

December 2018

The Flame



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

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Church Services

Sunday, December 2 at 10:30am
"Resting in Mystery"

Rev. Dr. Jean Heriot

Facebook, Instagram, Podcasts, Twitter, Google Alerts—many of us find these temptations endless and the promises of knowledge and entertainment engulfing. And yet, this lifestyle often doesn't live up to the hype. Sometimes walking in the woods, playing with children, or singing in a choir brings home to us the knowledge that our lives are deeper and more mysterious than we acknowledge. We will explore together practices and ways of being that encourage us to dwell in this mysterious world of being: a world beyond our electronic selves, a world of mystery, awe, and joy.

About the guest speaker: Jean Heriot is a UU community minister whose work at Hastings College involves both teaching and social justice. She is a professor of religion and sociology and the director of service learning. At HC, she encourages students to find meaning in their studies and their careers, and she mentors students who choose to seek justice for all.

Sunday, December 9 at 10:30am
"First UU Communion"

Rev. Royal Carleton

Join us as we take turns feeding each other what we are hungry for. This is not a traditional communion, and honors our UU principles and other world religions.

Sunday, December 16 at 10:30am
"Winter Holidays"

Rev. Michelle LaGrave

A celebration of three major winter holidays: Advent, Hanukkah, and the Winter Solstice. Whether waiting for the birth of a messiah, for the purification of holy oil, or for the return of the sun; each holiday recreates elements of the mysterious and the miraculous.

Sunday, December 23 at 10:30am
"Holy Ground"

Rev. Michelle LaGrave

Take off your shoes! For the ground beneath your feet is holy. Humans (and others) have many ways of approaching the sacred and entering into its presence. Where is your holy ground? Children are welcome to remain through the service. The nursery will be closed for this service to give our childcare workers a Sunday off.

Sunday, December 30 at 10:30am
"Myths and Justice"

With CUUPS

Explore how myth enriches and supports us in the search for greater justice and personal peace.

Sunday Forums

The Sunday Forums take place in the Common Room at 9:30am each Sunday. All are welcome to attend. We will have two forums in the month of December. See below.

Sunday, December 2 at 9:30am

"The Social and Political Psychology of White Racial Prejudice and its Political Effects" PART 2
With Greg Petrow

The election of Donald Trump has featured the resurgence of white racist expressions in mainstream society and media. In this talk I approach this from the perspectives of social and political psychology. What is social science's understanding of what white racism is, what causes it, and why its effects are seemingly ascendant?

Sunday, December 9 at 9:30am

Soul Matters Monthly Topic:

"What Does It Mean To Be A People of Mystery?"
With Mike McAtee

Unitarian Universalists love puzzles. We proudly announce that we are the religion that loves questions and questioning. Or to put it another way, we love figuring out life's mysteries. But what if mystery isn't just something to figure out? What if it's also something to be listened to? This is the lesser recognized call of our faith. Being a people of mystery isn't just about engaging life as a marvelous puzzle. It's also about allowing yourself to be spoken to by life's wonder.

No forum on 12/16, 12/23, and 12/30.

Starting in January, we will have only ONE forum each month. The forum will be on the first Sunday of the month, and will focus on the Soul Matters topic for that month.

Special Holiday Service

Christmas Eve Service

Lessons and Carols

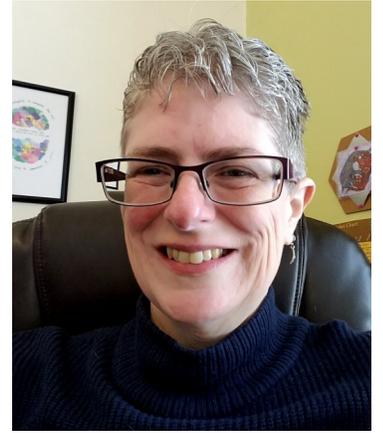
Monday, Dec. 24 at 7pm

This will be a traditional Christmas Eve service filled with music, singing, and candlelight. The Choir and the Early Morning Risers will perform.

Ministerial Musings from the Interim Minister

By Rev. Michelle LaGrave

*"O Mystery, you are alive!
I feel you all around
You are the fire in my heart
You are the holy sound
You are all of life
And it is to you that I sing
O grant that I may feel you, always in everything"
"O Mystery" by Jeremy Geffen*



So go the lyrics to one of my favorite songs, usually performed as part of the *Missa Gaia*; a song which comes easily to mind with the Soul Matters theme of “mystery” for this month. For me, December is always a time of mystery; a time when I can easily feel a sense of mystery all around, in matters both sacred and secular. Questions abound, from: How is it that human life came to be, seemingly against all odds? To: How *does* Santa manage to get all around the world in just one night? To: Why, in heaven’s name, does anyone still eat fruitcake? (My apologies if you are a lover of fruitcake, there must be some of you out there somewhere.)

As is so often the case, I find that music makes those experiences of mystery that inspire feelings of awe and wonder seem so much more accessible. These feelings are essential to our faith tradition. Unitarian Universalists long ago rejected any form of credal or dogmatic faith, along with their catechisms. Also long ago, our ancestors embraced the use of reason in religion as well as the compatibility of science and religion. This means we Unitarian Universalists today tend to live in the questions, more than the answers. *O Mystery, it is to you I sing.*

Letter from the Church President, Maria Wallace

Dear Members and Friends,

During my student year at Midwest Leadership School (MWLS), one of the most important lessons I learned was ‘step up, step back.’ If you are someone who is very vocal and always speaks up and volunteers, it is important to intentionally ‘step back’ at times and make room for others. If you are more introverted (like yours truly), it is vital that you take the leap and ‘step up’ so that you share new and different ideas and perspectives. It is important for all of us to step out of our comfort zone so that groups and systems are renewed and refreshed.

While interviewing Interim Ministerial candidates, I learned that one of an Interim’s favorite things about the job is that they come ‘pre-fired’. Their job has a clear beginning and end. They can focus on the work they need to do without having to worry about everyone loving them, or worrying about how long they will be able to stay. The avoidance of such anxieties seemed calming to them.

A phenomenon that pervades our church system is that, except for elected positions, most groups do not have structured ways for leaders to rotate out. Over the years I’ve seen many a leadership change happen because the leader was completely burnt out and finally had to quit and focus on self-care. In some cases, the leader had made it known that they were interested in stepping down, but no one stepped up until the position was finally vacant. Rarely have I seen true mentorship or apprenticeship, where knowledge is passed on while working side by side and the outgoing leader is allowed to ‘retire’ in a healthy way before burnout occurred.

(continued on page 8)

Church Events

Teams Meeting

Saturday, Dec. 1 at 11am in the Common Room. These meetings are for Team Leaders and volunteers to discuss future plans for the church.

Memorial Service for the Mother of Joe Schaaf

Saturday, Dec. 1 at 2pm.

World AIDS Day Service

Saturday, Dec. 1 at 7pm in the Sanctuary. This service is an opportunity for people who care about people with HIV/AIDS to lament, to witness and to gain energy for the struggle. We will sing, listen, light candles and pray! A section of the AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display and speakers will encourage everyone to “know their HIV status” this year’s international theme for World AIDS Day. Event Sponsored by: Nebraska AIDS Project, First Unitarian Church, First United Methodist Church, First Central Congregational Church, Kingdom Builders Christian Center, Metropolitan Community Church of Omaha, and Second Unitarian Church of Omaha.

Young Adult Discussion Group

Sunday, Dec. 2 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Classroom. This group welcomes everyone ages 18-35 from all over the Omaha metro. Questions? Please email: youngadults@firstuomaha.org.

WAYS TO HELP:

Holiday Decorating

Sunday, Dec. 2, after church. See page 13 for details.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Dec. 3 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *The Man Who Knew Infinity*, which is a 2015 British biographical drama film about the mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan, based on the 1991 book of the same name by Robert Kanigel.

Breaking Bread for Believers—NEW GROUP

Tuesday, Dec. 4 at 6:30pm in the Whitney Young Classroom. See page 10 for details.

Compassionate Communication Group

Tuesdays, Dec. 4 and Dec. 18 at 7pm in the Common Room. We’re learning about Compassionate Communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg, PhD. All are welcome. Contact Suzanne: nvcsuz@gmail.com for details.

Bourdain Dinner

H&H Event with Open Seats

Thursday, Dec. 6 at 7pm in the Common Room. Several tickets are available for this dinner. Bring a dish to share that represents a special memory from your culture or upbringing. Host brings center entrée, beverages and an environment to spark conversation and weave connections through our food, laughter and stories. Tickets cost \$35/seat. RSVP: auction@firstuomaha.org.

CommUnity Night

Friday, Dec. 7 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. The main dish is provided by RE. Everyone is welcome to come to this relaxed monthly potluck dinner. Bring games! Chit chat! There will be childcare.

Holiday Dinner

Saturday, Dec. 8 with social hour at 5:30pm and dinner at 6:30pm. The dinner will be catered by Pleasure Your Palette. The reservation form is on page 6. **RSVP by 11/30.**

CUUPS Yule Ritual

Sunday, Dec. 9 at 6pm in the Common Room. Please join us for our Yule ritual, as led by Denise Allain and Klyde Warren, as we celebrate the victory over the long nights with the warmth from our hearts, and the arrival of warmer and longer days ahead. Please arrive no earlier than 6pm, no later than 6:15. Ritual starts at 6:30pm. Potluck to follow—please bring a dish to share. Childcare available.

Women's Alliance

All who identify as women are invited to attend the gathering on Monday, December 10 in the Common Room. Socializing and beverages start at 6:15pm; dinner at 6:30pm. We will have a white elephant gift exchange. Please bring appetizers or a dessert to

share. \$15 dollar freewill donation. Please RSVP no later than Dec 3rd for childcare and Dec 7th for attendance to denise.allain@yahoo.com.

Kyle Knapp Christmas Concert H&H Event with Open Seats

Saturday, Dec. 15 at 7pm in the Sanctuary. Enjoy a lovely night of live music with Kyle Knapp with a few thoughts by his father, Ron. We have quite a few guest tickets with babysitting provided. RSVP: auction@firstuomaha.org. If you still need tickets, cost is \$15/seat.

Leadership Talk Back

Sunday, Dec. 16 at 11:30am in the Common Room. The MTC and the Church Board want to hear from you. Have questions? Suggestions? Please join your church leaders at a table in the Common Room during coffee hour. We meet on the 3rd Sunday of the month.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Dec. 17 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *The Way*, which is a powerful and inspirational story about family, friends, and the challenges we face while navigating this ever-changing and complicated world.

Women's Religious Studies Covenant Group

No meeting in December.

Young Adult Game Night

Friday, Dec. 21 at 6pm in the Common Room. All are invited to join the Young Adults for this event. We will have childcare! Bring snacks and board games. Questions? Email: youngadults@firstuomaha.org.

WAYS TO HELP:

Community Meals

Saturday, Dec. 22, offsite. See page 12 for more information.

First Steps Class

Sunday, Dec. 23 at 11:45am in the Merritt Lounge. You are invited to join us as we gather together to get acquainted with the basics of Unitarian Universalism and our vibrant community. See page 15.

Church Events

Christmas Eve Service

Monday, Dec. 24 at 7pm in the Sanctuary. See page 2.

Book Club

No meeting in December.

Taoism Discussion Group

No meeting in December.

Recurring Events

Women's Religious Studies Group

This group meets every Thursday, except for the 3rd week of the month at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. We are reading *Birth of a White Nation; the Invention of White People and its Relevance Today* by Jacqueline Battalora. For questions, please contact Linda Parker at lparkerlib@gmail.com.

Dharma Chautauqua Meeting

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

Bridge Group

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

YRUU (Youth Group) Meets every Wednesday at 7pm in the Common Room. No meeting on 12/26.

Choir Rehearsals

Every Wednesday at 7pm in the Sanctuary. For more info, email: choirdirector@firstuuomaha.org. No rehearsal on 12/26.

Parent's Choice Listening Circle

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

AHA Listening Circle-- Open to new members!

Meets the 3rd Sunday of the month at 11:45am in the Merritt Lounge. We will deepen our understanding of our personal Atheist, Humanist, and

Agnostic values through readings, listening and discussion which will help to enhance the UU experience for those who attend. Please contact AHA@firstuuomaha.org.

Future Events

CUUPS General Meeting

Sunday, Jan. 6 at 7pm in the Common Room. No potluck tonight! We will schedule for the year and work on our group ritual for Imbolc. Childcare will be provided. Questions? Email: CUUPS@firstuuomaha.org.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Jan. 7 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *Fahrenheit 11/9*. Documentary-maker and leftist activist Michael Moore sets his sights on the 45th President of the United States Donald J. Trump—elected on November 9th, 2016 (hence the title). He reveals just how flimsy American democracy is right now, while suggesting what might be done about it.

Atheists, Humanists, and Agnostics Meeting (AHA)

Thursday, Jan. 10 at 7pm in the Common Room. More info about this meeting will be shared next month. No meeting in December.

The 3F Book Bonanza Group

Friday, Jan. 11 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. The book we'll read is *The Princes of Ireland* by Edward Rutherfurd. We will also be planning the reading schedule for the year at the January meeting. We ask all those interested in joining the group to please bring suggestions for future reads. We meet on the 2nd Friday of the month. If you have questions, please email Denise at: denise.allain@yahoo.com. No meeting in December.

CUUPS Full Moon Ritual

Sunday, Jan. 20 at 6:15pm in the Common Room. Come celebrate the beauty and transformative powers of the Full Moon. We will create a sacred space and raising energy to bring about a positive transformation in our own lives through contemplation and

symbolic action. Our rituals are open to the public. Childcare will be provided.

Taoism Discussion Group

Tuesday, Jan. 22 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 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. No meeting in December.

Chili Cook-Off—Save the date!

Saturday, Jan. 26 at 6pm in the Common Room. See page 7 for details.

Book Club

Monday, Jan. 28 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. Our January selection is *Pillars and Dreams: A History of First Unitarian Church of Omaha*. Questions? Contact Dave at drichardson821@gmail.com. No meeting in December.

Outside Opportunity

River City Mixed Chorus Concert

Dec. 8 & 9 at Omaha Conservatory of Music. RCMC is back at the Omaha Conservatory of Music this December with *Sparkle On!*, a wildly entertaining follow-up to last year's sold-out holiday show. You'll hear the Chorus put their whimsical spin on some of the biggest holiday classics, along with special numbers made famous from divas like Bette, Babs, Dolly and more! This fun-filled, campy, Holiday Spectacular will be unlike any other concert you'll see this season. So grab your family and friends and come experience the magic, fun, and sparkle of the holidays with RCMC. Show your holiday spirit, sparkly attire is encouraged! For details and tickets, go here: www.rcmc.org/concerts-events/.

See page 13 for Ways You Can Help and Get Involved at Church!

Annual Holiday Dinner

Saturday, December 8 in the Common Room

Social Hour at 5:30pm; Dinner at 6:30pm

A fabulous, delectable menu prepared by Pleasure Your Palette
(vegetarian & vegan selections included)

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

Please make reservations with your check to First Unitarian to arrive in the office
by **Friday, November 30.**

Put your check and this form in the offering plate or mail both to the church office. Your check is your reservation.

Please circle what you are able to bring:

Appetizer

Dessert

Name(s) _____

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

Yes, I will need childcare ____

of children ____ ages _____

We want everyone to be able to come and celebrate. However, if confidential financial assistance would make it possible for you to attend, please contact Rev. Michelle LaGrave at minister@firstuuomaha.org or 402-345-3039 ext. 102.

Chili Cook-Off 2019—Saturday, January 26 at 6pm

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

Tickets: \$6/person Children under 10 FREE \$12/family maximum

Childcare provided, but please make a reservation so we know how many kiddos we have to wrangle. Many folks come dressed up as cowboys and cowgirls or as cows and horses—use your imagination.

Enter Your Chili into the Competition! “Lasso” your recipe & start cookin’!

Please bring your chili in a heated dish/crockpot along with a ladle to serve. (Please keep additional condiments to a minimum.) Arrive at 5:30pm to register your chili.

Enter the NAME of the chili at check-in. Do NOT include the name of the chef!

Bringing chili for the contest? Your admission is free!

Go here to RSVP online: www.firstuomaha.org/chili-cook-off

Or fill out the form below and mail it to the church office.

RSVP Form for Chili Cook-Off 2019

Let us know how many folks will attend please!

Your name: _____

Email address: _____

Are you bringing chili? _____

How many people over the age of 6 will attend with you?

If you need childcare for kids under the age of 6, let us know their ages and names please:

Can you help clean up, set up, or both? Let us know!

(President's Letter, continued from page 3)

I can think of several key church leaders who are currently serving a 'lifetime sentence.' Church leadership should not be like the Papacy or Supreme Court; church leaders should not have to consider faking their own death in order to leave their leadership roles without guilt. When someone has served in a position for many years or even decades, they certainly do become an expert at the position. Tasks take them less time, and they may appear superhuman in their ability to perform their duties. Thus, it becomes extremely intimidating for new leaders to 'step up.'

How can we show our deep respect and boundless gratitude for long-time leaders and shepherd them through transitioning out of their role(s) without offending them or making them feel forced out? We do not want to lose the vast amounts of valuable institutional knowledge that such prolific leaders possess. Most importantly, we don't want to lose them as a priceless member of our community.

Certainly when a leader makes it clear that they are willing and ready to step down, it is our responsibility to make it possible for them to do so without guilt. Our outstanding Treasurer, Walt Jesteadt, has mentioned more than once over the past few years that someday he may want to retire from being Treasurer. Current and past boards have been unable to identify any individuals willing to step up. It is difficult to imagine someone who could perform the duties as Treasurer with as much finesse and fidelity as Walt Jesteadt. However, Walt has a beautiful family with whom he may want to spend increasing amounts of time, as his children continue to grow and thrive, marry, and beget his grandchildren. It is not fair to Walt to expect him to continue ad infinitum. It is our responsibility as a board to assist in identifying a successor (or perhaps committee) who can apprentice him and benefit from his vast knowledge base while preparing to take the role. Despite the fact that neither Walt nor Donna has seemed to age during the 12 years I've been a member, we cannot expect Walt to become a vampire simply because we can't find anyone else to be Treasurer.

Rev. Michelle shared that one of her biggest surprises when she came to our church was that our finances were done on a completely volunteer basis. As part of the introspective Interim work, the board and MTC are working on adopting new financial practices that will hopefully take some burden off of our Treasurer/ Finance Team as well as our Office Administrator, the incredible Cat Dixon. We want to work smarter, not harder, in this area and perhaps make the role a little less intimidating and more streamlined. Walt is not ready to retire today, but when he is ready, he should be able to do so without guilt or anxiety.

Think about the teams/committees with which you serve. How can you work smarter, not harder? How can you streamline and document the tasks of the leader/chair and create regular, defined leadership transitions? Would you be willing to 'step up' if you knew that you only had to serve for a defined amount of time and could have the reassurance of being 'pre-fired?' How can we as a church community show our deep gratitude for our leaders while allowing them to 'step back' without guilt, anxiety, or burnout? Let's take care of each other and continue to be stewards and shepherds for future generations.

Love, Maria Wallace



These are photos from our annual Team Fair held on 11/4 during coffee hour.

Photos by Bob Hess.

Finance Matters

By Walt Jesteadt, Treasurer

At a recent Board meeting, I was asked to speculate on whether changes in the tax law this year would have any impact on pledge contributions. The primary change of interest is that the standard deduction increased from \$6,350 to \$12,000 for individuals and from \$12,700 to \$24,000 for couples filing jointly. Those with relatively large pledges or large charitable contributions in general could itemize in the past rather than taking the standard deduction and could receive a tax break. The increase in the standard deduction raises the bar and removes the tax incentive for charitable contributions for most of us. I noted that few donors had the tax break as their primary motivation and that our stewardship campaign had been successful after the tax law was passed, suggesting that it would have little impact.

We then had a discussion at the Board meeting about how some of us could take the new standard deduction and still receive a tax break for our charitable contributions and I was asked to provide that information in a Flame article. I know nothing about taxes, but I do know that it is unwise to give tax advice. I will nonetheless provide a little information.. If you are of retirement age and are taking funds from a 401K account, you can transfer some of that money directly to a tax-exempt charitable organization, such as the church, and it will not count as taxable income. The Omaha Community Foundation acts as a clearinghouse for such contributions and will be happy to help you with the process. It is probably too late to do anything for 2018, but now is the time to think about 2019. If you want more information, send an email note to treasurer@firstuomaha.org.

Automatic Contributions—Electronic Funds Transfer

Did you know that you can have your contributions to the church made automatically? Electronic fund transfer will allow you to designate the amount of the money to be transferred biweekly or monthly from your bank account to the church's account. Your bank statement will provide an itemized list of the transactions. The contribution statement you receive from the church periodically will show each contribution as well. It's easy to start automatic contributions! You only need to complete and sign a form and then return it to the church office along with a voided check.

Please contact the church office for the form or just go to this link to print out the form: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/6ac81d_fede6d3edd6da6c28a23b9fb995c9eff.pdf. You can start the process any time. After that your contributions will be automatic. They will continue until you notify us to stop. Thank you for your generosity!

Questions? Contact our treasurer, Walt Jesteadt. Email: treasurer@firstuomaha.org

Women's Alliance Bake & Craft Sale Recap

Success! We raised \$767 at our sale on Sunday, November 18. Thank you to all the bakers, crafters, and the volunteers. Thank you to John Wagner for helping us with the money. Thank you to everyone who purchased items at our sale. We hope everyone enjoys all the goodies! All funds raised will go toward the Merritt Education Fund. Photos by Kathi Oliver.



Inclement Weather Cancellations

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



New Group: Breaking Bread for Believers

Are you a Believer or a Christian in any form? We are starting a new group called “Breaking Bread for Believers” here at First Unitarian for members or others (friends/guests) who would like a forum to share/express their Christian beliefs. As Unitarians, ALL religious and spiritual paths should be considered equally valid and therefore need to be represented within our community. This group will give you a sanctuary to hold those spiritual beliefs close to your heart. Many people come from Christian backgrounds and chose to leave for a variety of reasons (sometimes sadly), so if you would like to continue to honor the best parts of your previous experience with Christianity you will always be welcome in this group! **Our first meeting will be on Tuesday, December 4th at 6:30pm in the Whitney Young Classroom.** We hope to see you there! Questions? Email Joe at joehammer95@gmail.com.

What’s in a Name Tag?

By 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. We call these folks “frequent visitors.”

*By the way church 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 email me at coordinator@firstuomaha.org if you are interested.

Not a member, but want to join? Email me and sign-up for our next Pathways Class here: www.firstuomaha.org/classup.

A Note About Religious Education

We are studying heroes and justice makers in UU history and in our own congregation. Fortunately, there are too many to fit into the time we have available. I am reminded over and over again how passionate our members and friends are to this church community, and to the outer world as well. I am always moved by the dedication of parents and grandparents to care for their children with the wisdom and patience and sense of humor that raising kids requires. I have infinite gratitude for those of us who volunteer to teach in RE, or find ways to be helpful to make our program happy and enriching.

I have been offering a small prize for a weekly drawing of those who have answered a question from the text of our weekly newsletter, *The Flicker*. I am gratified by the fact that you're really out there, reading the words that go forth from my desk. If you would like to receive the Sunday School newsletter *The Flicker* please email me at dre@firstuomaha.org to sign up. You can see this week's edition, here: www.firstuomaha.org/re-news.

Who is your favorite UU hero? I would love to have the names of those in the church now or in the past. Email me your ideas at dre@firstuomaha.org.

Happy December,
Jan Wilson

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. The entrance to the parking garage is on Farnam Street. 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.

Windshield Decals for Church Lot

In an effort to save our church parking for members, visitors, volunteers, and staff, the Ministry Team Council (MTC) has created a windshield decal (see the image at the below). There's a basket filled with decals in the Common Room or contact the Church Office.

The decals are small (3in. x 3in.) and can be placed in the front windshield in the top left- or right-hand corner on the inside of the car. As mentioned in last month's newsletter, Midtown Crossing shoppers and employees have been parking in the church lot—that causes problems, especially on Sunday mornings and during private wedding ceremonies. Our lot is small and each space is important so we can be welcoming to our visitors.

If you want to leave your car overnight in the church lot, please contact the church office to arrange that.

It's important that all spots are available on Sunday mornings for our members and guests.

Note: We have made an agreement with Alamo Theater to allow their workers to park in our lot during the weekday for the next month. In exchange, Alamo gave the Church a free showing of the film, *The Hate U Give*. If you have questions about parking, please contact the [church office](#).



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 UPDATE: Last Supper?

Saturday, December 22 may be the final Community Meals service for First Unitarian Church. Over the last 10 years, *First Unitarian has served nearly 7,000 meals* as a participating congregation in this program.

For those of you who would like to help with what may well be our “last supper,” we will need 4-6 servers, 4 green bean casseroles, and holiday-themed deserts. We will serve mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, green bean casserole, roast chicken, and desserts. If anyone would like to make brownies, I have mixes available. Need more info? Contact Diane Withem at dianewithem@gmail.com to sign up.

Many of us have enjoyed serving meals visiting with the guests, but the parent organization, Neighbors United, may be disbanding. Because of overall improvement in the local and national economy and the gentrification of the Park Avenue neighborhood, the meal service has gotten smaller; we used to serve 200-250 meals but now serve 60-80 people.

For the past 10 years Louise Jeffrey and Kay Lynn Goldner have organized all the

partnering church groups who served meals. They purchased supplies, oversaw set up and clean up, and one or both went to the meal every Saturday of the the last decade! They are now stepping down from the leadership. “Every Saturday” Unitarian volunteers also included Linda Hess, Terri Lynn Brewer, and our dear departed friend, Dean Christiansen. Indeed, the inter-faith program could not have continued for all these years without the consistent volunteer efforts of these Unitarians.

Although the end of the program has been planned for the last 14 months, there is some very recent interest among a couple of the participating congregations in continuing the Saturday meal. As of now, there is no firm plan for anyone willing to commit to the leadership positions. However, if it is indeed a “go,” First Unitarian will continue to support the program by cooking four to six times a year. Stay tuned! Final decision to be made in December.

Over the past years when First UU served, I could always count on so many of you! To all of you who shopped, cooked, baked, served, and or cleaned up, thank you! A special shout out to the Callaghans, Linda Hruska and Rae Barry who were always available over the six years I was in charge for our church. Linda was my emergency “go to” helper when people were unable to show up, and I don’t think I ever organized a meal that was served without dessert from Rae Barry!! Thanks also to everyone in the congregation who has helped fund this effort through Share the Plate or through other contributions. A very special shout-out goes to Bob and Kay McMeen for their very generous financial support.

Thanks again to all who participated and please consider offering your help to Kim Callaghan for the YES Meals.

The next YES Meal Prep: Friday, January 18 in the church kitchen. Interested in helping? Each month, we cook a meal for Youth Emergency Services. Email Kim at kjcallaghan@hotmail.com for info.

Ways You Can Get Involved

Christmas Decorating--Helpers Needed

The Holiday Decorating Team is looking for help with decorating the church for Christmas this year! The date to "deck the halls" is **Sunday, December 2** after church and "un-decking" on **Saturday, January 5**. We'll have decorated festive boxes in the foyer to collect mittens, gloves, and hats for YES (Youth Emergency Services). Please come help us decorate. If you're interested, please contact the church office at admin@firstuuomaha.org.

YES Teens Are on First U's Holiday "MITTEN TREE" Shopping List

First Unitarian's longstanding "Mitten Tree" tradition is getting a new look! For decades, a tree has been at the front of our sanctuary during December to collect donations for those in need. This year, our donations will go to benefit the teens served by Youth Emergency Services (YES). **Starting December 9**, place your donations of new hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, socks and underwear in the "Gift Boxes" located in the foyer. YES serves homeless and at-risk youth by meeting their immediate needs for food, clothing, safety and shelter and providing a support system to help them get back on their feet. First Unitarian already has a strong connection to this nonprofit in our neighborhood through the volunteers, led by Kim Callaghan, that each month prepare a meal to help feed the teens served by YES. Learn more about YES by following this link: <http://www.yesomaha.org>.

Community Meals

Saturday, Dec. 22 offsite at First Baptist Church. We're in need of servers and bakers. Need more info? Contact Diane Withem at dianewithem@gmail.com to sign up. See page 12.

Sunday Sound Team

Did you enjoy the Early Morning Risers last month? Do you want to join EMR but don't sing or cannot play an instrument? Did you know that YOU can still be a key player? How? Join the Sound Team. If you can use a laptop or a smart phone, you can help with the sound system! Help us make Sunday mornings sound even better. You are needed. Email: admin@firstuuomaha.org for more details.

Stream Team

Each week, this team streams the Sunday service so it can be viewed by people who, for whatever reason, could not attend church. We need your help! Training is available. Interested? Contact the office at admin@firstuuomaha.org today.

YES Meal Prep: Next date: Friday, Jan. 18 in the kitchen. See page 12 for details.

CHANGE FOR CHANGE

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

SHARE THE PLATE

Each month one-half of the loose currency collected in the offering plate is donated to a local cause that advances important principles of Unitarianism. Our Share the Plate recipient for December is **Youth Emergency Services (YES)**. YES serves homeless and at-risk youth by providing critically-needed resources that empower them to become self-sufficient.

Each night, hundreds of youth in the Omaha metro are homeless. Many of these youth have been physically, emotionally or sexually abused, making it unsafe for them to return home.

Many others are facing health, mental health, and substance abuse issues beyond their control. Without proper support and guidance, these vulnerable adolescents cannot succeed independently, and will likely fall into the cycle of homelessness as adults.

Youth Emergency Services (YES) exists to help these youth turn their lives around.

BY THE NUMBERS:

-An estimated 1.6 million youth are homeless each year in the United States

-Nearly 50% of homeless youth have been physically or sexually abused

-1 in 4 youth have traded sex for means of survival such as shelter, food, or clothing

To learn more about YES, please go to: www.yesomaha.org.

Social Justice Fair—save the date! Sunday, Feb. 3 during coffee hour

Join us on February 3rd for the Social Justice Fair. Find out how members and friends of First Unitarian Church are working in our community to help others. More information will be shared next month about the fair. Looking for a way to get involved with social justice in our church?

Contact Peg at sjconnect@firstuuomaha.org.

What Does the Board Do?

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

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

All members and friends are welcome at all of our board meetings which are held the second Tuesday of each month in the Common Room at 7pm. The third Sunday of every month our board members along with Ministry Team Council members, are available for discussion or questions at our Leadership Talk Back in the Common Room. This month our Talk Back happens on Sunday, December 16th during coffee hour.

You can see who is on the board here: www.firstuomaha.org/leaders. You can email the board at board@firstuomaha.org.

What Does the Ministry Team Council (MTC) Do?

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

The MTC also sets the agenda for the larger Teams Meeting which is held every two months and is a meeting of all the volunteers and team leaders that can attend. Our next Teams Meeting is Saturday, Dec. 1 at 11am in the Common Room. The current MTC members are Dave Richardson, Joe Schaaf, and Katie Zimmer.

You can reach them at mtc@firstuomaha.org.

Hospitality and You

You recognize Sunday hospitality when you see it. Someone smiles and hands you an Order of Worship when you enter the Sanctuary. Someone has made coffee and put out the cookies in the Common Room after the service. There's a visitors' desk in the Sanctuary foyer and there are people talking to newcomers and helping them get settled

What is a Hospitality Team?

A Hospitality Team is a group of about 9-12 people who are responsible for hosting one Sunday every other month (*only 6 Sundays per year!*). The team will handle coffee hour, greeting, taking up the offering, and welcoming visitors. We didn't invent the Hospitality Team concept. Church members learned about it at a district conference and brought the idea back to the Ministry Team for consideration. The Hospitality Teams program launched in the fall of 2014.

How does this work?

Hospitality Teams will work for us if everyone who is able volunteers for a team. It is a fair and relatively easy way to share our Sunday hospitality tasks. If you are a church member or regular attendee of our Sunday services, please volunteer. In the process, you will meet more people, feel good about doing your fair share, and help our church be the best we can be on Sundays. We understand that some people will not be able to volunteer because of physical limitations, schedule conflicts, or other reasons.

Want to join a team? We need you! Email Carolyn at caylamc@cox.net. Thank you!

New to Our Church?

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

The First Steps Class will take place on
Sunday, December 23 at 11:45am
 in the Merritt Lounge

If you are interested, RSVP to Carrie at coordinator@firstuomaha.org or stop by the Welcome & Engagement Table (in the Common Room downstairs) on Dec. 23rd and we'll get you to the right room. Grab a cup of coffee and we will see you there! If you need childcare to attend, please let Carrie know when you RSVP.



Pathways to Membership—Save these dates!

New session **starting Sunday, January 6, 2019** and running five consecutive Sundays (1/6, 1/13, 1/20, 1/27, & 2/3/19) following church service in the Whitney Young Classroom (downstairs by the nursery).

This is a chance to get a more in-depth look at what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. We'll have member-led discussions about the history of our church and the UU church at large, our church governance (the congregation-led church), religious education, elements of worship, and much more!

RSVP by going to our online signup here: www.firstuomaha.org/classup

Or contact Carrie at coordinator@firstuomaha.org.

(Drop-ins are welcome, but to get the most out of the class you'll want to be there for the 5-week course). Hope to see you there!

Learn more about church membership at our website: www.firstuomaha.org/membership.

Halloween Heart & Hand Auction a FUNdraising Success!

Auction outcome: The Auction on Oct. 26th was a fun party and successful fundraiser, with income of \$15,442 (when auction bills are paid). The auction tri-chairs, Katrina Schmidt, Donna Neff and Sara Switzer, send a heartfelt **thank you** to all the generous donors and buyers who helped us reach our goal of \$15,000! There were 205 items donated, with a record 52 group gatherings scheduled throughout the coming year.



Costume and raffle winners: Bill Braymen won the huge “Amazing Animals” raffle basket and stuffed bear, which he promptly donated to a Syrian refugee family with children. In heated competition, winners in the costume contest were: TV Character-Charlie McMahon as “Charlie Brown,” Period Dress-Rod Bottorff as “Viking,” and Spook’s Choice-Jackie Anderegg as “Ms. Hen” (and her egg). It was a pun-filled evening, as MCs Ben Wallace and Kathi Oliver kept us entertained and on track.

Post-auction website: Go to the auction website, which remains active, to **pay your auction bill with credit card** (fee added), **buy unsold seats to auction events**, see auction pictures, check the events calendar, and see all the generous donors and hard-working volunteers. Look for the auction button on the main church webpage or go here: www.auctria.com/ev?site=be42ca82-e61b-49d7-a3ed-f61e1b730925.

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

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

A Safe Place for Spiritual Growth

By Donna Tubach Davis, Board Member

Endings, beginnings, endings—such is my spiritual pathway. Just as the seasons cycle, so has my spiritual being. Sometimes my spiritual life is a season of vibrancy—succulent and productive. Other times the spiritual journey is a season of stagnancy, unfruitfulness—I am a wanderer in a barren land.

It is important to listen to the empty, as well as the full times for the seasons provide balance that is a necessity for the cycle of the spirit.

Anne Lamott, a religious author, describes her faith as not a leap, but rather a series of staggers from one safe place to another, like lily pads—round and green places summoned to hold her up while she grew.

It is my hope that this church will provide lily pads for all of us to take the next leap in our spirituality journeys.

Have You Read Pillars & Dreams Yet? (A History of the First Unitarian Church of Omaha)

This is a book written and organized by Dave Richardson with able assistance by Ellen Shurson, Linda Parker and Carolyn McNamara. It is extraordinary. Based on years of archiving by Marie Helms and Dave Nicklin and others, Dave Richardson has breathed life into the history of our First Unitarian Church. With the incredible painting of our church by Allan Tubach on the cover, Dave has done the spirit of this church justice. The book is precise, readable, sensitive, and in my opinion, inspiring. With the elegantly appointed photography and spot on acknowledgments of the people that have made this church strong, Dave has defined what this church has meant in Omaha. I think he also defines why we are here now.

This is a resource for new member classes or interested visitors and for the rest of us to be more informed about what we have and what we need to protect. Dave gives credit to the well diggers before us and has dug a deeper well for all of us.

I am rarely inspired. I think I am inspiration weary, (or maybe just old), but this book is great. Everyone who loves this church should own this book.

Onward,
Jackie Anderegg

To purchase your copy of the book, please contact the church office. Email: admin@firstuomaha.org.
Phone: 402-345-3039 ext. 101. Cost is \$25/copy.

KIOS—Thank you! 2018 KIOS Bundled Donations

This year, KIOS bundled contributions totaled \$3,370, for which First Unitarian Church will be acknowledged as underwriter many times in 2019 on *Morning Edition*, which airs M-F, 6-9 a.m., *All Things Considered*, which airs M-F, 3-5:30 p.m., *Wait, Wait...Don't tell me!*, which airs Sat., 10-11 a.m., and *Prairie Home Companion*, which airs Sat., 5-7 p.m.

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

Kim Dunovan & Jerre Tritsch, Nancy Scott, Jessie & Ben Stallings, Christina & Roman Noriega, Anne & Ron Knapp, Eddith Buis, Sharon Conlon & Jack Heidel, Kay Lynn & John Goldner, Dee Otte, Mark Loscutoff, Beth Conover & Steve Raybine, Lois Norris, Jaime Alexander, Carol Ramsey, Mary Green, Mike & Deborah McAtee, Larry Goeser, Suzanne King, Clyde Kramer, Carolyn McNamara & John Wagner, William & Sandra Bruns, Linda Hess, John & Linda Hruska, Tony & Sandy Host, Donna Neff & Walt Jesteadt, Harriet Major, Diane & Ron Withem, and Bob Perrin.

Welcome New Member: Amy Lucas

Amy joined the church on October 28th. She is a first-grade teacher, who has taken a few years off to be with her adorable, energetic kids, River and Rogan. She plays the drums, loves yoga and running, and is happiest playing in nature. She's a choir member and a listening circle co-facilitator. She tries to attend most Sunday morning forums, and she also acted in a murder mystery dinner for last year's Heart and Hand Auction. Please welcome Amy to membership.



Interim Minister

Rev. Michelle LaGrave
minister@firstuuomaha.org

Director of Religious Education

Jan Wilson
dre@firstuuomaha.org

Membership Coordinator

Carrie Helmberger
coordinator@firstuuomaha.org

Church Administrator

Catharine Dixon
admin@firstuuomaha.org

Choir Director

William Miller
choirdirector@firstuuomaha.org

Organist

Pat Will

Choir Accompanist

J. Gawf

EMR Director

Stan Harper

Minister Emeriti

Ronald Knapp
 Frank Rivas

Nursery Coordinator

Andrea Laudi
childcare@firstuuomaha.org

Custodian

Bobby Medrano

THE FLAME

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

Editor/Designer: Cat Dixon

Proofers:

Barb Henney, Scott Kemper,
 Lois Norris, Debbie Hunsberger

Flame Mailing Team:

Debbie Hunsberger, Lois Norris,
 Linda Hruska, Kim Callaghan

Meet Our Leaders

Board Members

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

Trustees of the Capital Trust

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

Ministry Team Council

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

Nominating Committee

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

Right Relations Team

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

Transition Team

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

Ministry Teams and Team Leaders

AHA—Sheri Conner
 Archives—Linda Parker
 Baby Welcoming Team—Becca Hatcher, Katrina Schmidt, & Sara Switzer
 Black Lives Matter—Rene Harper
 Caring—Louise Jeffrey
 Chalice Guild—Kay Lynn Goldner
 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—open
 Garden—Sharon Conlon
 Governance—Kim Dunovan
 Fundraising Team—Donna Neff & Katrina Schmidt
 Hope in Action—Kim Dunovan
 Hospitality Teams—Carolyn McNamara
 House and Grounds Team—open
 Listening Circles—Katrina Schmidt
 Membership Team—Mike McAtee & 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
 Right Relations—Nadine Keith
 Social Justice Coordinator—Peg Pidgeon
 Soul Matters—Michael McAtee
 Stewardship Team—Mary Kay Peters & Peg Pidgeon
 Wayside Pulpit—Kim Dunovan
 Women's Alliance—Catherine Plumlee
 Worship Arts Team—Denise Allain
 Young Adult Group—Taylor & Jessica Eman
 YRUU—Jessica & Taylor Eman & Tom Seguin

First Unitarian Church of Omaha

www.firstuuomaha.org

402-345-3039

Church Events

Teams Meeting

Saturday Dec. 1 at 11am in the Common Room. See page 4.

Memorial Service for the Mother of Joe Schaaf

Saturday, Dec. 1 at 2pm.

World AIDS Day Service

Saturday, Dec. 1 at 7pm in the Sanctuary. See page 4.

Young Adult Discussion Group

Sunday, Dec. 2 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Classroom. See page 4.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Dec. 3 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Breaking Bread for Believers

Tuesday, Dec. 4 at 6:30pm in the Whitney Young Classroom. See page 10 for details.

Compassionate Communication Group

Tuesdays, Dec. 4 and Dec. 18 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Bourdain Dinner

H&H Event with Open Seats
Thursday, Dec. 6 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

CommUnity Night

Friday, Dec. 7 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Holiday Dinner

Saturday, Dec. 8 at 5:30pm. Reservation form on page 6. RSVP by 11/30.

CUUPS Yule Ritual

Sunday, Dec. 9 at 6pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Women's Alliance

Monday, Dec. 10 in the Common Room. See page 4.

Board Meeting

Tuesday, Dec. 11 at 7pm in the Common Room.

The Flame Newsletter Deadline

Dec. 15 at noon.

Kyle Knapp Christmas Concert

H&H Event with Open Seats
Saturday, Dec. 15 at 7pm in the Sanctuary. See page 4.

Leadership Talk Back

Sunday, Dec. 16 at 11:30am in the Common Room. See page 4.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Dec. 17 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Young Adult Game Night

Friday, Dec. 21 at 6pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

WAYS TO HELP:

Community Meals

Saturday, Dec. 22 offsite at First Baptist Church. See page 12.

First Steps Class

Sunday, Dec. 23 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Room. See page 15.

Church Office Closed

12/24-1/3

Christmas Eve Service

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

Private Wedding

Saturday, Dec. 29 at 2pm.

Recurring...

Bridge Group

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

Parents Listening Circle

Meets the 2nd Sunday of the month. See page 5.

AHA Listening Circle

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

YRUU (Youth Group) Meetings

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Common Room. No meeting on 12/26.

Choir Rehearsals

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Sanctuary. No rehearsal on 12/26.

Women's Religious Studies Group

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

Dharma Chautauqua

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

Soul Matters Small Groups

Various meeting dates. See here: www.firstuomaha.org/soulmatters

Future Events...

CUUPs General Meeting

Sunday, Jan. 6 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

Atheists, Humanists, and Agnostics Meeting (AHA)

Thursday, Jan. 10 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

3F Book Bonanza Group

Friday, Jan. 11 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

CUUPS Full Moon Ritual

Sunday, Jan. 20 at 6:15pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

Taoism Discussion Group

Tuesday, Jan 22 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

Chili Cook-Off—Save the date!

Saturday, Jan. 26 at 6pm. See page 7.

Book Club

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

Social Media & First U

Find our public Facebook page here: www.facebook.com/firstuomaha/

Find us on Twitter here:

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

Be sure to like the church and follow us!

**Christmas Eve Service
Lessons and Carols
Monday, December 24th at 7pm**

This will be a traditional Christmas Eve service filled with music, singing, and candlelight. The Choir and the Early Morning Risers will perform. Please join us for this special service.



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

www.firstuomaha.org