

December 2015

The Flame



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

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Gift Project



Sunday Services at 9:30am and 11:15am

December 6 – “Stuff”

Rev. Frank Rivas

The recent encyclical, *Laudato Si*, spoke to how consumerism supports global warming. Do we want to measure our holiday by how many gifts are exchanged?

December 13 – “On the Messiness of Life”

Rev. Frank Rivas

Or, at least, on the messiness of my own life. A celebration of Hanukkah as an alternative to Christmas.

December 20 – “Music: Exploring Creativity and Pursuing Your Passion”

Steve Raybine, church member

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

“Lessons and Carols”

December 24 at 7pm

Brass ensemble (Alan Godfrey, Arian Alai, Bruce Godfrey, Kabin Thomas, and Stan Harper), The First Unitarian Choir, the Early Morning Risers, organ, and candles remind us that even in the darkest times hope is born in our lives. The Christmas narrative will be read and interpreted with fresh eyes. This is a celebration of births, great and small.

December 27 – “Commune” – 10:30am Service – One Service Only with Rev. Royal Carleton

The service will be as we shared last year, a focus about feeding one another what we are hungry for, and helping provide what we are thirsty for. As soon as you have “eaten” (choose from traditional wafers, carrots, almonds, goldfish crackers, Worners, or a flower) and enjoyed a “drink” (water, cran-apple juice, or wine), you will serve the next person in line, so they can be fed as well. For more information about this service, please see page 12.

Rev. Elations

Monthly Column from our Minister, Rev. Frank Rivas

Grinch that I am, I planned December services that would not support the Christmas industry. The first sermon criticizes unfettered consumerism; the second sermon explores Hanukkah as an alternative to Christmas; the third sermon, by Steve Raybine, has nothing to do with the holiday season at all.

Having thus liberated myself, I found myself listening one day to “For the Earth Forever Turning” and thought of what a perfect Christmas carol that hymn would be. Then I thought of the beauty of night sky, of the story of the shepherds in their fields, of the magi interpreting the stars, of a child born unsheltered from the starry sky. I envisioned, without planning to, a Christmas Eve service that’s based in the traditional narrative, but reminds us of our place in the universe and of the need, sometimes, for darkness.

Like the original Grinch, I underwent a conversion. I am now looking forward to the Christmas Eve service, to the choir, EMR, brass ensemble, organ, carols, and, yes, candles. (Nonetheless, I continue to wonder why we have to burn things in order to make an event seem religious.)

May we eschew the shopping mania and allow for music other than Christmas carols. And may we experience the miracle that happens on a cold winter night when people gather to tell stories, to light candles, and to sing.

Blessings and love,
Frank

Lunch With the Minister

Thursdays at noon in the Common Room. All are invited to join Rev. Frank for a “bring your own brown bag lunch.” We will not meet on Christmas Eve or New Year’s Eve.

Meditation

Tuesdays at 8am in the sanctuary. Join Rev. Frank to practice mindfulness and meditation at this gathering. All are welcome. We will not meet on December 29.

Streaming Services

Can’t make it to church? Missed a Sunday and really wanted to hear the sermon? We’re excited to announce the sermon videos are now online for you to view. Just go to www.firstuomaha.org. Hover your mouse over the word “worship” and go down to “streaming video.” There you will find last Sunday’s service. The direct link is: <http://www.firstuomaha.org/#!/streaming-video/g0sp7> Special thanks to Troy Jensen and others who have been involved with this project to make this feature a reality for our church.

Church Events

Exploring Humanistic Perspectives in Literature: All You Need is Love With Ron Knapp

Tuesday, Dec. 1 at 7pm in the Common Room. The program will include readings, among others, from Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Shakespeare, Rollo May, Francis Bacon, Andrew Marvell, Margery Bianco, and Anne Morrow Lindbergh. Come and enjoy literature, conversation and refreshments in a coffee house atmosphere.

OTOC Environmental Meeting

Thursday, Dec. 3 at 7pm in the Whitney Young Classroom. To find out more about this team and to receive the meeting's agenda please contact Laurie at tothegifts@icloud.com.

CommUUnity Night

Friday, Dec. 4 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. All are welcome to this casual potluck and game night. The church supplies the main dish and you bring the sides. Please join us!

Ministry Team Meeting

Saturday, Dec. 5 at 2pm in the Common Room. Team leaders and church members and friends come together to make decisions about upcoming projects and events. Questions? Contact mtc@firstuuomaha.org.

Mystic Sojourn CUUPS

Sunday, Dec. 6. Socializing begins at 6pm in the Common Room. Ritual and myth will be held from 7-8pm in the sanctuary. First Unitarian's Mystic Sojourn CUUPS welcomes all to

Lessons From Odin: A Night of Myth and Magic. Ritual is followed by potluck and merriment. Come and share the story of wise Odin the Allfather and how he learned to read the runes!

Investment Club

Wednesday, Dec. 9 at 7pm in the Whitney Young Room. This group is open to anyone interested in learning more about investments and will be run by Dean Christensen, long-time church member. Questions? Call Dean at 636-577-5899.

Tolerant Atheist Group

Thursday, Dec. 10 at 7pm in the Common Room. TAG's fall series continues with the third of the four-part series "American Free Thought," a history of free thought in America. The videos are somewhat sequential, but it is not necessary to have seen the previous parts. They have kicked off great discussions! This is the sixth year of TAG's connecting our Atheist, Agnostic, Humanist, and whomever "Free Thinkers" at First Unitarian. All are cordially invited to come together for video and discussion. As usual, doors open at 6pm for those interested in "Bring Your Own Dinner" and conversation. Questions? Contact tag@firstuuomaha.org.

Event at Our Sister Church: Opportunity to Give to Members & Neighbors of Our Sister Church, Clair Memorial United Methodist Church

Address: 5544 Ames Avenue, Omaha. Clair's Annual December Give-away will be held Friday, Dec. 11,

7am-7pm and also on Saturday, Dec. 12, 7:30am-12:30pm on the church's ground floor in the meeting room. Please start collecting new toys, gently used clothing, household goods, and books.

Items should be taken to the Clair on Thursday, December 10 after 5pm. For more info, call Juanita White at 402-502-8260.

Submitted by Janet West, member of the Sister Church Team

Holiday Dinner

Saturday, Dec. 12 in the Common Room. See page 6 for details.

Young Adult Discussion Group

Sunday, Dec. 13 at 11am in the Common Room. Calling all people aged 18-35! This is a once-a-month young adult discussion group aimed for people within this age range. We'll be covering pretty much any topic that we think is relevant to who we are and where we're going in life. Newcomers always welcome!

SSSS-Second Sunday Social at Seven

Dec. 13 at 7pm in the Common Room. MOVIE: *Fried Green Tomatoes*: A housewife who is unhappy with her life befriends an older lady in a nursing home and is enthralled by the tales she tells of people she used to know. SSSS shows an LGBT-themed movie at 7pm on the second Sunday on each month and everyone is welcome! A Facebook event is always created. If you have any questions, please call Royal at 402-999-1379.

Church Events Continued...

Women's Alliance

Monday, Dec. 14 in the Common Room. Women, and those who identify as women, from First and Second Unitarian are invited to attend the WA's Holiday Get-Together. The evening will begin with socializing and beverages at 6:30pm. At 7pm, we will enjoy "heavy" appetizers and desserts. Our annual "white elephant" gift exchange will be at 8pm. Please bring an appetizer or dessert and a wrapped gift. Re-gifting is strongly encouraged. Alliance asks for a donation of \$15 which goes to the Merritt Education Fund. (First-time attendees will be the guests of the Alliance.) The Alliance collect donations for Y.E.S. (Youth Emergency Services), that serves a large population of pregnant and parenting teens. They're asking for baby/toddler toys, pacifiers, burp cloths, bibs, and baby hygiene items for both boys and girls. If you would like to help wrap gifts for the holiday season for Y.E.S., please contact Kim Callaghan. Please RSVP by Dec. 11. Email: kathryn.oliver@outlook.com, RSVP on the Facebook event page, or leave a message with Kathi at 402-214-2718. When making your reservation, indicate whether you will be bringing appetizer (A) or a dessert (D).

People's Film Festival

Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 7pm in the Common Room. All are welcome to this showing of "Consumerism & the Limits to Imagination." Consumer capitalism dominates our economy, our politics, and our culture. In this illustrated presentation based on his latest critically acclaimed book, media scholar Justin Lewis makes a

compelling case that consumer capitalism can no longer deliver on its promise of enhancing quality of life. For more info, go here: <http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?preadd=action&key=177>.

The Women's Religious Study Covenant Group

Thursday, Dec. 17 at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. The topic is "Prayer" led by Sister Maureen Connolly. If there are questions, contact Evelyn Whitehill at 712-366-2748 or ewhitehill@cox.net.

Bible Study with the Parson

Thursday, Dec. 17 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. (Note the new start time) At the December Bible Class we will explore a major ancient humanist text, Ecclesiastes 1:1 through 4:8. We will also introduce the next text, Genesis 2:5 through 3:24. Believe nothing you have learned about this narrative.

Friday Fun Night

Friday, Dec. 18 at 7pm in the Whitney Young Room. Join the young adults for some fun and games. No need to RSVP. Just show up for some festive Friday fun!

Moving Inwards: Being with the Subtle Self

Saturday, Dec. 19, 3-5pm in the Common Room. Explore and cultivate presence with self, through the lens of somatic movement and dance, developmental and relational psychology. We are always in relationship. Even when alone, we are in relationship with ourselves. How we are and our ease or dis-ease in relationship begins with our early

experiences in life and is reflected in how we relate. In this experiential workshop, we will move, dance and explore together, our way of being in the world. This work has no goal, other than moving inward and 'being with the subtle self'. Please bring a yoga mat, blanket or beach towel. No experience necessary. Adults only, suitable for all fitness levels. Please call or email to reserve your space. Vickie Hawks Love, 805-637-6855, yhlbodymind@gmail.com.

Christmas Eve Service

Thursday, Dec. 24 at 7pm in the sanctuary. See page 2 for details.

RE Council

Sunday, Dec. 27 at 11:30am in Jan's office. All parents are invited to this meeting to discuss religious education. Questions? Email Jan at dre@firsttuomaha.org.

Women's Religious Studies

During December the group is discussing Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter "Laudato Si; on Care for Our Common Home." We meet in the Merritt Lounge from 1 to 2:30pm most Thursdays. Questions? Contact Marcia Leise at mkleise@cox.net.

Community Meals

Thank you to everyone who helped with our October meal. The next time we help serve lunch will be on Feb. 6, 2016. Mark your calendars for that date. Want to help? Contact Diane at dianewithem@gmail.com.

Church Events Continued...

Annual Holiday Dinner

*Saturday, December 12 in the Common Room
Social Hour at 5:30pm; Dinner at 6:30pm*

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

*Cost will be \$21.00 per person which includes the tip for the servers and clean-up
so that our faithful volunteers can take a much needed break and enjoy the evening.*

***Please make reservations with your check to First Unitarian
to arrive in the office by December 4. Put your check and this form
in the offering plate or mail both to the church office.
Your check is your reservation.***

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

Name(s) _____

*Please make your childcare reservation when you RSVP for the dinner.
Pizza and all the fixings will be provided.*

Yes, I will need childcare ____ # of children ____ ages _____



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

Church Events & Opportunities

Dungeons and Dragons Group Meeting

Meets the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month in the upstairs classroom after the second service. All D&D role players are invited. If you have questions, contact Roman at rmnoriega1@cox.net, 402-769-4260.

Bridge Group

Meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month in the upstairs classroom after the second service. If you're a complete novice, join us to learn how to play. If you've played before, come for some entertainment and time at the game table. Contact Scott at scott.kemper@gmail.com.

UU&YOU Class

Sunday, Jan. 3 at 12:30pm in the Whitney Young Room. Visitors, newcomers, and the just curious are invited to this introduction to Unitarian Universalism and First Unitarian Church of Omaha, along with an opportunity to share our religious journeys in a theologically diverse "safe" place. Conversation will also include some of our history and things going on here at our church. RSVPs go to uuclass@firstuuomaha.org or call Jaime at (402-657-9386).

A Course in Miracles

Thursdays at 6:30pm in the Common Room. Dates: January 7, January 21, February 4, February 11, February 18, February 25.

A Course in Miracles is a complete self-study spiritual thought system. As a three-volume curriculum consisting of a Text, Workbook for Students, and Manual for Teachers, it teaches that the way to universal love and peace—or remembering

God—is by undoing guilt through forgiving others. The Course thus focuses on the healing of relationships and making them holy. A Course in Miracles also emphasizes that it is but one version of the universal curriculum, of which there are "many thousands." Consequently, even though the language of the Course is that of traditional Christianity, it expresses a non-sectarian, non-denominational spirituality. A Course in Miracles therefore is a universal spiritual teaching, not a religion. To sign up for this course, please email admin@firstuuomaha.org.

Book Club

The Book Club doesn't meet in December. We will meet January 25 at 7pm. Questions? Email Dave: richardson.david@westside66.net

Listening Circles Signups

No homework, no deadlines, just support and exploration in a safe environment. These 90-minute sessions focus on topics suggested by short readings and are a wonderful opportunity to get to know other UUs. Contact Liz at listeningcircles@firstuuomaha.org for more information. New groups are continually forming.

Volunteer Opportunity: Wayside Pulpit at First Unitarian

Interested in changing the sign outside our church? We tend to change the quote on the wayside pulpit outside about twice a month. We are looking for someone who can commit to this job. Is that you? Contact the office for details: admin@firstuuomaha.org.

Volunteer Opportunity: Tutors

Please consider joining Jack Heidel, Sharon Conlon, Kim Dunovan, Doug Wagner, Joe Schaaf, Mark Loscutoff, Cy Leise, Clyde Kramer, Bob Hess, Steve Davis and Kelly Outson as tutors for a 6th grade class at Wakonda Elementary School in North Omaha, from 1:20—2:40pm. We're looking for a few more people to commit to helping out for just one day per week. This is a joint project with Clair Memorial Methodist Church. For information, contact Jack at jackheidel@yahoo.com.

Outside Opportunity:

Choir Music

Again this year the First UU Choir has been invited to perform at Christmas at Union Station. The choir will perform from 1:30 to 2pm on the afternoon of December 20 at the Durham Western Heritage Museum. We hope that a large number of First Unitarians will turn out to support the church's excellent choir. Please contact Bob to RSVP: bobmcmeen@gmail.com.

Outside Opportunity: RCMC

The River City Mixed Chorus will perform *Of Wonder & Whimsy* the weekend of December 12 at First Congregational Church. For show times and tickets, please visit www.rcmc.org.

MidAmerica Regional Assembly:

The WHO in the New Era of UU
April 29 to May 1 in St. Paul, MN.
Assembly workshop applications are being accepted now. Interested in attending? Please visit: <https://www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly>.



Santa's Little Helpers

This holiday season please help children in our church and our community receive gifts. You and your family will feel jolly spreading holiday cheer!



Just choose a Simpson's Character from the tree in the Middle Classroom (the upstairs classroom). Then give the card to Jan and she will provide you with a child's age, clothing and shoe size and what they like. Purchase items and bring them back to church and leave the gifts wrapped, labeled with your Simpson's character card and ready to go in Jan's office by Sunday, December 20. Santa's Little Helpers will deliver these gifts that week.

DECEMBER 2015						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

December 25 is Christmas
December 31 is New Year's

free-printable-calendars.com



Want to help but don't want to shop? Donate money by writing "Santa's Helpers" on the memo line of your check made out to First Unitarian. This money will help RE purchase gifts for kids in need in our community.

Questions? Contact Jan at 402-990-2220 or dre@firstuuomaha.org.



The Magic of Creativity: A Note from our DRE

I grew up in a creative household. Having grown up on the farm, my parents took their creativity for granted. Poverty during the Depression was a fact of life, and making do with alternative materials was a necessity. Understanding machinery from sewing machines to tractors was required, too. It's laughable to imagine my grandparents accepting excuses for leaving work undone because of some mechanical failure. You were supposed to get in there, diagnose the problem, and fix it.

My parents met at Iowa State, where Dad had enrolled to take advantage of the G.I. bill. They married and began housekeeping in a basement apartment thrown together by an enterprising landlord profiting by the glut of students seeking housing. Mom and Dad used their ingenuity to build furniture out of cast off boards and odds and ends. They made the best of the little place.

Their child-rearing philosophy was to provide space for their three children to create and to provide crayons, leftover fanfold paper, scrap lumber and fabric. Sewing supplies were always available, including the sewing machine. They always liked to do creative projects, so they were creativity role models. Dad had a passion for restoring old beat up bikes, and Mom loved to refinish furniture and sew clothes. Nothing pleased her more than to piece scraps together and make a garment with less than the recommended yardage.

I have never lost my childhood thrill of making stuff. I chose to become an art teacher to continue childhood a little longer. It was great to share my enthusiasm with kids and to nudge them into their own creative discoveries. At church I have the pleasure of doing the same with kids and adults. What a joy to have this opportunity!

Jan Wilson, Director of Religious Education
dre@firstuomaha.org

Overview of Sunday School and Activities

Birth-Kindergarten — 9:15am-12:30pm Nursery open. Adult signs child in/out.

Kindergarten-Grade 5 — 9:15am-10:30am Community Time. Middle classroom RE wing. Optional, adult-supervised play. Sign-in/out sheet, make contact with supervising adult(s) at drop-off.

*10:30-11:15 am. Class Time. Formal curriculum and teachers. K-2nd grade meets north classroom (Jan's office). 3rd-5th meets middle classroom of RE wing.

11:15 am-12:30 pm. Community Time. Middle classroom RE wing. Optional, adult-supervised play. Sign-in/out sheet, make contact with supervising adult(s) at drop-off.

Grades 6-12 9:00-10:30 am. Attend Church or Community Time at Spielbound. Adult-supervised board games at Spielbound (1 block from church). Parent responsible for drop-off/pick-up and having contact info on file.

*10:30-11:15 am. Class Time at Spielbound. Game choice and discussion with teachers. Youth at church walk over with Ryan Cook after first service, meeting at west RE door. Otherwise, parent responsible for drop-off.

11:15am-12:30pm. Attend Church or Community Time at Spielbound. Adult-supervised board games at Spielbound. Parent responsible for drop-off/pick-up and having contact info on file.

* denotes class time

What's in a Name Tag?

Carrie Helmberger, Membership Coordinator



Have you ever wondered, “Why do we wear these name tags and why are there so many different versions of them?” Let me shed a little light on these burning questions for you.

- We wear nametags, because let's be honest, a lot of times we see people week after week and we don't always remember their names. A nametag helps take a way a little of the pressure, making it easier to do that whole face- with- name recognition thing.
- Black plastic nametags (with pin backs)-- belong to our members who have been a part of the church the longest.
- Blue metallic nametags (with magnetic backs)--belong to our long-term members who just wanted a pretty blue name tag, to our more recent members, those who have just joined, or those of us who have lost our original name tag and needed a replacement*
- Visitors who fill out the yellow information sheet are greeted at their second visit with a white, paper nametag because members want to get to know them and make them feel welcomed. We want them to feel as if they belong, because they do!
- After a visitor has been with us for a while (8 or more visits), they will see that their plain white nametag now has a pretty blue stripe. This indicates that they are further interested in what our church has to offer. The blue stripe mirrors the blue cup at coffee hour, indicating the visitor feels safe enough at First Unitarian to stick around. It also means the visitors have been attending service long enough that their faces will be familiar to our members.

*By the way members, can fill out a nametag request form, and with a \$12 fee you too can have a blue magnetic nametag of your own! Please me at coordinator.firstuomaha@gmail.com if you are interested.

November Women's Alliance: PFLAG 101

On November 9, the Women's Alliance group was visited by Joni, a member of PFLAG. She presented the women with a brief lesson of what terms men and women should be using when addressing transgender individuals. It was an extremely insightful presentation. According to PFLAG's website, their mission is to support families, allies and people who are LGBTQ and to educate others about the unique issues and challenges facing people who are LGBTQ. PFLAG Meeting Information: Meetings are held the second Thursday of every month from 6:45 to 9pm at Memorial Hall (use the Truhlsen Community Center entrance), Countryside Community Church, 8787 Pacific Street. If you're interested in attending our next WA meeting, please go to page 5 in this newsletter.



A Prepared Environment for Diversity: Including the Whole

System in the Room *By Jack Round, Church President*

Based on the amount of time we discuss it, increased diversity is an important topic and goal for Unitarians. I asked several people why diversity, in general, is important to them; that is, what does diversity get for them? Their responses seemed to suggest they perceived a direct relationship between the amount of diversity in one's personal, ongoing experience and the degree to which one is "open-minded" (rather than "closed-minded" or "narrow-minded.")

This "open-mindedness" seemed to be a description of an increased personal awareness and, maybe, an increased personal aliveness.

They also suggested the ability to coexist with diversity increases our ability, individually and collectively, to deal with the world going forward. And perhaps it is a prerequisite to becoming more responsible global citizen.

Maslow

As you may know, on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, lack of prejudice is a part of the highest level: self-actualization. Being able to accept diversity, then, seems to be a prerequisite to becoming a more whole person.

Including the "Whole System in the Room"

In the book *Discovering Common Ground*, the authors suggest the ability to achieve positive, comprehensive, systemic change is significantly increased if representatives of the "Whole System" are included in the room at once. The "Whole System" is defined as being the many diversity dimensions that make up a larger social system (political, age, mind-set, racial, religious, skill sets/occupations, education, personality, sexual identity, geography, etc.). Lacking this diversity, some perspective or information necessary to achieve a desired outcome will be

missing. The book details in depth how to prepare the environment to allow all diversity perspectives to arrange themselves so "building common ground" is possible.

The book's formula is: The Right Task + The Right People + The Right Setting = Unprecedented Actions. Therefore, we may want to consider expanding our notion of diversity (as more than racial) in order to include the "whole system in the room" so we are capable of unprecedented actions.

Related to this expanded notion of diversity, several things come to mind:

Unitarian Political Diversity

Several years ago, I was talking to a very accomplished educator who also volunteered at the Unitarian church he attended. He told me someone had called in and wanted to visit his church, but her concern was she and her husband were Republicans. Was that a problem? The Unitarian told them they would probably feel more comfortable at another church. This story bothered me when he told it to me, and I wondered if we might benefit from having more political diversity in our churches.

Age Diversity

At the last Board Meeting, it was suggested we start a Unitarian Student Group at UNO in order to increase the number of younger people at our church. I think this is a tremendous idea.

Mindset: Static vs. Dynamic Diversity

I was talking to a long-time, local Unitarian who shared this narrative: "Here's how First Unitarian Church is: 250 members, more formal culture...etc. Here's how Second Unitarian Church is: 150 members, looser culture...etc." I wondered

how many times this individual had repeated the narrative which certainly seems to lock in a static (closed-minded) way of perceiving ourselves.

Racial Diversity

A consistently verbalized goal at our church is an increase in racial diversity. I wonder if ability to be diverse in other ways, creates the space and ability to be diverse in this way. And vice-versa.

A Prepared Environment for Diversity

In every Montessori classroom, as some of you may be aware, there is a "prepared environment" designed to allow children to learn in a way that is natural. This aligns with the Building Common Ground necessary condition of having the "right setting." I wonder if we need to consider intentionally preparing our church environment so as to welcome all diversity dimensions. In any contemplated "prepared environment," the ability to deal with someone who is different from yourself may require that building relationships should precede judging or being right. We can get the "whole system in the room" if we're prepared to do this. Then there may be no limit to what we will be capable of.

News from the Ministry Team Council

We are finding our groove! Nellie Chenoweth and Diane Withem are on board and active. It is our function to provide leadership and support for all of you who volunteer your energy and time. We are here to help you make things happen and to help you refine new ideas and events for our church and to help evaluate whether the events are consistent with the mission of First Unitarian and the goals of our Board of Trustees.

Contact any of us, including Catharine and Rev. Frank, if you need help with a new proposal, an existing project or a new team idea. We are here to serve! Our email is mtc@firstuomaha.org.

Our next Ministry Team meeting is on Saturday, December 5 at 2pm in the Common Room. Please come! See our church in action.

Jackie Anderegg, President-elect

Ministry Team Council

2015 KIOS Bundled Donations

This year, KIOS bundled contributions totaled \$3,660, for which First Unitarian Church will be acknowledged as underwriter 112 times in 2015---28 times each on: Morning Edition, which airs M-F, 6-9am; All Things Considered, which airs M-F, 3-5:30pm; Wait, Wait...Don't tell me! which airs Sat., 10-11am, and Prairie Home Companion, which airs Sat., 4-7pm.

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

Jaime Alexander Ashley Brown Jack Heidel and Sharon Conlon Sheri Conner Beth Conover
 Kim Dunovan and Jerre Tritsch Laurie and Todd Gift Bruce and Kate Godfrey
 Larry Goeser John and KayLynn Goldner Mary Green Lana Hammel Shelton Hendricks
 Linda Hess Sandy and Tony Host John and Linda Hruska Troy and Wendi Jensen
 Anne and Ron Knapp Clyde Kramer Dixie Lemon Harriet Major Donna Neff and Walt Jesteadt
 Christina and Roman Noriega Lois and Frank Norris Diane Otte Bob Perrin
 Catherine Plumtree Carol and Floyd Prine Carol Ramsey Dave and Colleen Richardson
 Barb and Bill Ross Mary and Kabin Thomas Jim VanArsdell and Gloria Sorey John Wagner and
 Carolyn McNamara Janet West Pat Will Diane and Ron Withem Judith Wright

Details about December 27th service from Royal *(continued from page 2)*

“Commune: to communicate to someone or something in a very personal or spiritual way, an act or instance of sharing, fellowship or rapport.” Last December Shawna Foster and I shared a form of communicating with a service entitled Eucharist. Before that service was created, I reached out to many members of our congregation to better understand, and better equip myself with words, visions, and understandings of what could fit well. I think it can be said that it was received well by those who attended and participated. I am mindful of some feedback—Some didn't attend because the service information was not framed in a way that was inviting to them, some wouldn't attend because the word, the image, and the service stirred thoughts and feelings of past experiences. Unitarians have celebrated communion for many years. The Flower communion service was created by Norbert Capek, who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia in 1923. He wanted to share ritual that would bind people more closely together. The format had to be one that would not alienate any who had forsaken other religious traditions. The service will be as we shared last year, a focus about feeding one another what we are hungry for and helping provide for what we are thirsty. Please see page 2 for more information about this Sunday service.

Foyer Improvement Project: We Are Getting There!

We hope that you have noticed the change in the church foyer! Most of the work has been completed. The Board approved the project and demolition began September 14th. Plaster walls had to be patched and painted. Wainscoting, chair rail and cabinetry was built and painted off-site. It was then brought to the church, fitted to the space and given a final coat of painting and hardware. We are completing door hardware and carpeting and touch ups on cabinetry. Hanging a display of Unitarian documents and plaques and installing some furniture will complete the space.

Main Concepts:

Create a welcoming and inviting first impression for visitors and members / Focus on what is important – “the elevator speech” for the church / Display important, framed church documents that “speak” to who we are now and historically / House and display member badges aesthetically / Reduce clutter by providing appropriate storage for membership and ambassador items including visitor badges / Create a safe entrance way without trip hazards / Restore door hardware to be consistent with original church style / Be respectful of the existing historic architecture

Donation Opportunities

Be a part of the project

- Repair & refinish a Windsor Sac Back arm chair from the Sanctuary (7 chairs available at \$240 each chair)
- Reproduction Windsor 72” settee \$1,850
- Two Reproduction Windsor side tables \$800
- New hinge hardware for toilet doors in lower foyer \$50
- Walk-off carpet throughout foyer: Shaw Contract Group walk-off carpet: welcome II tile, red #31850 \$2,700

Donated!

These donors will be acknowledged according to their wishes.

- New entry door hardware: historically correct and functional \$3,560—donated by Anonymous donor
- New hardware for sanctuary doors \$924—donated by Anonymous donor
- Repair Chancel table and refinish top \$500—donated by Women’s Alliance
- Barrier to organ loft \$120—donated by Anonymous donor
- Repair & refinish a Windsor Sack Back arm chair from the Sanctuary—two chairs donated by two Anonymous donors

The Sarah Joslyn Society Welcomes New Members

By Dixie Lemon

The Sarah Joslyn Society, composed of generous folks who have declared their intent to leave a bequest to the church, recently welcomed two new members: Dave Richardson and Shelton Hendricks. Last month’s article was about Dave. It was a year ago that Shelton Hendricks made the commitment to the Sarah Joslyn Society. He then promptly left the country before we could honor him with the commemorative slate and the “golden handshake.” We caught up with him again this autumn and finalized the event. Shelton retired a year or so ago from being Dean at UNO. Since then he has not held still for long, enjoying many trips with family and friends. If you want corroboration, check his Facebook page. It is just wonderful that he has joined the group, now totaling 74, who have made the commitment to leave a portion of their estates to the church. Thank you, Shelton!



What is 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. You may call the church office and press ext. 105 to leave a telephone message for Hope in Action. Or, you may simply complete a Caring Card located in the church pews and place it in the box in the church foyer.

WHO DECIDES WHAT SUPPORT WILL BE OFFERED?

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

What is Community Meals?

Community Meals is an outreach to people in need in our church's neighborhood. Every Saturday members of various "First" churches and others take turns providing a hot meal and groceries to those in need at First Baptist Church (our neighbor just one block east of our church). First Unitarian Church has been part of this effort for several years. Four times a year our church "caters" and serves the meal and distributes the groceries provided by Trader Joe's. There are First Unitarian Church members who work at the site on a weekly basis and additional help is always needed. The next time we serve is February 6, 2016. Want to help? Email dianewithem@gmail.com to sign up. Thank you!

Share the Plate— Partner Church

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. This month's recipient is our Partner Church. See next page for details.

How the Members and Friends of First Unitarian Church Assist Our Partner Church in Firtosmartonos, Transylvania, Romania

Over the years, members and friends of First Unitarian Church have paid for a variety of the needs of our Partner Church including subsidizing the repair of the village church and parsonage, providing scholarships to the village teens, and bringing Rev. Katalin and her husband, Boti, and their translator, Gabor, to Omaha in October 2013. Our church has sent \$1,320 each year to help maintain the village church and \$1,200 in scholarship money for the village young people so they can pursue their high school and college education.

In 2015-2016, the \$1,200 is being spread over nine students. For the high school students, the money is paying for room and board or bus transportation from and back to the village each day. For the college students, the scholarship money helps pay for books and fees.

Nine village students are attending high school or college during the 2015-2016 academic year. If we could send an additional \$1,200 (a total of \$2,400), the students and the parents of the students will be very appreciative. (The Women's Alliance generously donates \$400 of the \$1,200 currently being sent.) Rev. Katalin had said that providing the scholarship money is how First Unitarian Church can best support the village.

Below is an introduction to some of the students who are currently receiving the scholarship money in 2015-2016.

Dalma Szentpali is in medical school in Marosvasarhely (Targu Mures). She was born and raised in Firtosmartonos and graduated from the Unitarian high school in Szekelykeresztur (Crituru Secuiesc). (Students in Romania enter professional schools after they graduate from high school.) She will continue to receive the scholarship help until she finishes medical school.

Beata Kibedi's parents were born and raised in Firtosmaronos and are active in the life of the village and the village church. Beata is attending the Unitarian high school in Szekelykeresztur. She is living in the school dorm during the week and comes back to the village on the weekends. The Romanian government pays for the educational expenses whether the student is attending a state-run school or a religious school. In Beata's case, the scholarship helps pay for boarding costs.

Szilamer Foo is attending a public school in Szekelykeresztur. His parents are divorced. Besides running a small farm, his mother takes a bus to a nearby city to work. Szilamer is studying to be a police officer. The scholarship money helps to pay for the bus to and from Szekelykeresztur. Szilamer continues to help his mother run the farm.

Attila Szasz won second place in a county-wide math contest in the spring of 2014. He is attending a public high school in Szekelyudvarhely (Odorheiu Secuiesc) and is studying math and computer science. Because of the distance to Szekelyudvarhely from Firtosmartonos, Attila is boarding at the Reform (Calvinist) run dorm for high school students. Again, the scholarship money pays a portion of the room and board costs.

During December, the Partner Church has been designated the **Share the Plate** recipient organization. If each First Unitarian Church pledging unit would give \$25 to the Partner Church Fund, this would cover most of the money pledged to the church in Firtosmartonos and would allow the Partner Church Team to increase our church's scholarship money to the village young people. Please write a check to First Unitarian Church and write "Partner Church Fund" in the memo line.

Thank you from the Partner Church Team.

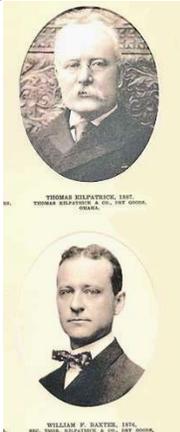
PLEASE NOTE:

NONE OF THE MONEY GIVEN TO THE PARTNER CHURCH FUND IS USED TO SUBSIDIZE TRAVEL TO TRANSYLVANIA BY FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH MEMBERS OR FRIENDS.

Thomas Kilpatrick and William F. Baxter: Two Key Figures linked to the History of First Unitarian and Omaha Civic Leadership

By Dave Richardson

It is not uncommon for members of this church to see one another on Sunday as well as on weekdays at work. Over the years, a number of our members have in common, liberal religion and business and professional connections. This is certainly the case with two very important church leaders from the early part of the 20th century. There are actually three major things Thomas Kilpatrick (1841-1916) and William F. Baxter (1868-1938) had in common. They were both presidents of Kilpatrick's Department Store. Mr. Baxter was the Vice President under Mr. Kilpatrick and succeeded him upon his death. Secondly, they both lived in homes that were landmark structures in our town's history and of course they were both key figures during a critical period of our history.



Longtime Omahans fondly remember Kilpatrick's Department Store located at 15th and Douglas. Mr. Kilpatrick founded a dry goods store on 11th and Harney. In the 1880s the business later moved to 15th and Douglas, and soon became the premier department store in town. It was generally considered to be more elegant than Brandeis, its biggest competitor. If you shopped at "Kilpat's" you were among the elite. The store's motto was "Satisfaction Always."

The store thrived under the leadership of Mr. Kilpatrick, Mr. Baxter and later Mr. Baxter's son-in-law Dan Campbell. The store was purchased by the Younkers' chain in 1961. The new owners expanded to two new locations at The Center, located at 42nd and Center, and The Crossroads on 72nd and Dodge, where it operated under the Younkers' name. The downtown store was closed in the 1970s and was ultimately torn down to make room for the W. Dale Clark library and other downtown developments.

The elegant homes of Masters Kilpatrick and Baxter were beautiful examples of two distinct styles and eras. Mr. Kilpatrick's home (seen below) was built in 1890 in the Romanesque Revival style and is on both the local and National Registry of Historical Landmarks.

The Baxter home was built after the family lost their earlier home in the Easter Sunday Tornado of 1913, which had devastated hundreds of homes and whole neighborhoods. The house was built "way out west" at 407 Elmwood Road. It was designed and built by the famous local architect Thomas Kimball. It is in an eclectic Mediterranean style and features a large open-air porch

located on the north side of the main level. The south side has a two-level sun porch. This house was torn down during a period of UNO expansion to the west. In addition to being successful businessmen, both men were very active leaders at First Unitarian in the first two decades of the 20th Century. They both served terms as board president and treasurer, as well as being generous with their pledges. The period from 1900 to 1920 was a time of great contrasts for the church. The first decade was during the halcyon days when the famous Reverend Newton Mann occupied our pulpit. The church fell on hard times after his retirement in 1910. The Women's Alliance deserves credit for its efforts in saving the church. The jobs of Board President and Treasurer were also no easy task. Both Kilpatrick and Baxter were key players in the leadership of the church during these two decades. Kilpatrick served three terms as Chairman of the Board of Trustees from 1900 to 1906. He also served several terms as Treasurer. He worked closely with Rev. Mann to maintain the finances and keep membership stable. When Kilpatrick died in 1916 his daughter Florence Mixter donated funds to purchase, in her father's name, the Austin organ for our new church which was then under construction.

The inscription reads:

"The organ is a memorial to Thomas Kilpatrick, An Honored and Faithful Member of this Church"

Mr. Baxter was a tireless worker for the church. Board minutes from 1912 to the late 1920s frequently offer thanks to him for his efforts as

board chair and treasurer. He served six different non-consecutive terms as Board chair. It seems that when help was needed the board turned to him. Baxter was board chair during planning and construction of the current building which was completed in 1918. The picture below shows him introducing former President William Howard Taft, who officiated at the laying of the capstone in 1917.



Wm. F. Baxter & Wm. Howard Taft. Taft officiated at the 10/19/17 laying the capstone on the east buttress of the entrance steps of the current church.

Baxter was also active in academic and community affairs. In March of 1919 he delivered a sermon at his new church which warned of the evils of Bolshevism and which echoed the fears of many during the "Red Scare" of that year. He also donated much time and money to the development of UNO (then called Omaha University). In 1939, his widow donated monies that were used to fund the William F. Baxter Lecture series. The Milo Bail Student Center houses the Baxter Chapel in his memory.

The accomplishments of these two church members serve to remind us that we indeed "drink from wells we did not dig and we are warmed by fires we did not build."

Team Fair Success

What a great time at our Team Fair on Sunday, November 1! Although it is the job of the Ministry Team Council to make this happen, it would not have happened in the same way and with as much energy without Carolyn McNamara's skill at organization and sense of fun. It was very well-organized, very well-attended, and FUN! And all of the credit goes to Carolyn!

Are you interested in joining a team and volunteering at First U but missed the Team Fair? If so, please contact the church office to find the best place for you!

Jackie Anderegg, President-Elect,
Ministry Team Council Member



Photos of the Team Fair by Carolyn McNamara and Royal Carleton.



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Choir Director

Bob McMeen

Custodian

Bobby Medrano

Early Service Pianist

Stan Harper

Choir Accompanist

Keith Hart

Minister Emeritus

Ronald Knapp

Nominating Committee

Mary Thomas, Kim Callaghan,

Molly Dewell, Joe Schaaf,

Nadine Keith, Dave Olson

THE FLAME

Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Word limit: 200. Send your submissions to

admin@firstuomaha.org.**Editor/Designer:** Cat Dixon**Proofers:** Lana Hammel, Scott Kemper, Lois Norris,

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Meet Our Leaders

Board Members

Jack Round (President), Jackie Anderegg (President-Elect), Sheri Conner, Cy Leise (Secretary), Kabin Thomas, Dean Christensen, Jack Heidel, Linda Parker

board@firstuomaha.org**Trustees of the Capital Trust**

Tim Duggan (2016), Steve Hutchinson (2017), Evelyn Whitehill (2018)

Committee on Ministry

Skip Ciulla, Sandy Host, Katrina Schmidt, Marie Sedlacek

Ministry Team Council

Rev. Frank Rivas, Jackie Anderegg, Diane Withem, Nellie Chenoweth

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

Archives - Dave Richardson

Caring - Katrina Schmidt

Chalice Guild - Kay Lynn Goldner

Community Meals - Diane Withem

Fellowship - Judith Wright, Nadine Keith &

Nellie Chenoweth

Finance - Walt Jesteadt

Fundraising - Donna Neff & Kathi Oliver

Hope in Action - Kim Dunovan

Hospitality Teams - Kim Callaghan

House and Grounds - Pierce Carpenter

Membership - Beth Conover

Neighborhood Ministry - Royal Carleton

Office - Carolyn McNamara

Omaha Together One Community -

Laurie Gift

Partner Church - Janet West

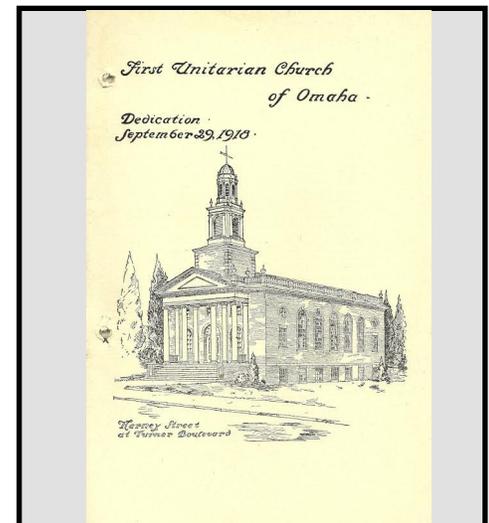
Religious Education - Sheri Conner

Women's Alliance - Nellie Chenoweth

Worship Arts Team - Megan Gustafson

Young Adult Group - Kathi Oliver

YRUU - Ben Wallace & Shawne Coonfare

**Celebrating Our Heritage**

Two important church anniversaries are approaching:

- 150th anniversary of the signing of the Articles of Incorporation of The First Unitarian Church of Omaha - August 22, 1869
- 100th anniversary of the dedication of the church building - September 29, 1918

Church Events

Perspectives in Literature

Tuesday, Dec. 1 at 7pm in the Common Room

See page 4 for details.

Mystic Sojourn CUUPS

Sunday, Dec. 6 at 6pm in the Common Room

See page 4 for more information.

OTOC Environmental Action

Team Meeting

Thursday, Dec. 3 at 7pm in the Whitney Young Room

CommUnity Night

Friday, Dec. 4 at 5:30pm

See page 4 for information.

Board Meeting

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

Investment Group

Wednesday, Dec. 9 at 7pm in the Whitney Young Room

See page 4 for information.

Tolerant Atheist Group (TAG)

Thursday, Dec. 10 at 7pm in the Common Room

See page 4 for information.

Holiday Dinner

Saturday, Dec. 12 in the Common Room at 5:30pm

See page 6 for details.

Young Adult Discussion Group

Sunday, Dec. 13 at 11am in the Common Room

See page 4 for details.

Second Sunday Social at Seven (SSSS)

Sunday, Dec. 13 at 7pm in the Common Room

See page 4 for details.

Women's Alliance

Monday, Dec. 14 at 6:30pm

See page 4 for details.

People's Film Festival

Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 7pm in the Common Room

See page 5 for more information.

Flame Deadline

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

Bible Study with the Parson

Thursday, Dec. 17 at 6:30pm

See page 5 for details.

Friday FunDay

Friday, Dec. 18 at 7pm

See page 5 for details.

Moving Inward: Being with the Subtle Self

Saturday, Dec. 19 at 3pm in the Common Room

See page 5 for details.

Santa's Little Helpers Presents Due

Sunday, Dec. 20 in Jan's office

See page 8 for information.

Christmas Eve Service

Thursday, Dec. 24 at 7pm

See page 2 for details.

Church office closed:

Dec. 24—Jan. 3

RE Council Meeting

Sunday, Dec. 27 at 11:30am in Jan's Office

See page 5 for details.

Recurring...

Meditation

Every Tuesday at 8am in the sanctuary. Not meeting Dec. 29

See page 3 for information.

Choir

Rehearses every Wednesday at 7pm in the Sanctuary.

YRUU

Meets every Wednesday at 7pm in the Common Room. Only meets on Dec. 2 and Dec. 9 this month.

Lunch with the Minister

Thursdays at noon in the Common Room. Not meeting Dec. 24 or 31

See page 3 for details.

Women's Religious Studies Group

Meets most Thursdays at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge

See page 5 for information.

Dungeons & Dragons Group

Meets the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month after the service. See page 7.

Bridge Group

Meets the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month after the service. See page 7.

Listening Circles

Various dates/times. See the calendar online here: www.firsttuomaha.org/#!/calendar-month/c1yks. See page 7

Looking ahead...

UU & You

Sunday, Jan. 3 at 12:30pm in the Whitney Young Classroom

See page 7 for more information.

Annual Chili Cook-off

Saturday, Jan. 23

Look for information in future enews and the next issue of *The Flame*.

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