Director William at choirdirector@firstuomaha.org. See page 14 for more information.

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.

Insight Meditation

Every Thursday, 5pm to 5:50pm in the Whitney Young Classroom. If new to meditation, you may wish to attend the 6pm meeting (see below).

Dharma Chautauqua

Every Thursday, 6pm to 7:30pm, in the Whitney Young Classroom. This group reflects a free and open-minded exploration of ideas and practices found within Buddhism, mindfulness, and spiritual, psychological, and recovery literature.

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 Scott Kemper at scott.kemper@gmail.com.

Heart & Hand Auction Event with Open Spots

Buy tickets for Heart and Hand Auction events online at www.auctria.com/auction/2017HHAuction, or email auction@firstuomaha.org, or pay at the door for larger events. Seats are available for this March event: **Soup & Salad Dinner** Saturday, March 24 in the Common Room. All proceeds to the church.

Future Events

Spring Carnival

Sunday, April 1. See page 3.

Compassionate Communication Group

1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm starting April 3. Using Compassionate Communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg, PhD, we'll learn about connecting with ourselves and others with empathy, living more authentically and acting in greater harmony with our values. Learning to communicate more compassionately, can be like learning a new language and takes practice. For more information, please contact Suzanne at nvcsuz@gmail.com. See page 15 for the flyer.

Hamilton Eggs Brunch: Stewardship Wrap-Up

Sunday, April 8 during Coffee Hour. See page 7 for details.

POPS (Parents of Preschoolers)

We will meet at 5:45pm on each of the dates below. We will alternate between First and Second Unitarian Churches. Childcare is provided. Please RSVP to Sarah at seades.hamilton@gmail.com or call/text: 402-306-6339). Future dates:

April 28—First Unitarian Church
June 9—Second Unitarian Church
Sept 29—First Unitarian Church

Stewardship Campaign

By Mary Kay Peters

It's that time again! The Kickoff for the 2018-19 Stewardship Campaign is Sunday, March 4 and will be here before we know it! This year we will attempt something different for our campaign by having a series of Stewardship Feedback Circle groups that will meet at various times for two hours in the Common Room throughout the month of March. Everyone is encouraged to sign up and participate in one of these two-hour sessions with Rev. Frank and a member of the Stewardship Committee (light refreshments provided). We want to hear from everyone about what this church adds to each of our lives!

The campaign will end on Sunday, April 8 with “Hamilton and Eggs,” a brunch and best of Broadway show *Hamilton* sing-along in the Common Room. See flyer on next page.

The excitement and enthusiasm for the church and its outside work and inner activities keep growing! Rev. Frank continues to refer to us as a church with big dreams, and we are all working on making those dreams become reality. In order to maintain or increase its programs as well as the beautiful building, and support outside programs of interest to our congregation, please consider increasing your pledge this year so we can all continue to enjoy what this wonderful church provides as we celebrate 100 years in our building. This past year the Stewardship Team lost its most faithful member, Barb Ross, who always actively contributed to the pledge drive campaign with her wit and wisdom. But as always, we hope to place the emphasis on fun and fellowship for the Stewardship Campaign and have it result in your financial support of the church.

STEWARDSHIP FEEDBACK CIRCLE GROUP DATES:

Two-hour blocks in the Common Room

Sunday, March 4—12:30pm-2:30pm

Tuesday, March 6—6pm-8pm

Thursday, March 15—6pm-8pm

Sunday, March 18—12:30pm-2:30pm

Thursday, March 22—1pm-3pm

Saturday, March 24—1pm-3pm

Monday, March 26—6pm-8pm

Saturday, March 31—2pm-4pm

Choose one! Sign up online at this webpage:

<http://www.firstuomaha.org/stewardship>

Or sign up by calling the church office (402-345-3039 ext. 101) or emailing admin@firstuomaha.org. Please use “Feedback Circle Group” or “FCG” as the subject of your email.

If you need childcare, please give the church office at least two weeks' notice so we can be sure that we have a childcare worker at the session you plan to attend.

All-Church Catered Brunch & Stewardship Wrap-up Sunday, April 8 @ 11:30am in the Common Room

Featuring: ham, eggs, fried potatoes, julienne vegetables, breakfast sausage links, fruit platter, pastries, orange juice, & coffee, of course.

Followed by a 30-minute sing-along of the best-loved songs from the Broadway show "Hamilton." Lyrics provided.

Remember: The Founding Fathers belong to all of us!



Hamilton & Eggs

First U Church

A Weekend to Discuss How First Unitarian Church Can ReFresh its Partner Church Relationship with Our Partner Church in Firtosmartonos, Transylvania, Romania—March 10 and 11, 2018

Rev. Frank Rivas, the Partner Church Team, and Roger Bertschausen, Executive Director, UU Partner Church Committee (UUPCC), St. Louis, MO are organizing a weekend to ReFresh First Unitarian Church's relationship with our Partner Church in Firtosmartonos, Transylvania, Romania. Goals for the weekend are to engage more members and friends, of all ages, of the First Unitarian Church community in the church's partnership relationship and to create a wide variety of strategies to refresh and re-energize this relationship.

Special Event: Partner Church ReFresh on Saturday, March 10th

Please plan to join us on Saturday, March 10 in the Common Room from 9am to noon. The Partner Church Team along with Roger Bertschausen will discuss our Partner Church—its past, present and future. A boxed lunch will be served. Please email the church office at admin@firstuuumaha.org to reserve your spot. Please notify the office if you have dietary needs and if you need childcare. **Please RSVP by Monday, March 5.**

Monument Dedication on January 14th in Romania

By Liviu Mocan, sculptor

(This article is reprinted from a Facebook post and was requested to run in this newsletter by the Partner Church team)

On January 14th we celebrated at Torda 450 years of religious tolerance. The monument below (made by sculptor Liviu Mocan) dedicated to the 450th year jubilee is very expressive and symbolic. A ladder that stands upon a stone and climbs towards the sky, meanwhile its stairs are transforming into books and flying doves, or thoughts, the spiritual vertical dimension of human beings. It is also an allegory, echoing the standing David Ferenc in the Transylvanian Diet on January 13, 1568. This Diet proclaimed religious freedom, the right of communities to elect their confession and their pastor as well. The round stone recalls not only the rock as a basis of the Church, but the round stone that served as a podium for the same Dávid Ferenc, who preached his sermon to the population of Kolozsvár when he had returned from Torda and thus the majority of the citizens embraced the Unitarian faith the same day in this town. This stone is still seen in the lobby of the Unitarian Church. The ladder also echoes and reflects the Gothic vaults, windows of the old church that was the scene of the Transylvanian Parliament in January 1568 that adopted for the first time in the world the principle of "subsidiarity," coexistence of religious communities inside the same political constitution, principality. This was much more compared to the "cuius region, eius religio" principles enshrined in the 1555 Peace of Augsburg, and even much more than the Edict of Nantes, 30 years later, in 1568 that permitted to Huguenots to express their confession's belief only in enclaves inside France. And finally, about the ladder: Hungarian poet, Weöres Sándor wrote:

"The soil stands under you,
Above you is the sky,
Inside yourself you'll find the ladder."

Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/liviu.mocan/posts/1520930361358665>

Photo: Gönczy Tamás



Letter from the Church President

By Alan Vovolka, President of the Board of Trustees

Like many of us I'm sure, my thoughts about the church have been influenced lately by the ministerial transition we will soon experience. Big changes offer an opportunity to reflect on strengths and weaknesses of an organization. I feel confident that First Unitarian is in a strong position, stronger in several ways than we were when entering the search process when I participated on two previous search committees for this church. We can rise to the challenge if we all reflect on why this church is important to each of us and what it is that we are each willing and able to do for the church during this important time.

Two areas that this church has focused on in past transitions are volunteer leadership and finances. We are always seeking to expand leadership opportunities to include new people, and if you are considering increasing your participation, this is a good time to make that known to Ben Wallace on the nominating committee or to any member of the Board of Trustees. On the finance front, our church has, for a long time, relied on large gifts from large donors who have blessed us with their generosity. We can manage our significant capital trust to provide help for future operating budgets, with some "modernizing" changes to our capital trust documents. Those will require a congregational vote at our annual meeting in May, and I would ask that those with financial knowledge and experience spend time familiarizing themselves with the details as they become available this spring, so that we can pool our collective wisdom for the benefit of future UUs. Our treasurer, Walt Jesteadt, has done research showing that we are below average in pledging for a mid-western congregation our size. This has been the case at our church for some time. Perhaps we should talk more to each other about what is worth paying for and make financial issues a larger part of our church culture.

Now for the good news: Catherine Plumlee, Joe Schaaf, and Maria Wallace have agreed to serve as our Interim Search Committee, so that we can have an interim minister starting here in the fall. The MidAmerica region of the UUA encouraged the board to select board members for this job since they are familiar with the current state of the church, and we need to act soon to fill this need. The settled ministry search will provide time for the very important task of studying the congregation to obtain the best possible match with a long-term minister.

There is also good news on the windows replacement project. One of the last portions of Dean Christensen's extensive legacy to this church is the windows project. In addition to donating funds to pay for research on how to approach this task, Dean, along with Bob Perrin, Pierce Carpenter, and others I'm sure, found, through trial and error, a repair strategy. The repairs will cost far less than half of the original estimates of hundreds of thousands of dollars for full replacement of the sanctuary windows. Floyd Prine has agreed to head up fund-raising from both internal and external sources to help with the expense.

Sanctuary Task Force: New Web Page

The Sanctuary Task Force (STF) was formed in the fall of 2017 by the First Unitarian Church of Omaha Board to explore the issue of Sanctuary. The team leader is Jeri Thurber. The Sanctuary Task Force has its own web page on the church website now. Please go here to see the page: <http://www.firstuomaha.org/sanctuarytaskforce>. On this webpage we will post updates, articles and opportunities to help the Omaha Area Sanctuary Network. We meet monthly on the 3rd Wednesday at 6:30pm in the WY Room. Questions? Contact Jeri at jeri.thurber@gmail.com.

Update! Social Justice Coordinator: Peg Pidgeon

We now have a way of keeping track of all the great social justice and community service projects that go on within our church family. New members and current members sometimes want to help but are not aware of the opportunities available due to the many different groups and events happening within this very active and caring congregation. A new email has been set up (sjconnect@firstuomaha.org) so that group leaders, team and committee members can send information on what is happening within their group and in turn make the information available to those who wish to help.

First Unitarian Church: Best of the Big O

First Unitarian Church was voted “The Readers’ Choice” for Best Church in 2017. The Best of the Big O selections are voted on by people who read “The Reader.” The church received the banner pictured below. We have placed the banners in the wayside pulpit and downstairs in the Common Room. Thank you for voting for First Unitarian Church! To see a listing of all the “Best of the Big O,” go here: <http://thereader.com/best-of/readers-choice-2017-winners/>



We need YOUR Help Nominating Our Future Leaders and Recognizing Awesome UUs!

Your Nominating Committee needs your help! Each year the Nominating Committee is tasked with putting together a slate of leaders for the future church year as well as deserving members for our Annual Awards. Who better than you to help us decide?!

Please suggest names of church members you would like to see recognized for their particular service to the church and to the community. There are a couple of ways you can nominate people: **1.** Fill out the form (go here: [http:// www.firstuomaha.org/nominating](http://www.firstuomaha.org/nominating)) **2.** Email the Nominating Committee at nominations@firstuomaha.org **3.** Fill out the forms that will be in the Orders of Service the first couple of Sundays in April or see next page for the annual awards form. All forms and nominations need to be in **by Sunday, April 15 at the very latest.**

Getting nominations sooner rather than later helps your Nominating Committee immensely! If you or someone you know is interested in holding a position at the church either on the Board, the Nominating Committee, or Capital Trust please contact the Nominating Committee as soon as possible as we are actively working to fill these positions.

Thank you!

The Nominating Committee - Molly Dewell, Kathi Oliver, David Olson, Carol Ramsey, Marie Sedlacek, Ben Wallace; Jacqueline Anderegg, Convener

OTOC Fundraiser in March

Date/Time: 03/24/2018; 6pm - 9:30pm

Location: KANEKO(1111 Jones St, Omaha, NE 68102)

Join Omaha Together One Community (OTOC) supporters for Celebrating Community – Lighting the Way at KANEKO. Enjoy entertainment, appetizers, and desserts. The popular silent auction returns with even more treasures to bid on. You can also visit Kaneko’s interactive visual light and sound exhibit that features 3D rainbows and a virtual Stonehenge.

See Mark Loscutoff on Sunday mornings for \$25 advance tickets. Tickets at the door: \$30

First Unitarian Church is an active member of OTOC, an inter-faith community-organizing effort in the city of Omaha. OTOC exists to recreate community in our fragmented society. 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.

Annual Awards Form 2018

First Unitarian Church would like to take this opportunity to recognize some of our own outstanding volunteers. The Nominating Committee is seeking input from the congregation for recognition in the same general categories as have been used in the past. They are:

Unsung UU Award affirms those UU's whose actions inspire, support, and express Unitarian Universalism but have not been previously recognized. The award is given to a person or group whose lifetime activities have made a significant contribution to the cause of Unitarian Universalism.

Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

Keeping the Faith Award was established to recognize people who live by UU principles. It is presented to persons who have worked to keep Unitarian Universalism alive in their community and who touch the lives of congregation and community members in a positive way.

Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

Social Justice Award pays tribute to those who witness to the ideals of social justice and responsibility so important to our UU heritage.

Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

Religious Education Award to honor an individual or individuals who have made a significant contribution to religious education.

Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

The Heritage Award to recognize an individual or group who have made a significant contribution to preserving, understanding, and celebrating our Unitarian Universalist history.

Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

The Young Adult of the Year Award to recognize an individual (18-35 years old) who has played a vibrant and critical part of our community.

Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

The Youth of the Year Award to recognize an individual (ages 13-17) who has contributed to our church and community.

Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

Additionally, at the annual meeting each year, a member of our church receives our **Unitarian of the Year Award** to recognize an individual or individuals who have made a difference in our Congregation over the past year.

Suggested Recipient: _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

Please submit your suggestions by filling in the names and supporting comments in the spaces above and return this form to the church office, drop it in the offering plate on Sunday, or send an email message to nominations@firstuomaha.org. **New this year: fill out the form online! Go here:**

<http://www.firstuomaha.org/nominating>

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: **March 31** 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 March is **OTOC** (Omaha Together One Community) and its vision is to create a connected community that bridges race, social and economic status that works together to influence policy about issues that we care about. To learn more go to: <http://otoc.org/>. See page 10 to read about the OTOC fundraiser happening in March.

2018 Preserve Our Building Fund Drive Report

By Jaime Alexander

Results from the January 2018 Preserve Our Building Fund Drive again reflect our congregation's continued commitment to this cause of having a fund for future significant needs of our sanctuary or building. By the end of January our contributions have totaled over \$4,100. The POB account balance is now nearly \$68,000! Although solicitation is limited to January, contributions may be made anytime. Remember to write "POB" on your check. Once again you have been generous. A sincere "Thank you" from POB Drive co-chairs Louise Jeffrey and Jaime Alexander goes to all who contributed to the 2018 Preserve Our Building Fund Drive.

Ways You Can Get Involved & Help

Community Meals Volunteers: Volunteers needed for Saturday, March 31. See page 12.

Sanctuary Window Project

The window renovation project is off to a great start thanks to the generous support of Dean Christensen. We are moving forward with repairs and could use your help. If you would like to make a contribution to preserving our beautiful church windows, there is an account set up for donations. Please help us by making your donations payable to First Unitarian Church and simply put "Window Project" in the subject line. Our church is on the National Historic Registry and this is a great project for our future. Many thanks! Questions? Contact Floyd at prine@cox.net.

MidWest Leadership School

MidWest Leadership School is a week-long intensive program in leadership and group dynamics. Led by lay and ordained staff with a deep understanding of UU congregations,

MWLS:

- develops both youth and adults into congregational leaders,
- provides leadership tools and skills
- deepens Unitarian Universalist identity.

This is an extremely intense week of workshops, discussions, intimate small groups, worship preparation, personal theological exploration and growth. For more information, go to <https://www.mwls.org/>.

In exchange for wholehearted commitment to a strenuous schedule, MWLS offers a life-changing and congregation-nourishing opportunity. Dates: July 15-21, 2018. Location: Luther College in Decorah Iowa.



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.

General Assembly 2018

June 20-24

General Assembly 2018 will take place at the Kansas City Convention Center, 301 W 13th St, Kansas City, MO 64105

Next year, the MidAmerican Region will hold its Annual Business Meeting in conjunction with General Assembly in Kansas City.

From the MidAmerican Region website (<https://www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly>):

It seemed counterproductive to entice you all to a Regional Assembly just weeks before we'll gather for General Assembly in Kansas City. Keep this in mind—we want to see you there!

Early registration for GA begins March 1st. See this site for all the information and pricing: <https://www.uua.org/ga/registration>.

Forums and UU

Interested in offering a forum on a Sunday morning? Please send your name, topic with a detailed description, required resources, and a requested date range to Forum Coordinator Bebe McCammond.

Email: forum@firstuomaha.org.

Sunday Forums are offered at 9:30am in the Common Room—before the Sunday service.

Cheaper Than Therapy.

Join the Choir!

Singing builds confidence, reduces stress and anxiety and raises endorphins. No kidding! So come out for a rehearsal and see what a great time we have!

First Unitarian Universalist Choir is open to all high school age students and older. No audition is required, but a brief (1 – minute or less) range and pitch-matching check will be on offer. Music reading and some previous choral experience are helpful but not required.

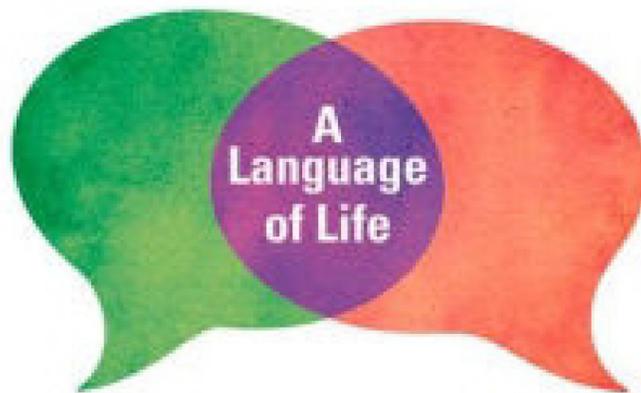
Rehearsals: Wednesdays at First Unitarian Universalist Church in the Sanctuary.

Arrive at 6:45pm
Rehearsals start at 7:00pm and conclude by 8:45pm.

For more information email:
choirdirector@firstuomaha.org

All voice parts are welcome, but we are currently in particular need of altos.

Compassionate Communication
Nonviolent
COMMUNICATION



developed by

MARSHALL B. ROSENBERG, PhD

Practice Group

Starts Tues. April 3, 1st & 3rd Tues. 'til June
7:00-8:30 PM Whitney Young Room

Facilitators: Suzanne King, Jan Wilson

childcare requests to childcare@firstuomaha.org

Chili Cook-Off 2018 *by Carolyn McNamara*

On Saturday, January 27, the annual Chili Cook-Off filled our Common Room with close to 100 chili cookers and consumers. With many types of chili to choose from, there was something for everybody, but it was tough to decide which one was best. A wide assortment of cornbread rounded out the meal so there was no excuse for going hungry. After much tasting and testing, ballots were cast for the best chili in both the meat and vegetarian categories. Votes were also cast for best dressed cowgirl and cowboy.

Cook-Off winners in the meat category were:

1st place: Sarah Hamilton for her “Nacho Average Chili”

2nd place: Ron Withem’s “This Year’s Chili”

3rd place: Katie Zimmer with “Classic Chili”

Best vegetarian chili awards went to:

1st place: Nancy Scott with “Sister’s Hot Jelly Chili”

2nd place: Jeri Thurber for her “Deluxe Chili for Everyone”

3rd place: Douglas Lee-Regier’s “GiGi’s Greatness Chili”

Bebe and Rob McCammond took first place for best-dressed cowgirl and cowboy in the costume contest.

The winners received gift cards from Half Price Books.

Special thanks to Marshal Catherine Plumlee; to musicians Collin Hatcher, Dave Olson and Nolan DeVries; and to our sound man, Dave Rosser. Our thanks also go to the following:

Cornbread Bakers: Donna Neff, Ellen Shurson, Lois Norris, Diana Byrd, Carolyn McNamara, Linda Hruska, Anne Rivas, Marie Sedlacek, Carol Ramsey, Nadine Keith, Sheri Conner and Nancy Scott

Chili Cook-Off Posse (folks who helped before, during and after): Geoff Erickson, Katie Zimmer, Lois Norris, Bebe & Rob McCammond, Diana & Daniel Byrd, Linda Hess, Mary Kay & Dave Peters, Roger Nicholaisen, Carolyn McNamara, John Wagner, Walt Jesteadt, Donna Neff, Floyd & Carol Prine, and Nellie & Geoff Chenoweth



Pathways to Membership Class

Sundays, April 8, April 15, April 22 and April 29 at 11:45am
in the Whitney Young Room (downstairs classroom)

This class explores who we are and what we believe and provides opportunities for members to share with newcomers what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist.

Whether you are new to the church, or have been coming for a while, this is a great opportunity to learn more about this community.

Questions? Want to RSVP? Need childcare? Contact Carrie: coordinator@firstuuomaha.org.



Schedule:

Week 1	April 8	Introductory Class & Religious Education
Week 2	April 15	History and UU Roots
Week 3	April 22	Church Governance and Elements of Unitarian Universalism
Week 4	April 29	Membership, Stewardship and Fundraising

Why I Am A Member of First Unitarian Church

By Suzanne King

I deeply value the saying "be the change you wish to see in the world." When I started attending First UU in 2014, I saw many examples of the changes I, too, wanted to be. This drew me in and made me want to learn more.

I saw diversity in the lifestyles, ages and beliefs of the people I met. I was glad to find and continue to enjoy an active and spiritually strong Covenant of UU Pagans (CUUPS). I find added delight in CUUPS being a First and Second UU shared group.

When viewing the First UU calendar, I found a range of adult RE activities and offerings: a variety of spiritual practices; choices for community volunteerism; as well as opportunities for sharing knowledge and learning together. I was further moved by the compassion in church events offering free childcare, too.

This and much more encourages me to keep coming back.

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, March 11 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 11th 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

EMR Director

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 Dixon

Proofers: Lana Hammel,
Scott Kemper, Lois Norris,
Debbie Hunsberger**Flame 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), 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—Steve Switzer

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 McAtee & 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—Peg Pidgeon

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

Team Leaders!

The Church Annual Meeting happens Sunday, May 20 at noon. **Team reports are due to the Church office by Friday, April 13th at noon.** Please send your report to admin@firstuomaha.org with "Annual Report" in the subject line of your email.

Here's the format for a team report:

<Team Name> Leader(s): Members: <list all of your members. This is a record for our archives.> Activities & Projects – 2017-2018: <list all of your team's activities in a brief narrative or bulleted format. Be complete but concise. This is a record for our archives.> Help us celebrate your efforts this church year and document your team and its projects and successes for archives. If you have questions, please contact the office. See last year's annual reports by [clicking here](#) or contact the church office.

Church Events

Stewardship Campaign 2018-2019

The whole month of March.

See pages 6 & 7.

CommUnity Night

Friday, March 2 at 5:30pm in the

Common Room. See page 4.

First UU Young Adults

Sunday, March 4 at 11:30am in the

Whitney Young Room. See page 4 for details.

People's Film Festival

Monday, March 5 at 7pm in the

Common Room. See page 4 for details.

Worship Arts Team Meeting

Wednesday, March 7 at 6pm in the

Merritt Lounge.

3F Book Bonanza

Wednesday, March 7 at 7pm in the

Merritt Lounge. See page 4.

Lunch with the Minister

Thursday, March 8 at noon in the

Common Room. See page 4.

AHA Discussion Group

Thursday, March 8 at 6pm in the

Common Room. See page 4.

First UU Young Adult Game Night (ReFRESH Event)

Friday, March 9 at 6pm in the Common

Room. See page 8.

Partner Church "ReFRESH" Weekend Event

Saturday, March 10 at 9am-noon in the

Common Room. See page 8.

People's Film Festival

Sunday, March 11 at 7pm in the

Common Room. See page 4.

First Steps Class

Sunday, March 11 at 11:45am in the

Whitney Young Room. See page 4.

Women's Alliance

Monday, March 12 at 6:30pm in the

Common Room. See page 4.

Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 13 at 7pm in the

Common Room.

Flame Deadline

Submit your newsletter articles to

admin@firstuuomaha.org by

March 15th at noon.

People's Film Festival

Monday, March 19 at 7pm in the

Common Room. See page 4 for

details.

Black Lives Event: Lecture by Leonard Zeskind

Friday, March 23 at 7pm in the

Sanctuary. See page 4.

POPS (Parents of Preschoolers)

Saturday, March 24 at Second

Unitarian Church. See page 5.

Leadership Talk Back

Sunday, March 25 at 11:30am in the

Common Room. See page 5 for

information.

CUUPS Ostara Celebration

Sunday, March 25 at 6pm in the

Common Room. See page 5 for details

Book Club

Monday, March 26 at 7pm in the

Merritt Lounge. See page 5

Taoism Discussion Group

Tuesday, March 27 at 6:30pm in the

Common Room. See page 5 for details.

Community Meals

Saturday, March 31, offsite.

See page 12.

Recurring...

Dungeons and Dragons Group Meeting (NOW MEETS OFFSITE)

We meet at Kitty Brougham's house:

2002 Deer Park Blvd on the odd-

numbered Sundays at noon.

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.

Choir Rehearsals

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Sanctuary.

See page 5. See flyer on page 14.

Women's Religious Studies Group

Meets most Thursdays at 1pm in the

Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

Dharma Chautauqua

Thursdays at 6pm in the Whitney Young

Room. See page 5.

Future Events...

Spring Carnival

Sunday, April 1. See page 3.

Compassionate Communication Group

1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm starting

April 3. See page 15.

Teams Meeting

Saturday, April 7 at 2pm in the

Common Room.

Pathways to Membership Class

Starts Sunday, April 8. See page 17.

Hamilton & Eggs Brunch

Sunday, April 8 in the Common Room.

See page 7.

Annual Meeting

Sunday, May 20 at noon. Team Reports

due to the office by April 13.

See page 18.

Social Media & First U

Find our public Facebook page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/firstuuomaha/>

Find our closed Facebook group here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/77808136080/>

You must ask to join the group before you can see the posts.

Find us on Twitter here:

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

Be sure to like the church and follow us!

Mission: Fostering the Whole Person, Compassion, and Justice

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

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

Adopted May 14, 2017

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

www.firstuomaha.org