

November 2019

# The Flame



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

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Thinking Workshop

## Sunday Services

**Sunday, November 3 at 10:30am**  
**Rev. Michelle LaGrave** will be in the pulpit.

**Sunday, November 10 at 10:30am**  
**"The Question: A Personal Reflection on Identity and Moving Beyond Categorical Thinking"**  
**Guest Speaker: Gil Guerrero from the UUA Transitions Office**

Gil will share some readings and his personal perspective on the experience of identity, and how our limited or shorthand understanding of identities impacts the search for our best minister.

**Sunday, November 17 at 10:30am**  
**"Wholehearted Attention: The Way of Zen"**  
**Guest Speaker: Dosho Port Roshi**  
 Zen practice is all about cultivating awareness in order to clearly see the deep truth of our ordinary life. Why is attention so important? How can attention be cultivated? What's the secret?

**Sunday, November 24 at 10:30am**  
**"Thanksgiving Service"**  
**Rev. Michelle LaGrave**  
 Please join us for a Thanksgiving Service.

## First Unitarian Goes Smoke-Free

The Board of Trustees voted at the October Board meeting to make the First Unitarian Church of Omaha a smoke-and-vape-free campus. This includes the grounds and the building. This policy will go into effect on November 1st. The Board would like to thank all of you who gave your feedback during the decision-making process. They appreciate your taking the time to talk with them and comment on the proposed change over the last couple of months. This decision will align First Unitarian with the UUA's suggested smoke-free policies. Thank you for helping to make First Unitarian a smoke-and vape-free campus.

## Church Parking

Parking is directly west of the church in the surface parking lot or on the street. **We want to save the surface lot for those who need to park closer.** You may park in the Midtown Crossing Parking Garage to the west of the church lot. The entrance to the parking garage is on Farnam Street. Have your ticket validated downstairs in the Common Room for free parking— with validation you receive FREE PARKING for the ENTIRE day. Questions? Email the church office at [admin@firstuomaha.org](mailto:admin@firstuomaha.org). See more info at our website here: [www.firstuomaha.org/directions](http://www.firstuomaha.org/directions).

## Windshield Decals for Church Lot

In an effort to save our church parking for members, visitors, volunteers, and staff, the Ministry Team Council created a windshield decal (see the image below) last fall. Decals were given to church members and friends. The decals are small (3in. x 3in.) and can be placed in the front windshield in the top left or right-hand corner. 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 still need a decal, you can pick one up this Sunday— there's a small basket filled with decals (along with a sign explaining what they are) next to the parking validation machine in the Common Room.



## Sunday Streaming Reminder

We no longer stream the service to the Common Room. Please sit in the Sanctuary. We understand that some people have a need to move around, and if that's you, please sit near the door and leave quietly. We will continue to do our best to stream to YouTube so folks at home can watch, but in some cases the service will be recorded and posted to the website at a later date. Once equipment upgrades are completed, we plan that streaming every Sunday will return.

## Ministerial Musings from the Interim Minister

By Rev. Michelle LaGrave

This past August, I did a “Question Box Sermon” in which members, friends, and visitors were asked to submit questions they would like to ask me/the minister. I did my best to answer several of them during the service, but the pile of question cards remains quite large, so I thought I’d use this space to answer a few more. Here goes...!



### **What is the most important feminist influence on your life/ministry?**

The most important feminist influence in my life is my mom, Nancy. I grew up hearing her tell stories about how she had to pick one of only a few possible careers that would have been acceptable to her father for a woman to go into and what she would have loved to do instead. I also witnessed the way she dealt with so many challenges she faced in a male-dominated world and the way she took them on with strength and determination and absolute certainty that the world as it was, was not as it should have been.

The most important feminist influence in my ministry is a UU minister who was also one of my professors in seminary, the Rev. Dr. Deborah Pope-Lance. She became a minister many years ago during a time when the vast majority of UU ministers were men. She told many stories of the challenges and yes, even hazing, she endured and how she overcame them and she taught me how to understand the legacy that was left to all those who came later and how it continues to impact the healthy functioning of Unitarian Universalism today.

### **What would you have chosen to do if you had not decided to be a minister?**

I love animals and I’ve always said that if the ministry didn’t work out, I’d become a vet tech! Before seminary, though, I mostly worked in one form or other of education, especially with creative program development. One of my favorite jobs was at a children’s museum.

### **How do you feel about being recognized on the street by congregants/church members? Do you feel annoyed by it (like, “oh, there’s another church member approaching me again!”), or do you feel like a superstar (like, “woo-hoo, here comes a church attendee asking me a question out of nowhere!”) Or does it just depend on your mood at the moment?**

Well, first of all, let me say I think you win the prize for the longest question! Most of the time, I am happy to stop and chat with a church member for a moment or two. I enjoy seeing you when I am out and about and catching up for a bit. Of course, there are exceptions: like when I’m running late for an appointment or the time when I lived in a village of only 1,200 people and it took forever to get through the grocery store because I would see so many people I knew, all in one “short” trip. I can’t say a church member has ever made me feel like a rock star when they saw me out in public, though. Unlike the above-referenced favorite job in a children’s museum where I’d show up somewhere and a bunch of screaming preschoolers would run and jump and clap their hands and yell: “Miss Michelle’s here!!!” – but I suppose there could always be a first time! ;)

In faith,  
Rev. Michelle



**Before you head to bed on Saturday,  
November 2 be sure to FALL BACK.  
Set your clock back one hour.  
See you at church on Sunday!**

## Religious Education Update

*By Christina Strong, Lifespan Director of Religious Education*

October 15th marked my six-month-lunaversary of working here at First U! I am so grateful to all of you for the opportunity to do this work that makes me feel most alive, with so much support from this community, surrounded by the beauty of this building. As an introvert, the prospect of “meeting more than 100 new people all at the same time!” seemed daunting when I started in this position in May, but I very quickly began to feel like a part of your +community. This church has come to feel as much like “home” as my “home church.” Omaha and I are starting to belong to each other, too.



One exciting part of reaching the six-month milestone is that I’m eligible to apply for the Religious Education Credentialing Program offered by the UUA. Over the next two years I will be pursuing the “Credentialed” level, and after five years of employment as a DRE, I will be eligible to complete the “Master” level. The program includes modules with topics such as “Adult Faith Development and Planning,” “Multicultural Religious Education,” “Unitarian Universalist Theology,” etc. Each module includes at least 15 hours of classroom or videoconference time and reading. I will also be matched with a mentor, a DRE who has completed the credentialing program, who will give me guidance as I work through the competency areas and feedback as I create a portfolio of my continuing education. I will begin my studies in November with the “Worship” module.

I will be out of town Nov. 7th-13th to attend the LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Associate) Conference, “Theologies of Suffering and Wholeness: Companions in Liberation,” and the Worship Renaissance Module, both in Baltimore, MD.

Questions? Email: [dre@firstuomaha.org](mailto:dre@firstuomaha.org).

## Update from Your Ministerial Search Committee

If you attended one of our Search Committee Cottage Meetings or Focus Groups during October, THANK YOU for your time and input. Our goal was to capture more information about who we are as a congregation and what we need in our next minister, and your participation helped.

Don't forget to reserve your spot in the Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop on Saturday, November 9th from 9am to 12 Noon. See details on page 10.

The Search Committee would also like to thank all those that have participated in the survey. We received 120 responses, which is a good number and will show interested ministers that our congregation is engaged. A report for the survey is being prepared and will be available to the congregation when it has been completed.

## Board President's Letter

Bula Vinaka everyone! That is Fijian for “a warm hello.” Lori and I were very lucky to spend a few days in Fiji on our way back from New Zealand, where we toured both islands and said goodbye to both of my parents in a very meaningful way. This trip was long in the making and much needed, as the last two years of our lives have been very sad and difficult (as many of you already know). New Zealand and the Maori people held a very special place in my mom's heart and both of my parents were happy to know that they would travel there one last time.

So what has been going on when I haven't been off gallivanting around the world? (Trust me, I hear the privilege screaming out from those words!) Well with the help, patience, and understanding from many of you (but especially Rev. Michelle, Cat Dixon, and Sharon Piehler as well as a few others), we have been moving steadily forward on several of the goals I set out for us early in this church year.

First, a huge thank you goes out to the whole congregation for helping us reach our Mind the Gap goal of an additional \$21,087 on top of last year's pledge drive. This money allows us to meet all of our budgetary obligations for this church year. A very special thank you goes out to the family of Barb Ross, who most generously helped us reach this goal by matching contributions from the congregation. Along with other generous gifts that the Ross family has bestowed upon us, I believe everyone should give each of them a warm hug and a “thank you” in Barb's name. I would also like to thank Mary Kay Peters, Mike McAtee, and Sharon Piehler for working so hard to get us over that goal. There were others who helped on top of contributing, and you know who you are—my thanks goes to each of you!

Next, we have moved forward on stabilizing our financial administration by employing Cheri Cody and Nancy Kenny to help us organize our accounting situation and put all of it into Power Church, which is a software-based system specifically for churches, which has a multitude of functions and which will help us organize our finances and data in many different and positive ways. They have spent many hours working with Cat, Rev. Michelle, and Bill Ross on this project and once again, I hope everyone gives each of these people a huge thank you for helping to make our financial administration functions more organized, secure, and sustainable going forward.

I am also working with Sharon, Cheri, Nancy and Walt Jesteadt on finding a workable solution to allow Walt to step away from the very important job of treasurer, a job Walt has so generously performed over the last FIFTEEN YEARS! Yup, you heard that right: 15 years! This project is a work in progress and we are still looking for the right volunteer who has the right combination of accounting and auditing background to help us complete this transition, so if you know of anyone who might be willing and interested (with a permanent bookkeeper it hopefully won't be terribly time intensive) please forward me their name. If you want to talk about this with that person some more, please feel free to corner one of the people mentioned above OR feel free to talk to that candidate about submitting their name for nomination at our upcoming MID-YEAR CONGREGATIONAL MEETING (to be held on January 19th- notification is in this issue of the Flame on page 17).

There is actually much more going on this year, but for expediency's sake (and to save Cat's editing pen for other uses) I will end this here, but please feel free to stop me or one of my Board colleagues and ask “What's new?” We are all happy to share what we have been working on. Just remember: YOU just might be the answer you seek if you have a question or a concern about our church and community, so please, please, PLEASE feel free to volunteer your time and talent whenever possible! It takes all of us to help our community thrive.

Until our next talk,  
Kia Mihi (“Thank You” in the [Maori tongue](#)),  
Joseph Schaaf

## Church Directory—Help Us Keep It Updated!

Did you know that an online address and phone directory of members and friends is available on the church website? Our church website is: [www.firstuomaha.org](http://www.firstuomaha.org). You can access the directory by clicking on the “Members Area” under the “Engage” tab on the home page and enter the members' area password. Or click on the button “directory” on the Quick Links Menu on the home page (bottom left-hand corner) and then enter the password. If you do not know the members' area password or your personal information needs updating, please contact Catharine Dixon in the church office. Email: [admin@firstuomaha.org](mailto:admin@firstuomaha.org) or phone: 402-345-3039 ext. 101. Please help us keep the church directory up-to-date. If you have moved or changed your email address or phone number, please let the church office know.

## Church Events

### CommUUnity Night

*Friday, Nov. 1 at 5:30pm in the Common Room.* All are welcome to this casual potluck. If you don't have time to pick up something to bring, that's okay. All we want is you. Child-care is provided. Facebook event here: [www.facebook.com/events/375469893335524/](http://www.facebook.com/events/375469893335524/).

### Teams Meeting

*Saturday, Nov. 2 at 9am in the Common Room.* All team leaders and volunteers are invited to attend this meeting as we discuss the Annual Vision of Ministry. If you have an item for the agenda, please email [MTC@firstuomaha.org](mailto:MTC@firstuomaha.org).

### Team Fair

*Sunday, November 3 during Coffee Hour.* The team fair highlights all the ways members, friends, and visitors can get involved at First Unitarian Church. See page 8 for more information.

### Omaha Polyamory Discussion Group

*Sunday, Nov. 3 at 6:30pm in the Common Room.* We invite any who embrace and support ethical non-monogamy-based loving relationships. We strive to offer a safe place to meet and discuss topics, issues, and hardships we face as polyamorous individuals and families. This group will meet the 1st Sunday of each month through April.

### People's Film Festival

*Monday, Nov. 4 at 7pm in the Common Room.* We will watch two films: *On the Line* & *Every Church is a Peace Church*. Go here for the Facebook event: [www.facebook.com/events/419537278705977/](http://www.facebook.com/events/419537278705977/)

### Compassionate Communication Group

*Meets the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the Common Room.* Using Compassionate Communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg, PhD, we learn to connect with ourselves and others with empathy and to act in greater harmony with our values. Learning to communicate more compassionately, like speaking a new

language, takes practice. Contact Suzanne: [nvcsuz@gmail.com](mailto:nvcsuz@gmail.com) for details.

### The 3F Book Bonanza Group

*Wednesday, Nov. 6 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge.* We will discuss *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* by Muriel Barbery. Questions? Please contact Sheri Conner at [ksvortex@msn.com](mailto:ksvortex@msn.com). In December, we will discuss *Saving Fish from Drowning* by Amy Tan.

### Pathways to Membership Class

This class has already started and registration was required. Dates this month: Nov. 6, Nov. 13, and Nov. 20, 6-8pm in the Whitney Young Room Classroom. Questions? Email Carrie at [coordinator@firstuomaha.org](mailto:coordinator@firstuomaha.org).

### Cakes for the Queen of Heaven—Five-Session Class

This class has already started and registration was required. Meeting dates this month: Nov. 7 and Nov. 21 at 6:30pm. Questions? Contact Christina at [DRE@firstuomaha.org](mailto:DRE@firstuomaha.org).

### Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop

*Saturday, Nov. 9 at 9am in the Common Room.* This workshop is an important part of our ministerial search process and is being put on by the Search Committee. All are invited. See page 10 for more information.

### Women's Alliance

*Monday, Nov. 11 in the Common Room at 6:30pm.* More details will be shared in the enews and on the church Facebook page in the future.

### AHA: Atheists, Humanists, Agnostics Group

*Thursday, Nov. 14 in the Common Room.* Doors open at 6pm for "Bring Your Own Dinner," and the meeting starts at 7pm. Please join AHA as we meet with the Ministerial Search Committee. What characteristics would you like in our new minister? Come and express your questions and insights representing your atheist, humanist, or agnostic views so they will be considered in selection of our next minister. This will be the last focus group meeting so don't miss this

opportunity! All are welcome.

### The Flame Newsletter Deadline

*November 15 at noon.* Email: [admin@firstuomaha.org](mailto:admin@firstuomaha.org).

### Leadership Talk Back

*Sunday, Nov. 17 at 11:30am in the Common Room.* The MTC (Ministry Team Council) and the Church Board want to hear from you. Have questions? Suggestions? Please join your church leaders!

### Transgender Day of Remembrance & Resilience (TDORR)

*Wednesday, Nov. 20 at 7pm in the Sanctuary.* This program is open to all ages and is free. See the flyer on page 11. Facebook event here: [www.facebook.com/events/2455921844690251/](http://www.facebook.com/events/2455921844690251/)

### Women's Religious Studies Covenant Group

*Thursday, Nov. 21 at 1pm in the lounge.* This group meets the 3rd Thursday of each month. Our book is *On the Brink of Everything: Grace, Gravity, and Getting Old* by Parker J Palmer. We welcome all self-identified women. If you're interested, please contact Rae: [raeb1@hotmail.com](mailto:raeb1@hotmail.com).

### Women's Alliance Annual Bake & Craft Sale

*Sunday, Nov. 24 during Coffee Hour.* See flyer on page 12.

### First Steps: A Class for Visitors

*Sunday, Nov. 24 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Classroom.* Join us for an introduction to First Unitarian Church and Unitarian Universalism. This session is run by Carrie, our membership coordinator. All are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to [coordinator@firstuomaha.org](mailto:coordinator@firstuomaha.org). If you need childcare, please let us know.

More events on next page...

## Church Events

### WAYS TO HELP:

#### YES Meal Prep

#### Volunteers & Donations

Monday, Nov. 25 at 9am in the Church Kitchen. See page 9 more details.

### People's Film Festival

Monday, Nov. 25 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *On Her Shoulders*, a documentary about Nadia Murad, who survived the 2014 genocide in northern Iraq. Go here for the Facebook event: [www.facebook.com/events/2453921348023835/](http://www.facebook.com/events/2453921348023835/).

### Book Club

Monday, Nov. 25 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. The book has not been selected yet. More information will be shared in the enews and on the church Facebook page. Questions? Email Dave at [drichardson821@gmail.com](mailto:drichardson821@gmail.com).

### 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. Our new book is *Misquoting Jesus* by Bart D. Ehrman. If you're interested, please contact Linda Parker at [lparkerlib@gmail.com](mailto:lparkerlib@gmail.com).

#### Dharma Chautauqua

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

#### Bridge Group

Meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month in the Conference Room at 11:30am. If you're a complete novice, join us to learn how to play this age-old game. It will boost your memory and your deductive reasoning skills. If you've played before, come for some entertainment and time at the game table. Questions? Contact Scott at [scott.kemper@gmail.com](mailto:scott.kemper@gmail.com).

#### YRUU (Youth Group)

Meets every Wednesday at 7pm in the Common Room from September to May. For more information, contact [DRE@firstuomaha.org](mailto:DRE@firstuomaha.org).

### Choir Rehearsals

Every Wednesday at 7pm in the Sanctuary from September to May.

For more info, email:

[choirdirector@firstuomaha.org](mailto:choirdirector@firstuomaha.org).

### Soul Matters Small Groups

Various meeting dates. See here:

[www.firstuomaha.org/soulmatters](http://www.firstuomaha.org/soulmatters).

Read an article about this month's topic on page 17.

### AHA Listening Circle

Meets the 3rd Sunday of the month at 11:45am in the Merritt Lounge. In this group we will deepen our understanding of our personal Atheist, Humanist, and Agnostic values through readings, listening and discussion which will help to enhance the Unitarian Universalist experience for those who attend. Please contact [AHA@firstuomaha.org](mailto:AHA@firstuomaha.org) with questions.

### Upcoming Events

#### Holiday Dinner

Saturday, Dec. 14 with social hour at 5:30pm and dinner at 6:30pm. The dinner will be catered by Attitude on Food. The reservation form is on page 13. RSVPs are required.

#### Mid-Year Congregational Meeting

Sunday, Jan. 19, 2020 at 10:30am—in place of the service. See page 17.

#### Chili Cook-Off—Save the date!

Saturday, Jan. 25, 2020 at 5:30pm. More info will be shared next month.

## Don't Miss Out!

See all the ways you can help and get involved at church on pages 8 and 9.

See upcoming OTOC (Omaha Together One Community) and Sister Church events on page 9.

## Inclement Weather Cancellations

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



## 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 November is our own **Partner Church**. We have a UU Partner Church in the Unitarian village of Firtosmartanos, Transylvania, Romania. This relationship started in 1992.

Since 2000, the Partner Church Team has also been sending \$1,320 per year to subsidize the minister's salary and to help maintain the village parsonage and church. The village church is 110 years old and badly in need of repairs and maintenance. Learn more here: [www.firstuomaha.org/partner-church-](http://www.firstuomaha.org/partner-church-)

## SHARE THE PLATE SELECTIONS FOR 2020

Every fall, the Ministry Team Council selects the Share the Plate Recipients for the coming year. On October 10th, the MTC reviewed the applications and made the selections below.

If you would like to nominate an organization for 2021, please [click here](#) for the form or contact the office.

### 2020 Share the Plate

January: Mind & Soul Radio, 101.3\*  
February: OTOC (Omaha Together One Community)  
March: YES Meals  
April: Black and Pink  
May: PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)  
June: NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)  
July: Urban League of Nebraska: Whitney Young Academy\*  
August: Siena/Francis Homeless Shelter  
September: Planned Parenthood  
October: Food Not Bombs  
November: Partner Church  
December: YES (Youth Emergency Services)

\* designates a new recipient

## 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!

## Ways You Can Get Involved

### **The Annual Team Fair: 11/3**

#### **Q: What's a team fair?**

A: The best way to learn about volunteer opportunities in the church. Get involved, give back and meet new people. Learn new skills and bring your talent to a team! We need you! Plus, each table will have delicious snacks and other enticements so be sure to stop by every team booth!

#### **Just a few of the teams that will be represented:**

Membership Team (assist in engagement & growth),  
Building Team (make sure the church keeps standing),  
Fellowship Team (plan, decorate & generate fun for get-togethers),  
Religious Education (teach kids, learn new things, & create art),  
and much more!  
*Please stop by the Team Fair on Sunday, Nov. 3rd during Coffee Hour in the Common Room.*

### **Women's Alliance Bake & Craft Sale Looking for Some Bakers & Crafters**

Love to bake? Make some yummy treats to be sold at the sale.  
Love to craft? Make a few creations for the craft sale.  
Don't have time to bake or craft? Show your support by purchasing a yummy

treat or a special creation for your home or as a gift!

#### **What do I need to do?**

Bring your items BEFORE service on SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24 to the Common Room. Please price all craft items with "recommended" prices. Label your baked goods with special ingredients (nuts, no nuts, gluten free, keto, non-dairy, etc). Purchase items at the sale immediately after the service. See flyer on page 12.

### **YES Teens on First Unitarian's Holiday "MITTEN TREE" Shopping List**

This year, our church will collect donations that will benefit the teens served by Youth Emergency Services (YES) in the month of December. Starting Sunday, December 8, place your donations of new hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, socks and underwear in the "Gift Boxes" located in the church foyer. Like last year, we will not have the usual mitten tree in the Sanctuary. Instead, we will have beautifully decorated gift boxes to accept your donations 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.

See the next page to learn more about how our church can help YES this holiday season.

## MORE Ways You Can Get Involved

### **YES Meal Prep: Volunteers & Donations**

*Monday, Nov. 25 at 9am in the Church Kitchen.*

Help Kim prepare a meal for the YES Shelter. Our menu this month is pulled pork (thanks to Wendy Buchholz) and veggie salad. Donated desserts are always welcomed. **This month we will collect holiday gifts for teenagers.** Some ideas: ear buds, hair accessories, gift cards to fast food restaurants and to Target. Contact Kim with questions. Youth Emergency Services (YES) hosts an annual holiday party for its youth. Beginning November 1, a small tree will be on display in the Common Room with paper ornaments with suggestions for gifts. No gift will be large. Most are for either gender. You don't even have to wrap it! The tree will be up until November 25th, as the gifts will be delivered then. The members of this church are so generous when it comes to helping out those who cannot help themselves. Let's make these kids' holiday shine bright!

See this website for more information:

[www.yesomaha.org](http://www.yesomaha.org). Want to help Kim make the meal? Need more details about the gift tree? Email Kim at [kjcallaghan@hotmail.com](mailto:kjcallaghan@hotmail.com).

### **Hospitality Subs**

Can you spare some time on a Sunday morning to assist a hospitality team in welcoming visitors, distributing the order of service, collecting the offering or cleaning the kitchen? Yes, we have hospitality teams for that purpose but sometimes a team may be short a member or two leaving them struggling to keep up. We are putting together a list of people a team can call on as a possible substitute when they are short a team member. *The more substitutes, the less often you may be called, and you can specify which job you are most comfortable doing.* If you are already a member of a hospitality team, please also consider joining the list of substitutes. Please consider joining the list of substitutes by emailing Carolyn McNamara at [caylamc@cox.net](mailto:caylamc@cox.net) or text her at 402-709-3192.

## **Outside Opportunities**

### **OTOC (Omaha Together One Community) Events**

#### **Sixth Annual Poverty Forum on Public Transportation**

Saturday, November 2, 8am-12:30pm at First United Methodist Church, 7020 Cass St. (Enter door 4 on East). Public transportation in Omaha, and a vision for its development in Omaha, along with a consumer panel sharing personal experiences with public transportation, and Senator Wayne addressing Nebraska's legislation highlight the Forum. Everyone will have an opportunity to engage in discussion focused on a vision for public transportation in Omaha and identify actions we each can take to move us toward that vision. To register go here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/public-transportation-forum-tickets-65184962979?aff=ebdshpsearchautocomplete>

#### **Issue Cafe: The Puzzle of Emergency Mental Health Services**

##### **Who do you call when you need them?**

Tuesday, November 5 at 6:45pm at Urban Abbey, 1026 Jackson. Join OTOC and IPL for an experienced panel of speakers who will talk about emergency mental health services currently available in the Omaha Metro area and new ones being planned. Services discussed will include Crisis Intervention trained officers, Mobile Crisis Teams, Co-Responders, Safe Harbor, NAMI Omaha Education and Support Services, and new Psychiatric Emergency Services being planned. Come, ask questions, learn new information!

For more information about OTOC, please visit: [www.otoc.org](http://www.otoc.org).

### **Sister Church Events**

We're working to reconnect with our Omaha Sister Church, Clair Memorial United Methodist Church. **These events below will take place at Clair Memorial Church. The address is 5544 Ames Ave., Omaha, NE 68104.**

**First Friday Fish Fry:** Happens the 1st Friday of each month. Times: 11am to 2pm and 4-7pm. Cost: \$12 donation includes fried catfish, homemade lemon cake and your choice of sides. For more information, call Brenda at 402-571-5234.

**Monthly Food Pantry:** Happens the 3rd Saturday of each month from 10am to 2pm. November date: 11/16

Contact the Clair Memorial Church office with any questions about these events: 402-451-8322.

## BEYOND CATEGORICAL THINKING

**November 9 Workshop**  
**November 10 Sunday Service**



**THINK OF A MINISTER. DON'T THINK OF AN ELEPHANT.**

Chances are, you thought of both. And distinct images perhaps came to mind. In terms of a minister, what images came to mind? Was it a person of a particular gender, race, or age?

Beyond Categorical Thinking is a highly recommended part of the search process for our congregation. We don't want to overlook or let biases keep us from knowing that a particular person would be the best match to serve as our next settled minister.

Congregations sometimes assume that their ideal minister looks a certain way, and often ministers who are not white or male or heterosexual or able-bodied or of a particular age or class are discounted and seen as "less than" in some ways.

Credentialed ministers in our faith who are People of Color, LGBTQ+, disabled, young, old, working class, etc. still face discrimination as part of the ministerial search process.

**In our efforts to find the best match, our congregation will host a Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop from 9am to Noon on Saturday, November 9 in the Common Room. Everyone in the congregation is strongly encouraged to attend!**

The workshop is designed to promote inclusive thinking and help prevent unfair discrimination in our search process. This is yet another way for us to live our values and improve the odds that regardless of identity, we will find the minister who is the best match for us and will serve us well.

Rev. Keith Kron, Director of the Transitions Office for the Unitarian Universalist Association, will facilitate the workshop, and also meet with our search committee and lead the Sunday service on November 10.

This workshop is a great opportunity for you to participate more fully in the search process. We will explore our hopes and concerns for a new minister, learn more about the search process, and see how our own history (both personal and congregational) might interfere with our efforts in this search.

**Please RSVP by Monday, November 4 to the church office at 402-345-3039 or by email to the church office at [admin@firstuomaha.org](mailto:admin@firstuomaha.org).**

**Need childcare? No problem, just let us know when you RSVP for the workshop.**

Submitted by the Ministerial Search Committee

# The Transgender Day Of Remembrance And Resilience



occurs every year on November 20<sup>th</sup> and often only includes the first 'R,' for remembrance, of individuals who lost their lives in the previous 12 months. They are gone simply for living honestly as transgender or gender nonconforming people.

The second 'R,' for resilience, is also important. Those taken from us by murder can never be returned. We must mourn, celebrate and remember them. We must also remember there are only moments between violence and death, acknowledge the times some of us might have lost our lives, didn't, and had the strength to keep living after.

If you are transgender, gender non-conforming or an ally and would like to participate, please contact the facilitator of this event: Cei Loofe at [cei.loofe@gmail.com](mailto:cei.loofe@gmail.com) or if you would like to attend, see the information below. This program is open to all ages and free of cost.

## **The Transgender Day Of Remembrance and Resilience (TDORR)**

First Unitarian Church  
3114 Harney Street  
Omaha, NE

November 20, 2019  
7pm  
No cost

# Women's Alliance Bake and Craft Sale



It's almost time for the Women's Alliance Bake and Craft Sale! We're hosting our annual sale the Sunday before Thanksgiving, November 24, during coffee hour.

*Love to bake? Make some yummy treats to be sold at the sale.  
Love to craft? Make a few creations for the craft sale.  
Don't have time to bake or craft? Show your support by  
purchasing a yummy treat or a special creation  
for your home or as a gift!*

This annual event has brought joy to the bakers and donors of Women's Alliance. All proceeds from the sale go towards our Merritt Education Fund. Please bring your items to the Common Room BEFORE service on Sunday, November 24. All craft items must have "recommended prices" on them.

The Merritt Education Fund has gone through some changes over the years. It started out as a scholarship fund to help college-bound students with their expenses. A few years ago the fund's purpose developed to help broaden personal development directly related to church functions and education advancement. You can find the Merritt Fund Application form in the mailroom, on the First Unitarian website, or at the sale!

# Annual Holiday Dinner

**Saturday, December 14 in the Common Room**

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

A fabulous, delectable menu prepared by Attitude of Food  
(vegetarian & vegan selections included)

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

Please make reservations with your check to First Unitarian to arrive in the office by **Friday, December 6.**

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. If confidential financial assistance would make it possible for you to attend, please contact Rev. Michelle LaGrave at [minister@firstuomaha.org](mailto:minister@firstuomaha.org) or 402-345-3039 ext. 102.*

## 2019 Heart and Hand Auction News!!

The Auction on Oct 25<sup>th</sup> was a fun party and successful fundraiser, with income of \$12,000 (when auction bills are paid). The auction tri-chairs, Katrina Schmidt, Kathi Oliver and Sara Switzer (with the behind-the-scenes help of Donna Neff and Walt Jesteadt), send a heartfelt **thank you** to all the generous donors and buyers!



**Thanks to our generous donors, buyers, and our hard-working volunteers!** A special thanks to Kate Wiig, our auction MC and auctioneer, for a fun evening!

A special thanks to all of the volunteers who helped setup, distribute food, helped in the nursery, and helped clean up! We appreciated all of the help. \*\*\*A special SHOUT-OUT to Kim Callaghan, Sarah Copeland, Sheri Conner, Jen McEvoy, Kay Lynn Goldner, Louise Jeffrey, Charlie McMahon, Joseph Schaaf, Christopher Schmidt, Steven Switzer for helping out last-minute. \*\*\*

### Costume and Raffle Winners

Kim Callaghan won the HUMERUS raffle basket and Catherine Plumlee won the BONE-APPETITE basket.

In heated competition, winners in the costume contest were:

Disney: Taylor and Jessica Eman dressed as Bert and Mary Poppins and their little one dressed as a penguin.

Funky Bones: Catherine Plumlee dressed as Skeletor.

Spook's Choice: Sharon Conlon dressed as Donald Trump.

### Guest Seats for Auction Events

Some of you had big hearts and purchased extra "guest" seats for auction events. Thank you! Please invite your guests yourself, or contact the Auction Team to distribute them. Same with questions about whether guest seats are available for particular events.

**If you are an Auction donor or buyer, watch your email closely the next few weeks.** We will use regular mail only if no email. Buyers will receive a summary of their purchases, their bill, and options for payments. Donors will receive a summary of their donation and who purchased it. (The email comes from our auction software, Auctria, so monitor your "spam" folder also.) **Please pay auction bills as soon as possible.** To set up a series of payments, just let us know. We currently only accept cash or check for payment, but hope to get credit card payments (with a small fee) setup soon.

The Auction Team will be following up all year to help assure all the events and items purchased are enjoyed. Questions? Contact [auction@firstuomaha.org](mailto:auction@firstuomaha.org) or call Katrina (402-916-9741) or Kathi (402-214-2718). Again--on behalf of the FUNdraising Team and our church--THANK YOU to all who participated in the 2019 Heart & Hand Auction! See a few photos on next page.

## Finance Matters

By Walt Jesteadt, Church Treasurer

Bill Ross served as church treasurer for 20 years or more and continued to keep the books as our church accountant for another 15 years, during my time as treasurer. He has resigned from that position and we have asked Cheri Cody, the treasurer at Second Unitarian, to serve as our interim accountant. She has recruited Nancy Kenny, another member of Second Unitarian, to help in reviewing our books. Cheri also serves as a consultant on financial issues for churches in the MidAmerica region of the UUA and Nancy is a CPA, so our financial data are in good hands.

Cheri and Nancy are streamlining our procedures in ways that will make it easier to manage our finances in the future. One important change is to adjust our budget to reflect our true operating costs. For many years, we have included all of our recurring expenses, such as salaries, utilities, insurance, etc., in the budget approved at the annual meeting in May but have used money from bequests and reserve funds to cover one-time costs such as the expenses associated with calling a new settled minister. We did not include those expenses in the budget because we knew that we would not be able to secure the additional \$12,000 in pledges required to cover the expenses and achieve a balanced budget. It would have been more transparent to include those additional costs in the budget, however, and show the use of bequest and reserve funds as a source of income required to balance the budget. All of the information regarding our expenses would then be in one place and the size of our operating deficit would be clear. We will be developing a new, more transparent budget for approval by the congregation.

We are also simplifying our balance sheet by eliminating unused accounts and grouping others under more general headings. All of these changes will make it easier to understand our finances as well as to manage them.

## Heart and Hand Auction 2019—photos by Lily McEvoy





**River City Mixed Chorus is Back with a Concert for the Holidays! Dates: Dec. 6, Dec. 7, and Dec. 8**

Our friends at RCMC are back at the Omaha Conservatory of Music this December for not just two, but three chances (due to sold out concerts the last two years!) to catch Omaha's favorite chorus this holiday season! *Brass and Bells*, featuring the Lincoln-based *Plymouth Brass* ensemble, is sure to get you in the holiday spirit as the choir showcases a variety of classical repertoire and reinvented holiday classics, complete with shenanigans only RCMC can deliver. So grab your family and friends and come experience the magic, fun, and joy of the holidays with the River City Mixed Chorus. Festive holiday attire is encouraged! Go here for tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/brass-and-bells-friday-dec-6-tickets-74625999373>.

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

By Jackie Anderegg

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.



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

# NOTICE OF THE MID-YEAR CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**Save the Date: Sunday, January 19, 2020**

Dear Church Member,

The Board of Trustees would like to invite you to our mid-year Congregational Meeting scheduled for Sunday, January 19, 2020 at 10:30am. This meeting will take the place of the Sunday service.

The purpose of the mid-year meeting is to bring forth new business that the Board, the Ministry Team Council (MTC), and other leadership is working on. We seek your input and welcome discussion.

We will also solicit next year's leadership slate (which will be voted on at our annual meeting—scheduled for Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>). We hope the mid-year meeting will become an annual event.

The board will provide light snacks. We encourage your participation.

Thank you,

First Unitarian Church of Omaha Board of Trustees

## Soul Matters Update

*By Michael McAtee*

November's Soul Matters topic is "What Does It Mean to Be A People of Attention?"

"Alice Walker famously wrote, 'I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it.'

Walker's words are a great reminder that attention and gratitude go hand in hand. Indeed, they are a perfect embodiment of the dominant message about attention: that it's here to wake us up to life's many gifts. But it's also important to remember that attention has a few ulterior motives up its sleeve. So, some fair warning is required this month. Because attention won't just make you grateful, it will make you fall in love. And it won't just allow you to notice life's gifts, it also makes it impossible to ignore life's pain."

—Excerpt from November's Soul Matters Small Group Packet

Come explore this month's topic by joining one of our small group sharing circles. Go here for more information: [www.firstuomaha.org/soulmatters](http://www.firstuomaha.org/soulmatters).

## Email Scam Alert!

Many of our church members have receive scam emails that appear to be from Rev. Michelle. If you start a conversation with this person, eventually the person asks you to purchase gift cards and to send the codes on the back of the cards via email.

### THE CHURCH STAFF AND MINISTER WILL NEVER ASK FOR YOU TO GIVE THEM CREDIT CARD OR GIFT CARD INFORMATION.

The UUA urges church staff and members to be cautious about email scams. Please know that the church staff and the minister will never email you to ask for credit card information or for you to purchase gift cards. These scammers create an email address that *looks like* it belongs to the minister or the church, but it doesn't. If you're not sure, don't respond to the email. **When in doubt, call and speak to the person directly!**

Several UU congregations have reported that their members are receiving scam emails that are requesting gift card donations for a charitable cause. At least one person has lost money to these scams. Religious groups and congregations are becoming easy targets for these types of scams. The UUA recommends that congregations inform their members about this scam. The UUA has seen an increase in "phishing" attempts of all kinds. Phishing is a form of "social engineering," whereby a hacker with bad intentions sends an email (or text or phone call) pretending to be someone the recipient trusts and asks the recipient to take an action which can have adverse effects. Sometimes, they request money. Other times, they invite the recipient to click a link or open an attachment that can trigger malicious code.

A good rule of thumb with emails you're not expecting is to: (1) reach out to the sender through another channel (call, text, visit website) and (2) **not** click on a link (or send money, gift cards, etc.) without clarifying from the trusted source directly.

The UUA magazine, *UU World*, published an informative article about email scams recently, go here to read the article: <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/church-gift-card-scam?fbclid=IwAR34FXw59kzwuZMNBxqJpKBzB53mjCjTsc-1-lrnCe99zXLFhDvuEai1uQ>

Below is an image of a scam email that one of our church members received:



#### Ways to tell this a scam email:

1. The person tells you NOT to call. Only email. Scammers claim they "can't talk now."
2. Click on the name in the "from" field. Check the email address that comes up with the real email address you already have. Anyone can list their name as "Rev. Michelle" or "Church Office."
3. The scammer is asking for you to be discrete. Ministers and church staff would call you directly if there was something confidential going on.
4. The email starts with: "Good Morning" or "Hi" — not addressing you by name.
5. Generally, the grammar in these scam emails is off. The syntax will be odd or there will be spelling mistakes and/or odd spacing.

## Re-membering—What being a member means to me

By Sheri Conner

I started attending First Unitarian in late 2011 and found my spiritual home. I also found a home for my skill set in RE. I taught, helped to develop curriculum and assisted the DRE in many different capacities for the next couple of years. During those years that I was so deeply involved with RE, I didn't spend very much time with adults, and found that I was welcomed and thanked for visiting First Unitarian over and over again by well-meaning members at the rare coffee hours that I managed to get to; I was apparently a new face to the adults who didn't frequent the RE wing. It sometimes felt awkward.

So, by early 2014, I decided to take the final leap into making First Unitarian my permanent spiritual home. Once I had the blue member's name tag, people stopped welcoming me and thanking me for visiting First Unitarian. Funny thing...I attended a coffee hour about a year ago without wearing my name tag (I had forgotten to put it on), and a very nice lady (long-time member) approached me and asked how long I had been visiting First U. I replied that I had been coming to church here for more than seven years and have been a member for around four years. She had a most puzzled look on her face. I don't find it so puzzling. First Unitarian has so many great activities and ways to get involved, if two people have different interests, it is quite possible that they don't meet, like two ships passing in the night.

One of the reasons that I began attending First Unitarian Church was Seth, my grandson. My husband and I adopted him when he was three; he has been in our care since he was a baby. I felt that he needed a religious foundation on which to build his life; First U was a good fit for us. When we first started coming, he was young enough to stay in the nursery. He is now in eighth grade and attends YRUU. This church is also his spiritual home. He has cultivated friendships that, I believe, will last well into adulthood and quite possibly a lifetime. He has grown into a loving and compassionate youth; I believe that First U bears a lot of responsibility toward helping to instill these positive attributes into his character.

Becoming a member and remaining a member of this church is an integral part of our lives. I can't even imagine life without First Unitarian.

Now that Seth is older, my involvement with RE has waned. I still treasure the RE program and help when I can, but lately I've had more opportunity to become involved with other groups which has had the effect of deepening my overall spiritual experience and connection to the church. I love this congregation and want to thank everyone for being a part of our lives.

*Note: The Membership Team asked church members to share briefly what church membership means to them. As these stories come in, we will share them in the monthly newsletter. Interested in sharing what membership means to you? Please email Carrie, Membership Coordinator, at [coordinator@firstuomaha.org](mailto:coordinator@firstuomaha.org).*

## Why Do We Have Pink Attendance Sheets at First Unitarian?

You have probably seen the note in the order of worship announcements that says: *Please sign in on the pink sheets in each pew. The information gathered will not only help us count attendance at each service but will let us know that someone has not been seen lately and may need assistance.*

We take attendance each Sunday so we know how many friends, members and visitors are here. Attendance helps us determine how many orders of worship to print. Knowing how many people are present helps us determine if the sanctuary is too full. Plus, if we notice that someone is missing for a few weeks, our Membership Coordinator Carrie can reach out and make sure that person is okay. The office and its volunteers appreciate that folks have been signing in on the pink sheets. Thank you!

# IMPORTANT TEAM LEADER INFORMATION

## Part 1: How Do I Get Something Approved at Church?

Our church has new leaders and members which is great! We want to be sure you have the information you need.

**Did you know that: New church teams, church activities, church events and church budget requests go through the Ministry Team Council (MTC) for approval?**

The MTC meets once a month at church and currently your MTC members are Amy Lucas, Sarah Monaghan, Sharon Piehler (president-elect) and Rev. Michelle. The MTC is the day-to-day operating team of the church.

### Have a new church team or event or budget request?

Go here for the forms: [www.firstuuomaha.org/forms](http://www.firstuuomaha.org/forms) (Yes, you can fill out the form on the website!)

The online finished form will be sent to the church office. If you decide to complete the form offline, you will need to mail or email the form to the church office.

Once your form is received, you will be contacted by the church office to verify it was received.

You may be asked to respond to questions via email or you may be asked to attend the next MTC meeting.

### Direct Links to forms on church website:

Building Reservation Form link: [www.firstuuomaha.org/reservation](http://www.firstuuomaha.org/reservation)

New Team/Event Form link: [www.firstuuomaha.org/newteamform](http://www.firstuuomaha.org/newteamform)

New Budget Request Form link: [www.firstuuomaha.org/budgetform](http://www.firstuuomaha.org/budgetform)

If you have any questions about the forms, the approval process, or the MTC, please email the church office at [admin@firstuuomaha.org](mailto:admin@firstuuomaha.org).

## Part 2: How Do I Handle Fundraising at Church?

We have a form for that! On the Fundraising Proposal form, you will be asked questions about how event fits into the church mission and the Annual Vision of Ministry and what your financial goal is. If there are no concerns from the Fundraising Team, the Fundraising Team will approve the proposal and get in touch with you. The Ministry Team Council (MTC) and Minister will be informed, with a deadline to respond if they have any questions.

If there are concerns, your fundraising proposal will be forwarded to MTC for discussion and a decision. The MTC will inform the Fundraising Team and those proposing the fundraiser of its decision. Please send completed Fundraising Proposal Forms to [DonnaUU@gmail.com](mailto:DonnaUU@gmail.com).

Go here for the Fundraising Proposal Form (which is posted as a Word Document for easy use): [www.firstuuomaha.org/forms](http://www.firstuuomaha.org/forms).

If you need paper copies of any forms, please contact the church office: [admin@firstuuomaha.org](mailto:admin@firstuuomaha.org).



## Library Lady

By Linda Parker

I love the idea of “common reads”—e.g., One Book One Nebraska, sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book. The Nebraska common read for 2019 was *This Blessed Earth*. The Unitarian Universalist Common Read for 2019-2020 is *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, [www.uua.org/books/read](http://www.uua.org/books/read). There is also a companion version for young people. The UUA Common Read will be available in print in the church library in mid-November.

Both non-fiction titles are thought-provoking and offer insights into American life and culture. Fiction books also are sources for reflection and awareness. I enjoy mystery novels, and sometimes I wonder if the detectives are Unitarians at heart. Read the following quote from Louise Penny's *Bury Your Dead* and let me know if you agree:

It had been a long while since Inspector Langlois had been in a library. Not since his school days. A time filled with new experiences and the aromas that would be forever associated with them. Gym socks. Rotting bananas in lockers. Sweat. Old Spice cologne. Herbal Essence shampoo on the hair of girls he kissed, and more...

And libraries. Quiet, calm. A harbor from the turmoil of teenage life...

He remembered how it felt to find himself in the library, away from possible attack but surrounded by things far more dangerous than what roamed the school corridors.

For here thoughts were housed.

Young Langlois had sat down and gathered that power to him. The power that came from having information, knowledge, thoughts, and a calm place to collect them.

When I read this passage, the 4<sup>th</sup> Principle came to mind, “A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” Thoughts are an integral part of one's religious journey. Visit a library and bask in the power of thought surrounding you.

## Local Author Forum at Douglas County Historical Society

The Local Author Forum will be held on Sunday, November 17 from 2pm to 4pm at the Douglas County Historical Society located on the Metro Campus, Fort Omaha, in Building 11B. The address is 5730 N 30th St. #11B, Omaha, NE 68111. Our very own Dave Richardson will be there selling copies of our 2018 church history book, *Pillars & Dreams*. For more information about this event, visit [www.douglascohistory.org/](http://www.douglascohistory.org/)

## Blessing Bag Day 2019

By Catharine Dixon, church admin

With the help of many, we were able to put together 100 Blessing Bags for the church office on 10/11. These bags include persona hygiene items, water bottles, and granola bars and other much-needed things. We give these bags to those who come to the church looking for assistance. Also included in each bag is a printout of our Omaha Area Resource Guide.

Special thanks this year goes to Jaime Alexander, Rae Barry, Nancy Buennemeyer, Eddith Buis, Daniel & Diana Byrd, Kim Callaghan, Gary Emenitove, Bruce & Kate Godfrey, Kay Lynn Goldner, Jessica & Taylor Eman, Bob Hess, Carolyn McNamara, Sharon Piehler, Kim Simon, and Vanessa Timberlake. We also had anonymous donations made to our collection box—thank you!

Thank you for helping First U help others.

# Meet Our Leaders

## Interim Minister

Rev. Michelle LaGrave  
[minister@firstuomaha.org](mailto:minister@firstuomaha.org)

## Lifespan Director of Religious Education

Christina Strong  
[dre@firstuomaha.org](mailto:dre@firstuomaha.org)

## Membership Coordinator

Carrie Helmberger  
[coordinator@firstuomaha.org](mailto:coordinator@firstuomaha.org)

## Church Administrator

Catharine Dixon  
[admin@firstuomaha.org](mailto:admin@firstuomaha.org)

## Sanctuary Singers Director

William Miller  
[choirdirector@firstuomaha.org](mailto:choirdirector@firstuomaha.org)

## Organist

Pat Will

## Sanctuary Singers Accompanist

J. Gawf

## EMR Director

Stan Harper

## Minister Emeriti

Ronald Knapp  
 Frank Rivas

## Affiliated Community Minister

Rev. Dr. Sarah Voss

## Nursery Coordinator

Andrea Laudi  
[childcare@firstuomaha.org](mailto:childcare@firstuomaha.org)

## Custodian

Bobby Medrano

## THE FLAME

Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Word limit: 200.  
 Send submissions to  
[admin@firstuomaha.org](mailto:admin@firstuomaha.org).

Editor/Designer: Cat Dixon

### Proofers:

Brian Callaghan, Gary Emenitove,  
 Scott Kemper, Lois Norris

### Flame Mailing Team:

Debbie Hunsberger, Lois Norris,  
 Linda Hruska, Kim Callaghan

*Cover photo by Errol Waits. Thanks to Gary Emenitove for suggesting this photo.*

## Board Members

Joe Schaaf (President), Sharon Piehler (President-Elect), Catherine Plumlee (Secretary), Sarah Copeland, Harold Cruz-Sanchez, Peg Pidgeon, Bill Tull, Donna Tubach Davis  
 Email: [board@firstuomaha.org](mailto:board@firstuomaha.org)

## Trustees of the Capital Trust

Daniel Byrd (2020), Bob Hess (2021), Christopher Schmidt (2022)

## Ministry Team Council

Amy Lucas, Sarah Monaghan, Sharon Piehler, Rev. Michelle LaGrave  
 Email: [mtc@firstuomaha.org](mailto:mtc@firstuomaha.org)

**Nominating Committee:** Nellie Chenoweth, Kate Godfrey, Mike McAtee, Carolyn McNamara, Kathi Oliver

**Right Relations Committee:** Della Bynum, Carol Cronin, Deb McAtee, Sarah Voss

**Transition Team:** Kathy Alexander, Skip Ciulla, Carol Cronin, Kay Lynn Goldner, John Hruska, Marcia Leise

**Ministerial Search Committee:** Diana Byrd, Kim Dunovan, Jessica Eman, Kate Godfrey, Mark Loscutoff, Lita Magisana, Dave Richardson, Klyde Warren

## Ministry Teams and Team Leaders

AHA—Sheri Conner  
 Archives/Library—Linda Parker  
 Auction Team-- Kathi Oliver, Katrina Schmidt, & Sara Switzer  
 Baby Welcoming Team—Katrina Schmidt, & Sara Switzer  
 Black Lives Matter—Rene Harper  
 Caring—Louise Jeffrey  
 Chalice Guild—Kay Lynn Goldner  
 CUUPS—Steve Switzer  
 Early Morning Risers—Mary Kay Peters & Lloyd Olson  
 Fellowship Team—Nadine Keith & Nellie Chenoweth  
 Finance Team—Walt Jesteadt  
 Garden—Sharon Conlon  
 Governance—Peg Pidgeon, Ben Wallace, Maria Wallace  
 Fundraising Team—Donna Neff  
 Hospitality Teams—Carolyn McNamara  
 House and Grounds Team—open  
 Listening Circles—Katrina Schmidt  
 Membership Team—Mike McAtee  
 Midtown Helping Hands—open  
 Office Team—Carolyn McNamara  
 Omaha Together One Community—Laurie Gift  
 Partner Church Team—Dave Olson  
 Recycling Coordinator—Roman Noriega  
 Right Relations—Nadine Keith  
 Social Justice Coordinator—Sharon Conlon  
 Soul Matters—Michael McAtee  
 Stewardship Team—Mary Kay Peters & Mike McAtee  
 Wayside Pulpit—Kim Dunovan  
 Women's Alliance—Catherine Plumlee  
 Worship Arts Team—Mary Thomas  
 Young Adult Group—open  
 YRUU—Taylor Eman & Ben Stallings

## Social Media & First U

Find our public Facebook page here:

[www.facebook.com/firstuomaha/](https://www.facebook.com/firstuomaha/)

Find us on Twitter here:

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

Be sure to like the church and follow us!

**First Unitarian Church of Omaha**

[www.firstuomaha.org](http://www.firstuomaha.org)

402-345-3039

## Church Events

### CommUnity Night

Friday, Nov. 1 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. See page 6.

### Teams Meeting

Saturday, Nov. 2 at 9am in the Common Room. See page 6.

### MTC Meeting

Thursday, Nov. 2 at 10:30am in the Merritt Lounge.

### Private Wedding

Saturday, Nov. 2 at 3pm.

### Team Fair

Sunday, November 3 during Coffee Hour. See page 8.

### Omaha Polyamory Discussion Group

Sunday, Nov. 3 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. See page 6.

### People's Film Festival

Monday, Nov. 4 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 6.

### Board Meeting

Tuesday, Nov. 5 at 6pm in the Whitney Young Classroom.

### Compassionate Communication Group

Tuesdays, Nov. 5 and 19 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 6.

### Pathways to Membership Class

Wednesdays: Nov. 6, 13, 20 at 6pm-8pm in the Whitney Young Room.

### The 3F Book Bonanza Group

Wednesday, Nov. 6 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 6.

### Cakes for the Queen of Heaven—Five-Session Class (RSVP required)

Dates: Thursdays, Nov. 7 and Nov. 21. See page 6.

### Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop

Saturday, Nov. 9 at 9am in the Common Room. See page 10.

### Church Office Closed—Holiday

Monday, Nov. 11

### Women's Alliance

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

### AHA: Atheists, Humanists, Agnostics Event

Thursday, Nov. 14 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 6.

### The Flame Newsletter Deadline

Nov. 15 at noon. Send articles to the church office:

[admin@firstuomaha.org](mailto:admin@firstuomaha.org)

### Leadership Talk Back

Sunday, Nov. 17 at 11:30am in the Common Room. See page 6.

### People's Film Festival

Monday, Nov. 18 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 6.

### Transgender Day of Remembrance & Resilience

Wednesday, Nov. 20 at 7pm in the Sanctuary. See page 11.

### Women's Religious Studies Covenant Group

Thursday, Nov. 21 at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 6.

### Women's Alliance Bake Sale

Sunday, Nov. 24 during Coffee Hour. See page 12.

### WAYS TO HELP:

#### YES Meal Prep

Monday, Nov. 25 at 9am in the Kitchen. See page 9.

#### Book Club

Monday, Nov. 25 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 7.

### Church Office Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

Wednesday, Nov. 27—Friday, Nov. 29

### Ways to Help & Get Involved

List of opportunities on pages 8 and 9.

### Sister Church & OTOC Events

Upcoming list of events on page 9.

### Recurring Events...

#### Bridge Group

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

#### AHA Listening Circle

Meets the 3rd Sunday of the month. See page 7.

#### YRUU (Youth Group) Meetings

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Common Room. September to May. See page 7.

#### Choir Rehearsals

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Sanctuary. See page 7.

#### Women's Religious Studies Group

Meets most Thursdays at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 7.

#### Dharma Chautauqua

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

#### Soul Matters Small Groups

Various meeting dates. See page 17. See here: [www.firstuomaha.org/soulmatters](http://www.firstuomaha.org/soulmatters)

### Future Events...

#### Holiday Dinner—RSVP Required

Saturday, Dec. 14 with social hour at 5:30pm and dinner at 6:30pm. The reservation form is on page 13.

#### Mid-Year Congregational Meeting

Sunday, Jan. 19, 2020 at 10:30am—in place of the service. See page 17.

#### Chili Cook-Off—Save the date!

Saturday, Jan. 25, 2020 at 5:30pm. More info will be shared next month.

# **Women's Alliance Bake & Craft Sale**

**Sunday, November 24**

**during coffee hour**

***Get all the sweet treats & goodies!***



*See page 12 for details.*

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

[www.firstuomaha.org](http://www.firstuomaha.org)