

THE FLAME

September 2014



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

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Month

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The Holland Lecture
Series Continues

Meet Our Leaders

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Board meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month and are open to all members.

Next Ministry Team Meeting is Saturday, October 4 at 2pm

THE FLAME

Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Word limit: 200.

Send your submissions to
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Religious Education - Sheri Conner

Religious Services - Megan Gustafson

Women's Alliance - Nellie Chenoweth

Young Adult Group - Maria Wallace



**Sunday, September 7—One service
Sunday at 10:30am**

Welcome Home Sunday

Rev Frank Rivas and Jan Wilson
Jan loves the word “intergenerational,” but Rev. Frank prefers the phrase “all church.” To officially begin the new church year, we gather as an entire congregation, children, youth, and adults, to celebrate that we each belong to this community. We celebrate with poetry and song, with an art installation created by the congregation, and either with an actual child dedication or an explanation of why and how we welcome new lives into our community. Welcome home!

**September 14—Return to two
services at 9:30am and 11:15am**

The First Thousand Years

Rev. Frank Rivas
The first thousand years of Christianity did not focus on sin and atonement, nor on reward or punishment in the after-life. Instead, the church focused on this life as Edenic. Church architecture, liturgy, and theology all reflected this focus. We might learn from this orientation.

**September 21—Two services at 9:30am
and 11:15am**

Creating Eden

Rev. Frank Rivas
Eden is not created for us, but rather is something we create within us and among us. We focus today on praxis, practical suggestions—not directions as clear as how to use your new coffee maker, but not as enigmatic as direction about how to assemble a Chinese-made compost tumbler.

**September 28—Two services at 9:30am
and 11:15am**

Tales from Midwest Leadership School

Rene Harper

*First Unitarian Church
welcomes you!*

**We begin two services at 9:30am
and 11:15am on Sunday,
September 14!**

Rev. Elations

Monthly Column from our Minister, Rev. Frank Rivas

Carpe diem.

This may be our season. Having escaped the bubble that followed my mother's death, I see with increased clarity the vibrancy of this, our community. We appreciate who we are; we are energized to become even more; we await the vision that will direct us.

My first reaction is to pause and appreciate this moment. We gather together from very different lives—old, young; rich, poor; atheists, questioners, and theists. Through all those differences and more, we feel profoundly connected one to another.

My second reaction is not to squander our energy. Not to argue about which of our individual wants take priority, but rather to accurately identify our shared vision. Not to focus our energy on external goals, like increasing numbers, but instead focus on becoming the kind of community that draws others to us.

My third reaction is to engage in the process of naming of what we together are called to become. Ideas are popping up all over the place: at the leadership retreat in June, at the ministry team later in the summer, in my August sermon. More important than the individual suggestions is the spirit in which each of them was offered: not “this is my pet project,” but rather “this is what I believe that the church needs.”

We are blessed to be here together. Let us create the community that our hearts have longed for.

Carpe diem. Seize the day.

Blessings,
Frank

Welcome Home! Ice Cream Social

Join us in saying goodbye to summer with an ice cream social on Sunday, September 7 during the 11:30am coffee hour. This is the last Sunday with only one service. The ice cream social is brought to you by the Fellowship Team. Please join us!



Women's Alliance Meeting

Women, members and friends, from First and Second Unitarian Church are invited to attend the Women's Alliance (WA) monthly get-together on Monday, September 8 in the common room of First Unitarian Church. The evening will begin with socializing and beverages at 6:30pm. Dinner will be served at 7pm with a program from OTOC (Omaha Together, One Community) at 7:30pm.

Our September program will feature Mark Hoeger with OTOC. He will be speaking on Medicaid expansion and tax issues. Please join us!

We ask for \$12 which goes towards the cost of dinner and our NEW Merritt Educational Fund and Partner Church Fund. If this will be your first time attending, please let us know and be our guest. Our meal will be announced in an upcoming order of service and email.

Please RSVP by emailing wa@firstuomaha.org or by calling Janet West at 402-553-3162 (leave a message) or Kathi Oliver at 402-214-2718 by September 2. Please include in your message if you would like meat or vegetable as an entrée. Dinner will be soup and salad. If you order a dinner and do not attend, please send \$12 to the church office and indicate the money is for Women's Alliance.

Marble Run-off

Intergenerational, Interactive, Ingenious

Teams will create their marble runs out of recycled materials such as cardboard, popsicle sticks, paper or plastic cups, and paper towel tubes. The goal is to create a marble run which lasts the longest (timed in seconds), has unique features, and involves the broadest range in ages on the construction team. A toddler may drop the marble to start the run. We want to get YOU involved. Contact Jan to join a team or start a team. Email dre@firstuomaha.org or pick up a marble run-off form at church. The teams' creations will be celebrated, timed, and displayed on Sunday, October 12 at 1pm in the Common Room. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to dre@firstuomaha.org.



Spirit Circle

Sunday, September 7

We will gather at 6pm. We will try to finalize the covenant. Questions? Contact Ryan at ryanpcook@hotmail.com.

UU & You

September 10 at 7pm

Visitors, newcomers, and the just curious are cordially invited to this introduction to Unitarian Universalism class meeting on Wednesday, September 10 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. UU&You classes provide an introduction to Unitarian Universalism and our church along with an opportunity to share our religious journeys in a theologically diverse "safe" place. Conversation will include some history of Unitarian Universalism and our church, what the church does, how it functions, and opportunities and paths. RSVP or questions can be addressed to uuclass@firstuomaha.org or call class facilitator Jaime Alexander 402-657-9386.

New Group Forming

Are you interested in Dungeons & Dragons? Roman is looking for folks who would want to gather at church and play. Dates and times will be determined by the people who respond. Call Roman at 402-769-4260 or email the church office at admin@firstuomaha.org to sign up and get more information.

President's Letter: Defining Our Purpose

by Louise Jeffrey, Board President

My last column referred to our recent leadership retreat and opportunities for inreach within our congregation and outreach to our community. In fact, when I look at the long list of priorities and wishes for our church which we generated in that meeting and in the Common Room the following two Sundays, they generally fall into three categories:

- Inreach (eg. Accessibility issues, Covenant groups, growth or improvement of the religious education programs for adults and children)
- Outreach (eg. A social justice presence in the community and a presence in the intellectual and artistic life of the community), and
- Articulating how our denomination and congregation are distinct from others.

The Board and Rev. Frank have carefully considered all the input and the draft mission statement composed by the Board at the 2013 leadership retreat, and we have discussed it during and between the last two board meetings. We have arrived at the following statement:

“The First Unitarian Church of Omaha strives to be a welcoming, liberal religious community with traditions of reason and tolerance, which are reflected in how we live our lives. We are committed to introducing our youth to the breadth of religious thought and encouraging them to responsibly discern their own spiritual paths. We promote spiritual growth, social justice and sustainable living to affect positive change in our society and ourselves.”

On a related note, I just want to remind all of us to look forward to a special supplementary edition of The Flame coming out in the next two weeks. It deals with a significant effort at both inreach and outreach—namely the Hospitality Teams. This important addition to our already welcoming church culture has been “under construction” for the past year and we are hoping to fully implement it church-wide early this fall. Please look The Flame over carefully and consider participating in this effort which has become a part of membership in many Unitarian churches.

Forward!

Louise Jeffrey

Party! Pumpkins! Potluck! Purchases! Put your “Heart” and “Hand” in our service auction

Save the date!! Friday, October 24th, 6-10:30 p.m. (at the church) is our Halloween Heart and Hand Auction Party! This is our major fall social event and FUNdraiser for the church operating budget. The “heart” part of the auction is when donors offer “seats” for sale for a wide variety of social activities through the year or donate classy items for purchase at the auction itself. The “hand” part is when donors offer their skills and time through lessons or help with projects. Both “heart and hand” are needed for the many helpers needed to pull off this big event!

What might you offer to help us pep up our social lives, jump start a new hobby, or tackle a project on that endless “to do” list? What intriguing items might you donate to dazzle partygoers into a shopping frenzy? The Auction Party features plenty of good eating (Fall Favorites potluck and deserts), cash bar, door prizes, raffles, crazy costumes (for those so inclined), live-auction entertainment with renowned Auctioneer Kate Wiig, and a room full of silent-auction delights. Child care provided (with Halloween fun there, too.).

Our operating budget calls for \$17,000 from FUNdraising to balance. The Auction is a big piece of that effort. Last year’s auction as a great success, netting over \$15,000 with 100+ items: all because folks like you offered their “hearts” and “hands” as donors, buyers, and auction helpers in support of our church. Join in for a fun and successful Halloween Auction Party!

Look for more Auction information in this Flame, at church, and on the church website. Can you help with the Auction? Questions? Email auction@firsttuomaha.org or call Donna (402-393-5390) or Kathi (402-214-2718).

Do You Shop on Amazon?

DOUBLE UP AND GIVE MORE! Before you shop on Amazon for all your gift giving and everyday needs, purchase an Amazon gift card at the scrip table, visit www.firsttuomaha.org and click the Amazon logo at the bottom of the page. Why? Because every time you make a purchase from Amazon, via the First Unitarian webpage, First Unitarian of Omaha receives 4-12% of the purchase PLUS an additional 3% for purchasing scrip gift cards. For more information, email scrip@firsttuomaha.org or visit with Kathi Oliver and Donna Neff during coffee hour.

UUnique Boutique

Do you make jewelry, yard art, or crafts? Do you want to sell your books to the congregation? Use the UUnique Boutique on Sunday mornings during coffee hour to do so. Starting August 31 the FUNdraising team will be selling Unitarian postcards, sold in packs of 5 for \$10. All of the proceeds will benefit First Unitarian. Previously sold as TRIBUTE cards, these unique postcards can be used for any occasion with a gift to First Unitarian. Do you want to help the church also? Contact Kathi Oliver to sell your items and discuss ways your profits can benefit First UU. Email scrip@firsttuomaha.org for more information.

RE Update *by Jan Wilson, Director of R.E.*

We will soon welcome all the folks back from a summer of cutting grass, weeding, flip-flops, and cookouts. How great to have the time for renewal. As good as summer has been, it is always nice to feel the energy of returning to school and the beginning of a new session of Sunday classes for preschool, grade school, middle and high school youth.

The RE Council has many new ideas for the new fall session. First, families will be attending with children at the 9:30am service. The children will stay the whole time, and with the assistance of a special children's order of worship, they will discuss their reactions to each service as their grade level classes begin at the close of the first service.

Thanks to the addition of many more volunteer teachers, we will be able to provide classes which will give our kids a better teacher-to-student ratio and a similar age grouping for discussions. The nursery will continue as usual. The K-2 grade students will meet in my office. Grades 3-5 will meet in the middle classroom. Grades 6-8 will be in the Whitney Young Room downstairs, and the 9-12 grades will be in the Merritt Lounge.

We welcome new teachers: Dave Richardson, Abby Cape, Chris Oliver, Geoff Chenoweth, Liz Sagert, Lisa Calhoun, Stephanie Rodriguez, and Chelsea Ross. We also welcome our returning teachers: Sheri Conner, Donna Neff, Nicole Giron, Shay Valentine, Wendi Jensen, Roman Noriega, Kate Wiig, Ryan Cook, and Bethany Murphy. We are doubling our teaching staff to provide even more opportunities for our young people to flourish in acceptance and leadership.

The sources of our faith from Judeo-Christian literature will be taught this semester. We will be teaching this as the literature of our heritage from the perspective of the Hero's Journey. This universal format, originally described by Joseph Campbell, gives us an understanding of the connection we have to all cultures. The Hero's Journey is seen as a metaphor for the path our lives inevitably take through tests and trials we encounter. In

addition, it brings a "big picture" awareness of the Bible stories as encompassing elements and devices present in fiction, as well as universal human truth.

YRUU is looking forward to many exciting programs and has recruited advisors to help. Our goal is to build on the work of Ben Wallace and Shawne Coonfare by adding new advisors to this incredible group of teens so that they can take a much needed break while they make a seamless transition to new leadership. We will again welcome teens from Second Unitarian, as well as advisors and parents. This is a long-standing collaboration which has enriched the lives of our YRUU group.

If you are a parent, grandparent or guardian, please register your children online at <http://www.firstuuomaha.org/#!register/c1d0>.

Here's to a great year!
Jan

Come and Start the Youth Group Year with Us at the YRUU Parent and Youth Meeting on September 3!

The annual Parent and Youth meeting for the YRUU Youth Group will be held on Wednesday, September 3 from 7pm to 8:30pm in Common Room at First Unitarian Church. The Youth Group meets each Wednesday throughout the school year from 7-8:30pm and is focused on creating a community where youth can be themselves in a safe space while exploring topics related to their faith journey, social justice, our UU history, and having FUN! All 7-12 graders and their parents are welcome to come learn more about our wonderful youth group community and some of the great things that we will be doing this year! If you have questions, email Ben Wallace and Shawne Coonfare at omahayruu@gmail.com or call Ben at 402-680-6226. See you there!

Adult Religious Education

Wellness Series with Douglas Lee-Regier

6pm to 8pm in the Whitney Young Classroom on the following Thursdays:

August 28—Reflexology with Douglas Lee-Regier

Fancy foot rub! Come with a friend or pair up with somebody there; be ready to take off your shoes and relax. Reflexology is a system of massage used to relieve tension and treat illness, based on the theory that there are reflex points on the feet, hands, and head linked to every part of the body.

September 4—BodyTalk with Krissa Lee-Regier

BodyTalk is a system of energy balancing based on the understanding that the body/mind/spirit system is self-healing when it is in communication with itself, and that optimum communication can be stressed, distorted or shut down by many of life's stresses and traumas, external and internal. In addition to an overview and demonstration of how the method works to restore balance and greater self-awareness, some self-help techniques will also be shared.

September 11—Over the Kitchen Counter

Garlic, ginger, tomato, cinnamon and friends with Pat Mettler. This presentation is meant to be an educational tool in your quest for health and longevity. Simple ideas, recipes, and samples for making use of medicinal plants that may already be in your kitchen will be presented.

September 18—Reiki with Douglas Lee-Regier

Reiki is a healing technique based on the principle that the therapist tunes into the patient's innate healing system with hands on or slightly off the body, to activate the physical, spiritual and emotional natural healing processes of the person. We will also focus on self-treatment.

September 25—Traditional Chinese Medicine – TBA

October 2—Myofascial Release with Douglas Lee-Regier

Presentation will include stretching techniques, a mini-treatment demo and methods of self-treatment. Myofascial Release is a subtle massage procedure that involves light to moderate pressure on the body to release facial restrictions caused by trauma, acute or chronic pain, or other physical or emotional conditions.

Each presentation will include some instruction and practice. There will be different topics each week, some combined. Topics include: reflexology, bodytalk, healing with herbs, reiki, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), and myofascial release.

We want to present methods of self-healing that people can learn from and benefit from and then have something to take home to do for self-improvement. To RSVP or to reserve childcare, please contact adultre@firstuuomaha.org.

The Women's Religious Studies Group

The Women's Religious Studies group is reading *The Epic of Unitarianism: Original Writings* from the History of Liberal Religion. We continue our discussion of short works by influential writers such as Frances David and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Our group meets most Thursdays from 1pm until 2:30pm. Interested? Contact Rae Barry at 402-422-1404 or raeb1@hotmail.com.

Share the Plate—Boys & Girls Club

Each month one-half of the loose currency in the offering plate is donated to a cause with a local presence which advances important principles of Unitarianism.

This month we share the plate with Boys & Girls Club. See this website for more information: <http://bgcomaha.org>.

The Women's Religious Studies Covenant Group

The Women's Religious Studies Covenant Group will be doing an evaluation of our past six sessions and making a decision as to the direction in which we want to go with our Covenant Group. We will meet on Thursday, September 18th at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge.

Oktoberfest

Traditionally, Oktoberfest is a 16-day festival starting the last week of September that centers on German food and beer. Sunday, September 21 at 6pm, Nathan Kramer, with the help of other volunteers, will be producing an Oktoberfest Dinner in the Common Room.

This Oktoberfest Dinner will begin with a social time. Then guests will be seated for a meal starting with eight traditional German salads, a main course of pork loin, grilled chicken, spätzel and sauerkraut, then end with traditional German tortes. The dinner will feature a long festival table covered with red-checked cloths, set under a ceiling of Bavarian blue and white streamers. Guests are asked to bring beer and wine for themselves or to share. (See online list of ideas and recommendations.)

The event is limited to 40 guests. There is a reservation fee of \$3 per person. The remainder of expenses are being shared with the help of Event Sponsors and a free-will offering the night of the event. Reservations can be transferred, but it is important that the reservation be used. If you would like reservations or to become an Event Sponsor, please see website for more information: <http://bit.ly/1sXKTnw>.

This event is a pilot for future culinary events where individuals can design a dinner menu and have volunteers assist in helping to create the experience. For more information, contact Nathan Kramer at nathan@nathankramer.com or (402) 884-8916.

Church Events Coming Up

Gentle Yoga Class

*Begins Tuesday, September 2
See page 15 for information.*

YRUU—Parent & Youth Meeting

*Wednesday, September 3 at 7pm
See page 8 for information.*

Community Night

*Friday, September 5 at 5:30pm
See page 13 for information.*

Welcome Home! Ice Cream Social

*Sunday, September 7 at 11:30am in
the Common Room
See page 4 for details.*

Spirit Circle

*Sunday, September 7 at 6pm in the
Common Room
See page 5 for details.*

Women's Alliance

*Monday, September 8—social hour
at 6:30pm; program at 7:30pm
See page 5 for information.*

Board Meeting

*Tuesday, September 9 at 7pm in
the Common Room*

UU & You Class

*Wednesday, September 10 at 7pm
in the Merritt Lounge
See page 5 for details.*

Volunteer Fair

*Sunday, September 14 during both
coffee hours
See page 20 for details.*

Flame Deadline

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

Women's Religious Studies

Covenant Group

*Thursday, September 18 at 1pm in
the Merritt Lounge
See page 10 for details.*

Young Adult Game Night

*Friday, September 19 at 6:30pm
See page 18 for details*

Oktoberfest

*Sunday, September 21 at 6pm
See page 10 for details.*

RE Council Meeting

*Sunday, September 28 at 1pm in
Jan's office*

Book Club

*Monday, September 29 at 7pm in
the Merritt Lounge
See page 18 for information.*

Adult RE: Wellness Series

*Thursdays, August 28, September 4,
11, 18, 25, October 2 in the
Common Room
See page 9 for more information.*



Hospitality Teams will continue in the fall.

Recurring...

Women's Religious Studies Group

*Meets every Thursday at 1pm in the
Merritt Lounge
See page 10 for information.*

Bridge Group

*Meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday of
each month after the service in the
Whitney Young Room or in the
corner of the Common Room*

Choir Rehearsal

*Meets every Wednesday evening at
7pm in the Sanctuary.*

YRUU

*Meets every Wednesday at 7pm in
the Common Room
See page 8 for information.*

Looking ahead...

Holland Lecture

*Wednesday, October 1, offsite
See page 13 for more information.*

Ministry Team Meeting

*Saturday, October 4 at 2pm in the
Common Room*

Heart & Hand Auction

*Friday, October 24
See page 7 for more details.*

Rev. Robert T. Weston 1898-1988, the Poet in the Pulpit Minister at First Unitarian Church of Omaha 1960-1964 Part II of III

by Dave Richardson

In the first installment of our three-part examination of Robert Weston's life and work. We looked at his contributions to the various congregations he served and to the denomination as a whole. In this installment we will take a closer look at his contributions to our congregation and the community at large.

Rev. Weston's tenure in Omaha roughly corresponded to the time of the Kennedy administration. As we shall see, this correlation shared more than coincidence. The nation was undergoing a long and bitter struggle with civil rights, as well as dealing with fears of what JFK dubbed the "nuclear sword of Damocles" hanging over us.

Omaha was also undergoing some of the same struggles. Many of us remember the early '60s in Omaha as a time of increasing awareness of racial inequality in our city. The Omaha Public Schools were "de facto segregated" as a later court decision declared. Open and Fair Housing, as it was then called, was hotly debated by our city government and the citizenry at large. Despite the accomplishments in the previous decade made by church member and chairman of The Nebraska Urban League, Whitney Young, in the area of equal employment opportunity, much reform was still needed. Omaha's proximity to the Strategic Air Command made us "ground zero" in the event of nuclear war, which seemed like a real possibility to

many during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Robert Weston arrived in Omaha at the beginning of this era of upheaval.

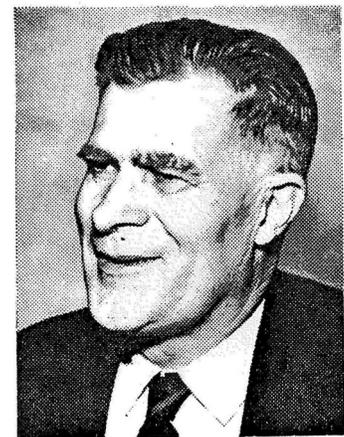
Rev. Weston provided a strong force for change from the pulpit as well as over local radio and in print media. His sermons reveal his strong support for equal opportunity in education, employment and housing. His sermon titled "Democracy Begins With You" was a call for involvement in both church and local social justice issues. He also wrote editorial columns for *The Omaha Star*, the voice of the African-American community. His message also went out over the airwaves on radio station KMEQ. His commentary was often aimed at explaining Unitarianism to those unfamiliar with our denomination. When Rev. Weston left our pulpit in 1964, he was kind enough to leave behind hundreds of letters and notes sent in by listeners. Most of them are full of praise and often requesting copies of his radio messages. He always obliged these requests. Not all of the letters and messages he received were laudatory, however. The local owner of a chicken ranch accused him of "leftist treason." Another rather lengthy letter outlined how the Reverend could "find Jesus" by reading certain Bible passages which the writer dutifully provided along with his explanations of the texts. He closed (finally) by saying he hoped to meet Rev. Weston in heaven, but this would happen only if he repented

and abandoned his heretical views. The writer added if repentance did not occur, Rev. Weston would surely receive a "warm welcome" in Hell.

The only kind of hell Rev. Weston preached about was the potential devastation caused by nuclear war.

You may recall that Robert served as a navy chaplain during WWII. He was one of the first naval officers to witness firsthand the aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima. He recalled the "ethical revulsion" he felt after seeing the effects of atomic warfare. This and many other strongly held values made his messages authentic and powerful.

In our third and final installment we will look at the role Reverend Weston played in the founding of The Second Unitarian Church of Omaha in addition to other significant accomplishments of his tenure in Omaha.



**Robert T. Weston
1960-1964**

CommUUnity Night

Join us for CommUUnity Night on Friday, September 5 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. Definitely fun for the whole family! Join our potluck with your favorite food and a board game for this relaxing get-together. RE provides the main dish.

"We're all better off when we're all better off" --Eric Liu, Next Holland Lecture Series Speaker



Eric Liu, author of *The Gardens of Democracy: A New American Story of Citizenship, the Economy, and the Role of Government* is the next speaker in the Holland Lecture Series. If the name sounds familiar it is because Mr. Liu was scheduled to speak last October but due to illness had to reschedule.

The Gardens of Democracy: A New American Story of Citizenship, the Economy, and the Role of Government asks us to think of government not as a machine that needs regular service and repair but as a garden to be nurtured. A successful garden follows natural rules, but requires goals, regular tending, and an understanding of connected ecosystems. While he wants us to have a bigger share of the harvest (we're all better off when we're all better off), Liu also asks us to be more involved as citizen gardeners.

In his latest book, *A Chinaman's Chance: One Family's Journey and the Chinese American Dream*, Mr. Liu explores what it means for an immigrant group to move from indentured servitude and second-class status to economic and social integration and achievement. America's ongoing battle over immigration and China's growing economic and political role make this topic doubly timely.

Liu, currently a lecturer at the University of Washington, is a former White House deputy domestic policy advisor and a regular contributor to TIME.com and TheAtlantic.com.

Please join us for this FREE lecture on Wednesday, October 1 at 7:30pm at the Holland Performing Arts Center.

Church members will receive an invitation in the next couple of weeks for a special Chairman's pre-lecture reception and preferred seating. Free general admission tickets for this reserved seating event will become available September 1 through Ticket Omaha: online at ticketomaha.com, by phone at 402-345-0606 or by visiting the Ticket Omaha box office at 13th & Douglas in downtown Omaha.

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. Life can leave any of us feeling vulnerable and isolated. 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?

Our response will vary depending on the type of support that is needed in our church community and what resources we have available to respond. Hope In Action will help with referrals to social service agencies, rides to church, visits to the homebound or a sympathetic ear to talk through a problem.

Although Hope In Action is not equipped to respond to emergencies, short-term financial assistance may be available for payment of lodging, food, clothing, medication, transportation and utilities. Disbursements of financial assistance will not be made directly to the person making the request for assistance.

HOW TO ASK FOR SUPPORT

Requests for assistance must be made directly by the person needing help. Hope In Action does not respond to any anonymous or third-party requests for assistance.

Here are the ways you can ask for support from Hope in Action. You may send an email to hopeinaction@firstuuomaha.org or use the Hope In Action link on the church website. You may call the church office and press ext. 105 to leave a telephone message for Hope in Action. Or, you may simply complete a Caring Card located in the church pews and place it in the designated 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 to a request for assistance.

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 beginning between 10 and 11am (based on the meal preparation time needed) and ending at 1pm. Additionally, there are First Unitarian Church members who work at the site on a weekly basis and additional help is always welcome.

Our next meal will be served the Saturday prior to Christmas, December 20th.

Getting involved can be as simple as providing a pan of brownies or working in the serving line. Want to get involved? Call or email Diane Withem, 402-679-8916 or dianewithem@gmail.com.

Update from the Partner Church Team

The Partner Church Team will send \$1,200 to a church committee in Firtosmartonos, Transylvania, Romania. This money is to help the village young people with room and board at the Unitarian high school in Szekelykeresztur and some of college expenses for the students who have moved on to higher education. The money will be given to seven students this year. Although a small amount per student, the students and their parents are very appreciative. Some of the money comes from the donations of members and friends of First Unitarian Church to the Partner Church Fund. Additionally, the Women's Alliance donates \$400 each year to the Partner Church Scholarship Fund.



Gentle Yoga Class Begins

*Tuesdays, 5-6:30pm in the Whitney Young Classroom
September 2-October 21*

This gentle yoga class follows the tradition of classical yoga. The class format consists of a reading, *asana* practice (physical poses), and meditation. After our restoration and relaxation, we share tea and a brief feedback.

Focus:

MIND

For this class, our shared readings relate to Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.

BODY

As needed, the class uses props (chair, pillows, etc) to safely support poses.

To improve your flexibility and strengthen your body

To introduce poses of *Surya Namaskar* (Sun Salutation)

SPIRIT

To deepen the connection between your breath and your body

To introduce a personal meditation practice

Your confidential goodwill offering is to be donated to the needs of First Unitarian's Caring Team (Hope in Action). Payment is due the first week of class.

Suggested guideline: \$100 – \$160 for eight weeks.

If you wish to drop in to try a class, please call an instructor for availability. Suggested guideline: \$15-20 per class.

To register please email: yoga@firstuomaha.org.

Class size is limited. Payment is due first class. Please go to this webpage for more information:

<http://www.firstuomaha.org/#!/yoga/clhbe>

Hospitality Teams Are Happening Now!

Your Ministry Team Leaders have been studying Hospitality Teams for more than a year. On the first Saturday of every even-numbered month, the leaders of all the teams listed on page 2 of this *Flame*, staff members, and others meet to coordinate the activities of the church. For about a year now, Hospitality Teams have been an important part of each meeting.

What is a Hospitality Team?

A Hospitality Team is a group of about 12 people who are responsible for hosting one Sunday every other month (6 Sunday services 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 Prairie Star District conference and brought the idea back for consideration.

How was the concept evaluated here at First Unitarian?

Your Ministry Team Leaders liked the concept and authorized a trial run. A volunteer team hosted one Sunday Service in February, March, and April. This helped us document the hosting responsibilities and train individuals on each responsibility. The main idea behind Hospitality Teams is that everyone learns every job and works as a team to make sure that our congregants and visitors are welcomed warmly and served effectively. To be sure that the plan was sound, we recruited 5 teams for a summer trial. Each team served one Sunday per month. These teams will continue to serve in odd-numbered months.

How many people need to volunteer to make Hospitality Teams work?

About 108! That is 9 teams with 12 people each. That's a scary number but we were able to recruit almost 50 volunteers for our summer trial. We are quite hopeful that most of the volunteers will be willing to continue to serve on their existing team or move to other teams. This will certainly be the largest recruiting effort in recent memory and your help is crucial.

What is the basic expectation of congregants?

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.



How soon does this start?

Our existing teams will handle hospitality for September. We need to form and train 4 new teams to start in October. Please volunteer!

How do I learn more?

We have created a special, Extra Edition of *The Flame* this month to provide all of the information about Hospitality Teams in one convenient place. It will be available via email to those who receive *The Flame* using that method. In addition, it will be mailed to each household so that we reach as many people as possible.



**Volunteer today for
an October Team!
We need 108
volunteers to make
this work!**

THE WOMEN'S ALLIANCE EDUCATIONAL FUND

The Women's Alliance scholarship fund committee has been revamped for the 2014/2015 season, and every season hereafter. In previous years the Women's Alliance would allocate funds for a scholarship for an individual from First or Second Unitarian wanting to continue their education with the transition from high school to college. The WA has decided to broaden this fund, rename it, and incorporate criteria to attain funding for personal development.

The name of the scholarship fund has changed to the Merritt Educational Fund. This fund's purpose is to broaden personal development directly related to church functions. Some examples can include (but are not limited to): help with costs to attend General Assembly, Leadership School, or Mid-America District meetings; broadening talent (musical, religious education, technical school, etc); or help with costs for a college course to further one's education to advance in their career. These are just examples. The WA team requires some criteria to apply for this educational fund.

1. The recipient must be a First Unitarian contributing member or friend of the church
2. Funding must be used for continuing education or for church-related activities
3. An application must be submitted with the following information: what direction you are headed in and what the funds are for. Applications can be picked up in the mailroom of the church or by emailing Women's Alliance at wa@firstuomaha.org.

The listed criteria may be altered by the contributing members of the Women's Alliance Educational Fund Committee at any time. More criteria may be added if, and when, the committee sees fit.

Sarah Joslyn Society

Below you will find a list of current members of the Sarah Joslyn Society which was created to recognize and honor those members of First Unitarian Church who have made a commitment to leave a bequest to the church. There are now 70 members who will be guests at a luncheon on October 19.

Is Your Name Here? Jaime Alexander♦Jacqueline Anderegg♦Bill Bruns♦Sandi Bruns♦Linda Buehlmann♦Eddith Buis♦Carol Christensen♦Dean Christensen♦Sharon Conlon♦Deb Duggan♦Tim Duggan♦Olive Erickson♦Margot Fetrow♦Richard Fetrow♦Audrey Freyer♦Dale Freyer♦Larry Goeser♦John Goldner♦Kay Lynn Goldner♦Megan Gustafson♦Lana Hammel♦Jack Heidel♦Wendy Hessler♦Joe Hoagbin♦Dick Holland♦Mary Holland♦Betty Holloway♦John Hruska♦Debbie Hunsberger♦Louise Jeffrey♦Walt Jesteadt♦Bob Jones♦Diane Jones♦Dick Joslin♦Anne Knapp♦Ron Knapp♦Dixie Lemon♦Harriet Major♦Katherine Bester McClure♦Carolyn McNamara♦Donna Neff♦Dave Nicklin♦Ruth Nicklin♦Frank Norris♦Lois Norris♦Bob Perrin♦Jack Perry♦Yvonne Price♦Cella Quinn♦Jim Rogers♦Raija Rogers♦Ellen Shurson♦Jim Simon♦Kim Simon♦Liz Stawyczny♦Gretchen Thomas♦John Thomas♦John Wagner♦Elaine Wells♦Janet West♦Evelyn Whitehill♦Jim Wigton♦Judy Wigton♦Pat Will♦Edith Wilson♦Sid Wilson♦Judith Wright♦Anonymous I♦Anonymous II♦Anonymous III

If you would like to see your name here, all you have to do is include a bequest to the church in your will or add a codicil specifying that. For the specifics, talk to Dixie Lemon (402-393-2882) or any member of the Finance Team and then join us at the luncheon.

Book Club

In September we will meet on Monday, September 29 at 7pm. At that meeting we will discuss Eric Liu's newest book *A Chinaman's Chance: One Family's Journey and the Chinese American Dream*. Eric Liu is the speaker for the next Holland Lecture on October 1, and we usually read a book by the speaker the month before the lecture. If you would like to receive emails about the book club, please contact Dave Richardson at drrichardson@westside66.org.

Young Adult Group

The next Young Adult Game Night is Friday, September 19 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. Are you a young adult? Want to get involved? Contact youngadults@firstuomaha.org.

Save the Date

Our Annual Holiday Dinner is scheduled for Saturday, December 13 at 7pm in the Common Room. More information will be available soon!



In August we had quite the group for the Adult Religious Education class run by Ron Knapp on Thursday evenings. Want to attend an Adult RE class? See page 9 for information about the next session coming up.



On Saturday, August 16 First Unitarian Church friends and members along with Second Unitarian Church members painted a house. This annual Paint-a-Thon is a fun way to get involved and to improve our community. Thank you to all those involved!

New Member News

New member Krystal Davis visited First Unitarian at the recommendation of a friend who knew that she was looking for spirituality, not dogma. Krystal loved the services and the people she met and wanted to be more involved, but it was after attending a Unitarian Universalism and You class that she knew she was ready to make the commitment. She became a member on July 27.

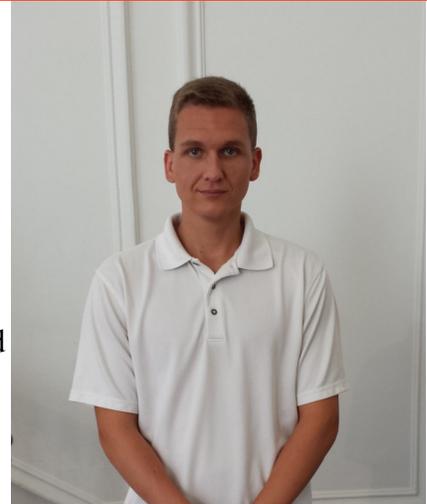


Krystal was raised as a Jehovah's Witness but she was "disfellowshipped" when she married her husband Jason who was not of the same religion. While she suffered the loss of most of her family and friends, she is grateful for the spiritual and intellectual freedom that came from that loss. Krystal was born in the little town of Stigler, Okla., but spent about six months in Omaha as a child. Her good memories of Omaha influenced the decision to land here when Jason's career prompted a move. She works as a medical lab scientist, running the tests ordered by doctors. Her interests include hiking and exploring nature, knitting, playing the piano, reading, writing, and playing cards. She is a big fan of the performing arts and is passionate about science, learning, protecting the environment, and helping those who need support.

Please welcome her.

New Member News

Payton Pearson doesn't remember a time when he didn't believe in God. Although baptized in the Baptist faith, he attended services only a few times. In high school he took a religious compass online quiz and scored 100% Unitarian Universalist which much later caused him to investigate UU churches in Omaha. He visited First Unitarian in early June and was immediately "hooked." Because he found us to be a church of reason and tolerance, which are at the core of his beliefs, he became a member on July 27.



A native of Sacramento, Calif., Payton is a pilot stationed at Offutt Air Force Base. His hobbies include playing the piano, running, cooking, and playing basketball. He is writing a novel and philosophic works, runs a YouTube channel, and enjoys public speaking. His passions include bitcoin, dismantling the Federal Reserve, philosophy, spirituality, science in general, and extraterrestrial life. He loves outer space and has two papers published regarding space and terraforming planets. Payton volunteers at Siena/Francis House and at the pharmacy at Offutt, he works with two bitcoin companies (alpha bitcoin and blockchainio), and he is a member of the Red Cross.

Please welcome him to membership.

HALLOWEEN "Heart & Hand" Auction Party

Friday, October 24 2014 6-10 p.m.

At First Unitarian Church 3114 Harney St.

A major FUNdraiser for the church operations budget

Eat, Party, Shop!

Auction Categories:

1. Gourmet Gatherings

(dinners, dining out)

2. Giving & Receiving

(services, lessons, a helping hand)

3. Going Wild

(games, activities, sports, outings)

4. Great Goods

(tempting gifts & merchandise)



Mark Your Calendar!

New party format this year:
Silent Auction first, then Live

Delicious Food!
Fall Favorites Potluck
Non-alcoholic beverages
provided. Cash bar.

Costumes Encouraged

(but optional)

Prizes for Best Costumes!

Raffle! Door Prizes!

Silent Auction! Amazing items

Fun Live Auction!

What will YOU Donate??

Casual-Informal-Fun!

Free Childcare by reservation

Laugh, shop, enjoy desserts
with Kate Wiig, Auctioneer

To OFFER Items for Auction To SIGN UP for the potluck or childcare

To VOLUNTEER to Help out To GET A BIDDER # for early shopping

Email auction@firstuomaha.org Call Donna 402-699-3183 or Kathi 402-214-2718

Visit the Auction Area (Common Room) Go to church website (<http://www.firstuomaha.org>)

Donation deadline is October 20 (sooner is better, of course)

Team Fair—September 14

All of our Ministry Teams will present their important services at the Team Fair. You'll have an opportunity to learn more about what they do and how you can get involved! Come check out the teams during both coffee hours on Sunday, September 14!

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