

# THE

# FLAME

January 2014



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

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# Meet Our Leaders

## Staff

### Minister

Frank Rivas

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

### Director of Religious Education

Jan Wilson

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

### Office Administrator

Catharine Dixon

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

### Organist

Pat Will

### Choir Director

Bob McMeen

### Nursery Aide

Jackie Dross

### Custodian

Bobby Medrano

### Early Service Pianist

Stan Harper

### Minister Emeritus

Ronald Knapp

## THE FLAME

Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Send your submissions to

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

Design: Shawna Foster

Editor: Cat Dixon

Proofers: Anita Horn, Cyndi Nather, Lana Hammel, Scott Kemper

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

Special thanks goes to the Flame mailing team. They come in and fold and mail The Flame each month! Thank you, Anne Massoud, Evelyn Whitehill, Shelton Hendricks, Howard Bolton, and Sara Perkins.

## Board Members

Tony Host (President), Dean Christensen, Lana Hammel, Lynette Ryder, Louise Jeffrey (President-Elect), Stephen Meister, Ron Withem, John Wagner

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

## Trustees of the Capital Trust

Tim Duggan (2016); Sandy Host (2015); Steven Hutchinson (2014)

## Pastoral Advisory Team

Jaime Alexander; Joe Schaaf; Susan Thomas; Alan Volvoka

## Ministry Team Council

Rev. Frank Rivas, Carolyn McNamara, Louise Jeffrey, Amy Barlow

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

## Ministry Teams and their Leaders

Adult Religious Education - Crystal DiGiorgi

Archives - Dave Richardson

Caring - Douglas Lee-Regier

Chalice Guild - Kay Lynn Goldner

Community Meals - Dana Meister/Diane Withem

Fellowship - Judith Wright/Nadine Keith

Finance - Walt Jesteadt

Fundraising - Donna Neff/Kathi Oliver

Governance - Alex Nather

House and Grounds - Dave Rosser

Membership - Jackie Anderegg

Office - Carolyn McNamara

Omaha Together One Community - Kim Dunovan/Laurie Gift

Partner Church - Janet West

Religious Education - Sheri Conner/Donna Neff

Religious Services - Megan Gustafson

Women's Alliance - Mary Bort

Young Adult Group - Maria Wallace

Youth Group - Ben Wallace/Shawne Coonfare



**Join us at 9:30am and 11:15am on Sundays!**

### Share the Plate

#### January 5

Our Congregational Ancestors—  
A Portrait of Rowena Morse Mann

Inspired by what we learned while researching the antique quilt recently featured at church, the Religious Services Team will present a snapshot of the life of one of the very prominent members in the church's past. Being married to Newton Mann is only the beginning of Rowena's story.

#### January 12

Stone Soup

Yvonne Price, long-time member, creates a new recipe for stone soup. Some ingredients will be familiar, and others may challenge your appetites.

This Sunday the choir will perform at the 11:15am service.

#### January 19

Rev. Frank Rivas

Justice and Religion

On Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, we will reflect on the role of the church during civil rights years as well as our mission today. This Sunday the choir will perform at the 11:15am service.

#### January 26

Rev. Frank Rivas

Wild Redux

When I was here several years ago, I told the story of my encounter with feral horses. My understanding of that story has matured somewhat. I share it again, but differently.

#### Wednesday, January 1

Universal Worship Service

10am

This worship service is open to the public and will be conducted by Sufi leaders Jan and Richard Potter. The Universal Worship represents an ideal to bring all world's religions together in order to promote tolerance, understanding and spiritual awakening for humanity. We light candles and do readings from various faith traditions. A potluck will follow in the Common Room.

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

This month's recipient is **Bountiful Harvest**, a new empowerment initiative for low income residents of the Park Avenue area. Under the auspices of First Lutheran Church and in cooperation with the Omaha Food Bank, Bountiful Harvest is a food cooperative aimed at decreasing food insecurity for families living in proximity to our church. This month's Share the Plate contribution will help provide seed money for this initiative, which will provide its first distribution this month.

See page 17 for more details about the co-op.

# Rev. Elations

## Monthly Column from our Minister, Rev. Frank Rivas

A new year. It's an arbitrary date, of course, but nonetheless January marks a new year, a chance to reflect on where we have been, on who we are, and on where we are going—both as individuals and as a church community.

The Pastoral Advisory Team begins the year by replicating the all-church assessment that we completed when the Rev. Kate Rohde was your minister. It's a way to identify where we are now and to measure ourselves against where we were three years ago.

I find myself thinking about where the church is heading. I had hoped to bring up this question in the sermon on calling, but time was short. (This is nothing new for me. I remember the first time I preached in divinity school. The consensus was that I tried to cram too much into one sermon.)

Just as we have our individual callings, so our church has a shared calling. If we are to live in good faith, we need to reexamine how we balance creating a church that is a safe place for us with a church that welcomes diversity, how we balance a church that encourages our own spiritual development with a church that addresses the needs of the broader community.

Perhaps the weekend we reflect on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, we can also reflect on these questions. Perhaps the questions will emerge at our potluck with the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer later in January and in the series that they will host during Black History Month.

Comfort, a sense of belonging, a sense of home—these are valuable aspects of the church experience. So are challenge, tension, and a recognition of our calling in the world.

May this be a blessed year for each of us,  
Frank

### UU & YOU Offered on Sunday, January 19

Unitarian Universalism and You classes provide an introduction to Unitarian Universalism and our church, along with an opportunity to share our religious journeys.

Visitors, newcomers, and the just curious are cordially invited. The class will convene in the Whitney Young Room 15 minutes after the ending of the 11:15 service. That usually works out to be about a 12:30 starting time. A light lunch will be served to bolster the always interesting conversation. The class lasts about an hour and 30 minutes so ending time will be about 2pm, although those interested in a brief tour of the church may be a little later. If you need child care please let us know by the Friday before.

RSVP or questions can be addressed to

[uuclass@firstuuomaha.org](mailto:uuclass@firstuuomaha.org)

or call Jaime Alexander at

402-657-9386.

Photo: 2013 Chili Cook-Off Winners



## Annual Cowperson Chili Cook-Off February 1 at 6pm

It's time to find grandma's chili recipe and make sure you've got all the fixins' you need. You can't wait till the last minute because all the really good critters hibernate in the winter. As usual, you can feed yourself, your significant other, and all of your young ones at this chuck wagon for only **12 bucks tops**.

The competition for **best chili** is fiercer than a deacon fighting sin. If you bring a pot of chili to share, you save the \$6 adult entrée fee.

Kids under 10 eat free. Cornbread and soda pop are free. Adult beverages available.

There is also a cowperson **dress-up contest**, so wax up your chaps and shine up your belt buckle. There are two categories for the contest. (1) cowperson, female and (2) cowperson, other.

This is an all-church, **family-friendly**, event. If you have little wranglers age 5 and under, you can turn them over to the sheriff during this shindig but we need advance notice so we can be sure to hire enough deputies. For youngsters 6 and over, bring your own hobble.

### CATTLE CALL (Casting Call)

Calling all performers of bluegrass and country (amateurs or otherwise):

Come prepared to perform and we will reward you with applause!

Sign up to perform during coffee hour or online here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1384285608460689/?source=1>

**Sign-ups for the Chili Cook off are coming. Watch the weekly enews for more info!**

# Potpourri Midyear *by Tony Host,* *Board President*

Early in the year, the Board envisioned six visions for moving forward during the next five years. In five years we envision:

- A membership of 400;
- A renovated RE wing;
- An RE program that covers the life span of members, works with 100 youth, has a strong reputation in the community such that it becomes a gateway to the involvement of others, and prepares our youth to be knowledgeable outside the church and long to return to a UU environment;
- That we are an active voice in our community for social justice with a strong collaborative approach;
- Celebrating our 150th anniversary; and
- Being a teaching church for intern ministers.

These were the visions the Board shared with the church leadership; challenging teams to look within their areas on how their activities can support and bring about these visions. We have taken major steps towards fully implementing governance by restructuring the Ministry Team. Do you know that there are about 23 teams that do the day-to-day work of the church? And the teams have responded already with changes you have already seen. Membership team members talked about “Our Four P’s” as responsibilities of membership.

- Presence: Attend church services and functions, as you are able.
- Participation: Get involved in the life of our community in ways that enhance your life and spirit with music, social events, social justice action, classes or whatever you desire. The possibilities are unlimited! Your participation also brings benefit to other members of our community.
- Pledging: Support the church and its mission through an annual financial pledge.
- Passing It On: Share your pride and enjoyment in our community by talking about our church and what it means to you. Bring friends and relatives to our services, classes and social events.

We have a very strong YoUUng Adult presence at church with members participating in and taking on major events for the church this last year. Not to be outdone, the YRUU program has really solidified this year, and it is a joy to see our youth working with 2nd Church on Wednesday evenings plus the presence of our youth on Sundays. Our Director of Religious Education, Jan Wilson, and the Religious Education team have put together a program that is starting to stretch our existing available

spaces in the RE wing. And the Board is working on long-term plans for this area. We have made major improvements in the RE wing and office space through the efforts of many “Spruce Up Squad” volunteers coordinated by Barb Herring, funded by a generous bequest from the Wilson family.

We have had focus discussion groups on social issues such as how the war on drugs has affected society. We brought Rev. Katalin Cserey and her husband out to visit from our partner church in Firtosmartonos, Transylvania. We have had showings of the Judy Lecture, which was given at our District’s annual meeting, with discussions on how we can serve our membership going into the future. We continue having an active voice in the community through volunteering on community meals, Holland Lectures, working on a food co-op initiative, marching in social issue support parades, and participating in “Omaha Together One Community” (OTOC). Our Women’s Alliance group and our Archives Team supported the church through their efforts in conserving and donating the 1898 quilt to the International Quilt Study Center and Museum to honor our roots.

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We have fun at CommUUnity Nights, summer church picnic, Chili Cook-Off, and Heart and Hand Auction. We have inspiring worship services and sermons. We have music that **has** to be heard; creating internal indecisions of which service to go to (I go to both a lot of the times; but then someone has to volunteer to clean-up after 2nd coffee hour!) We have two covenant groups going with a third in the wings. We have a rich, full summer program. We have heard moving personal stories from our members in Odyssey sharings.

And that is what it is all about - you, the present, the past, and future members. So take a deep breath and reflect upon the past year. And what needs to be done in 2014 and beyond. We are making progress. We are headed in the right direction. And we are doing it together. UU make a difference!

In faith,  
Tony

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## **Give My Regards to Broadway**

**Saturday, January 11, 2014**

**7-8pm**

This Heart & Hand Auction event  
promises to be a "don't miss" affair!

Come enjoy this special evening of show tunes  
performed by Dave Rosser and Katrina Schmidt  
with pianist Victory Sedlacek.

Some lucky folks already purchased concert seats at the Heart & Hand Auction  
(just check in at door.)

If you missed out, tickets (\$20) are available through the church office or at the door.

If you want to attend but can't afford it, check with our auction Guest Guru, Shawna Foster, for donated or lower cost seats ([guestguru@firstuomaha.org](mailto:guestguru@firstuomaha.org))

Coffee and desserts will follow in the Common Room.

# Religious Education

## Winter Reflections

Winter is a season for pulling close to the people and traditions that inspire and refuel us. I remember the Christmases as a child where the excitement was almost painful. My sister and I would stay awake all night, gazing out of our bedroom window into the street lamps, the sleeping neighborhood, and of course, the moonlit sky. Even long after we knew better, we watched for reindeer and a trail of glittering sleigh runners. We were admonished to stay in bed until 6am, but there were many tippy toes down the stairs, at 3am, 4am, 5:00am. We were never disappointed. My dad would say in future years, “Christmas *happens*.” What he meant was that no matter how hurried, harried, commercial, stress-infused, the preparation, the magic moment of wonder and unspeakable peace, *happen*.



Kids in the Club House they made



Listening to the organ demo given on Sunday, December 8 by Pat Will and Nathan Kramer.

It continues to happen for me, through years of adult-size issues and human awareness of the pain that is all too present in the world. I hope it happens for you, too.

Sincerely,  
Jan Wilson,  
Director of Religious Education

## Changes Coming to Sunday RE

We will still have Sunday School at 10:30am. Parents, you can come to the 9:30am service and stay for coffee hour while kids are in Sunday School or come to the late service and arrive early for the first coffee hour so kids can go to Sunday School.

Starting Sunday, January 12 the kids in Sunday School will join the 11:15am service by walking in a group to the sanctuary before the beginning of the service. They will sit with their parents in the sanctuary or with the RE Group—the choice is up to the kids. They will be able to hear the opening, the chalice lighting, and just before the offering Jan Wilson will share a “Story for All Ages.” After the story, the children will exit the sanctuary while being sung out. Our long-time visitors and members will remember this format from a couple of years ago. Then the children will go to their RE classrooms and have community time—art, choir, social justice or games.

At the 9:30am service kids can choose to sit with their parents for the entire service or go to Community Hour with our RE teachers.

Little ones (5 years and younger) will still go directly to the nursery (if parents so choose).

# Adult Religious Education

## Showing of “The Nature of Existence”

What if you asked spiritual leaders, gurus, scientists, artists, and every day people all over the world why we exist? Roger Nygard's award-winning movie does just that. We will have three dates for the showing of "The Nature of Existence". This feature is a precursor to our Spiritual Journaling Group to begin in February. The movie runs 93 minutes with discussion afterwards.

Please contact Crystal at [adultre@firstuuomaha.org](mailto:adultre@firstuuomaha.org) with any questions and to RSVP.

Dates:

Sunday, January 12 at 7pm (brown bag dinner at 6pm for fellowship)

Thursday, January 16 at 7pm (brown bag dinner at 6pm for fellowship)

Tuesday, January 28 at 9am (brown bag breakfast at 8am for fellowship)



Roger Nygard explains his movie as follows: “ I wrote the toughest 85 questions I could think of, about our purpose and the nature of existence, and then asked hundreds of people all over the globe, such as: Indian holy man Sri Sri Ravi Shankar (*The Art of Living*), evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*), 24th generation Chinese Taoist Master Zhang Chengda, Stanford physicist Leonard Susskind (co-discoverer of string theory), wrestler Rob Adonis (founder of Ultimate Christian Wrestling), confrontational evangelist Brother Jed Smock, novelist Orson Scott Card (*Ender’s Game*), director Irvin Kershner (*Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*), Stonehenge Druids Rollo Maughfling & King Arthur Pendragon and many more... How would YOU answer?”



## Preserve Our Building *by Jaime Alexander*

The 2014 Preserve Our Building annual fund drive is now underway during January. For our newcomers and others who may not be familiar with the POB campaign, a short review of POB history may be appropriate. Our sanctuary was refurbished in October 2004, made possible by gift of the “Erickson Bond.” The sanctuary was refurbished to perhaps better than its original resplendent beauty. Thinking that our ability to fulfill our future building preservation needs should not be completely dependent on hoping for a major gift, I wondered if we could build a fund to lead the way towards funding a needed refurbishment in the future. Thoughts of “Wells we did not dig” and leaving something for those yet to come led to the creation the Preserve Our Building fund drive in 2005.

The POB fund has grown with contributions and interest to over \$38,000. Your generosity is wonderful! The concept of many of us giving what we can from year to year is proving to be successful. Approval from the congregation is necessary to spend from this account. Please join in this year’s effort.

Your check should be made payable to First Unitarian Church of Omaha with “POB” on the memo line. A solicitation letter recently sent to home addresses included a return addressed envelope for your convenience. The envelopes and blue cards in the pews at church may also be used for your POB donation during Sunday offering, just annotate the memo line, POB. Thank you for supporting Preserve Our Building.

### **Women’s Alliance**

For their December Community Service Project, the Women’s Alliance collected 96 new books to donate to Liberty Elementary School. Great job!

Note: Women’s Alliance does not meet in January. Mark your calendar for our next meeting on February 10 at 6:30pm. Details will come out soon!

## Church Events in January

### **The Future of Everything: Technology in Ministry**

*Sunday, January 5 at 12:45pm*

Learn about our church website project and find out about Church of the Larger Fellowship's activities. See page 16 for details.

### **Spirit Circle**

*Sunday, January 5 at 6pm in the  
Common Room*

We will be giving thanks for our hardships because they cause us to grow.

### **Give My Regards to Broadway**

*Saturday, January 11 at 7pm in the  
sanctuary; reception in  
Common Room to follow*

This fundraiser concert promises excellent music and a fun time. See page 7 for details.

### **The Nature of Existence Showings**

*Sunday, January 12 at 7pm*

*Thursday, January 16 at 7pm*

*Tuesday, January 28 at 9am*

(Note: all have option for brown bag meal one hour before viewing.) See page 9 for details.

### **Young Adult Game Night**

*Friday, January 17 at 5pm in the  
Common Room*

Join the young adults for our monthly game night. If you identify yourself as a young adult, then you can attend. Questions? Contact [youngadults@firstuomaha.org](mailto:youngadults@firstuomaha.org).

### **UU & You Class**

*Sunday, January 19 at 12:30pm in  
the Whitney Young Classroom*

Visitors and the just curious are invited to attend. See page 4 for more information.

### **RE Council Meeting**

*Sunday, January 26 at 12:30pm in  
Jan's office*

All church members are invited to the meeting to discuss religious education. For more information contact [dre@firstuomaha.org](mailto:dre@firstuomaha.org).

### **Book Club**

*Monday, January 27 at 7pm in the  
Merritt Lounge*

We will discuss Dear Life, a collection of stories by Alice Murno.

### **Sister Church Potluck**

*Monday, January 27 at 6pm at The  
Church of the Resurrection (3004  
Belvedere Blvd.)*

Our Sister Church has invited us to their church for dinner. Come join us! See page 14 for details.

### **Women's Religious Studies Group**

*Meets every Thursday at 1pm in the  
Merritt Lounge*

We are discussing Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth by Reza Aslan. Come join us!

### **YRUU**

*Meets every Wednesday in the  
Common Room at 7pm. Note: does  
not meet on January 1st due to the  
holiday.*

UU teens are welcome to join us. Contact [omahayruu@gmail.com](mailto:omahayruu@gmail.com) for more information.

### **Choir Rehearsal**

*Meets every Wednesday in the  
sanctuary at 7pm. Note: does not  
meet on January 1st due to the  
holiday.*

Interested in signing in our choir? Contact Bob McMeen, our choir director, and start the new year right by singing with us! Bob's email is: [bobmcmeen@gmail.com](mailto:bobmcmeen@gmail.com).



Our Holiday Dinner on December 14

## Looking ahead...

### **Chili Cook-off**

*Saturday, February 1 at 6pm in the  
Common Room*

See page 5 for more information. Join us for this annual tradition!

### **Tolerant Atheist Discussion Group**

*Thursday, February 6 in the  
Common Room.*

Come to the "Bring Your Own Brown Bag Dinner" at 6pm; discussion begins at 7pm. More details to come!

### **CommUnity Night**

*Friday, February 7 at 5:30pm in the  
Common Room*

This family-friendly event is a potluck with the main dish provided by RE. Enjoy a relaxed atmosphere while making new church friends and reconnecting after the busy holiday season.

### **Women's Alliance**

*Monday, February 10 at 6:30pm in  
the Common Room*

We don't meet in January. Be sure to come to our event in February! Details will be announced soon.

# Rev. Charles W. Phillips (1913-2002)

Personal reflections on the minister of First Unitarian Church of Omaha from 1956-1960.

By *Dave Richardson*

Most of these monthly columns have been third-person pieces about various persons, events and highlights of our church's history. I am deviating a bit from that practice this month. My reasoning is I wanted to reflect upon a very interesting man who served our church whom I knew as a very young man.

I first met Rev. Charles Phillips when he and his family moved to Omaha in 1956 from Des Moines where he had been the minister. His son Todd was in my grade (7<sup>th</sup> at the time) at Dundee School which was then a K-8 school. Todd was particularly memorable, largely because he asked probing questions of teachers and classmates. This was an era when that was not encouraged. Speaking in class was confined to answering the teacher's questions which were usually of the "guess what teacher's thinking" type. Certainly questioning what the teacher said was rare if not downright rebellious. Right away I knew this kid was different, which was why I liked "hanging out" with him. When I learned that his father was a minister I wondered what kind of a church would encourage young people to be so inquisitive? After a couple of visits to his home and to an occasional Sunday Service I soon learned the answer to that question.

The Phillips family lived in the church-owned parsonage located at 51<sup>st</sup> and Chicago directly across the

street from Dundee School. It was at this home that I first met Rev. Charles Phillips. To my 13-year-old eyes he was an impressive figure. At first glance he seemed somewhat aloof and professorial, almost continental, with his pipe and well-trimmed moustache. Certainly he was not like most of the Omahans I was accustomed to seeing in the mid '50s. I noted that Reverend Phillips challenged his children intellectually and encouraged free thought on the part of Todd and his two younger sisters. I also learned that he had an interesting war history.

Reverend Phillips was a chaplain during WWII and had "hit the beaches" with the troops at Sicily, Salerno, Southern France and Normandy. Like most who served in this great conflict he seldom discussed his experiences directly, but the effect of those experiences was evident in his understanding of the necessity of world order and why democratic values must ultimately prevail. I read a few years ago that Unitarian ministers served as chaplains during WWII in greater proportion than virtually any other denomination.

During his tenure here at First Unitarian he was able to do a brief three-week sabbatical to study and observe in the Middle East on a fellowship provided by the American Christian-Palestinian Committee. Also while serving in Omaha he completed a book titled

*No Graven Image* published in 1960. The genesis of the book was a series of sermons addressing why mankind is a "religious animal." In an *Omaha World Herald* review of the book, long time columnist, Robert McMorris, quoted Reverend Phillips as saying "these questions of ultimate concern haunt us all some of the time, and some of us most of the time." Later in that same year Reverend Phillips was called to the pulpit in Wilmington, Delaware.

I only heard him deliver a few sermons in my occasional visits to this church with my childhood companion, but I can still remember Reverend Phillips' deep voice and powerful cadences as he spoke from the pulpit. Even though his tenure here was brief he left a strong impression on me which ultimately contributed to that curious 13-year-old becoming a Unitarian and I am sure he left similar impressions on many in the congregation.



## Holidays Mean Hospitality

Many of us have just experienced both the joy of gathering and the effort that it takes from everyone to make a great gathering. We know that all the necessary preparation can be less stressful if we all take a share of the load and that even doing the dishes can be enjoyable if we all pitch in.



For our church, Sundays are mini-holidays. We gather together to celebrate, we welcome our guests, we provide some refreshment, and we enjoy each other's company. However, we haven't really figured out the best way to organize our Sundays so that it is easy for everyone to pitch in.

## A New Approach to Hospitality

There is a new idea that is being widely adopted by UU churches. It is called Hospitality Teams and many think it may be a better approach to engaging the entire congregation in Sunday hospitality.

Hospitality Teams came to our attention at the May Prairie Star District Conference and we discussed it further in Ministry Team meetings. In November, Ministry Team meeting attendees authorized a trial run to see if Hospitality Teams would work well for us. You will see this trial run in action over the next few months.

The goals of Hospitality Teams are to provide opportunities for each congregation member to:

- Help serve the congregation and support the church services.
- Belong to a team that works together on a regular basis and take a turn in its leadership.
- Learn the work that is required to bring our services together, share the knowledge with other team members, and help improve the process.
- Become an integral part of welcoming all newcomers to our church.

Our current practice is to treat each aspect of supporting our church service as individual tasks. The tasks that will be first addressed by Hospitality Teams are:

1. Greeters, who distribute the orders of service and receive the offering.
2. Ambassadors, who welcome new visitors and help them get settled.
3. Coffee hour hosts, who set up, serve, and clean up after our social time.
4. Nursery aides, who provide an extra set of hands to help our staff nursery manager.

The benefits of Hospitality Teams compared to our current practice are:

1. Teams will be regularly scheduled in advance so team members can plan ahead.
2. Teams will have more members than duties so the load will be lighter and substitution will be done within the team.
3. Over time, all team members will be trained on all tasks so training and back up will be done within the team and occur continuously.
4. We will have many more individuals who can contribute ideas and expertise to improve our processes.

The trial run will be conducted over three months and you will be able to observe how it works. At the end of the trial, we will then make an educated decision about whether to proceed. For more information about Hospitality Teams, just Google "uu hospitality teams."

Your Ministry Team Council: Amy Barlow, Carolyn McNamara, Rev. Frank Rivas, and Louise Jeffrey

## Our Sister Church Here in Omaha, Nebraska!

### Potluck with Church of the Resurrection

First Unitarian Church and our sister church, Church of the Resurrection, are hosting a potluck to provide an opportunity for our members to get to know each other along with an opportunity to discuss social issues that we care about. First Unitarian Church and Church of the Resurrection are both members of Omaha Together, One Community (OTOC), which is a grassroots organization that is made up of congregations, community organizations and other groups that share a commitment to renew the fabric of community life in Omaha.

Omaha Together, One Community (OTOC) has asked each of its member organizations to visit with their members to identify what community issues they care about. This information will be brought back to OTOC to help them identify a new social issue in 2014, that they can support and help make a difference with.

As a means to identify our member's social concerns and to get to know each other, our church and Church of the Resurrection, will be hosting a potluck to provide an opportunity to discuss what we care most about in our community.

We hope that you will join us in this unique opportunity to discuss what you care about along with getting to know the members of our sister church.

Potluck (Please bring a main dish/ side dish/dessert to share with all)

Date: Monday, January 27

Time: 6pm

Location:

Church of the Resurrection  
3004 Belvedere Blvd.

Family-friendly event. Childcare will be provided.

For directions, see Church of the Resurrection's webpage:

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/parish/church-resurrection-omaha-ne>



## Forums at Our Sister Church in February

### African American History Month Adult Forums “Jails, Mountain Tops and Buses”

First Unitarian Church is very excited to announce three adult forums celebrating African American History Month with our sister church, Church of the Resurrection. The Church of the Resurrection was founded as the merger of a white congregation, St. John's, and a black congregation, St. Philip's. Church of the Resurrection has found themselves blessed with a wonderfully diverse group. To celebrate their racial diversity, they will be holding three adult forums during Black History Month. The forums are a reflection on the civil rights movement. They are very excited to invite our church members and we hope that you participate in this unique opportunity.

#### Forum Schedule

Adult Forum #1  
Letter from Birmingham Jail  
Wednesday, February 5

Adult Forum #2  
I've Been to the Mountaintop  
Wednesday, February 12

Adult Forum #3  
Get on the Bus  
Wednesday, February 19

Time of the forums to be announced at a later date.

Location:  
Church of the Resurrection  
3004 Belvedere Blvd.

For directions, see website:

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/parish/church-resurrection-omaha-ne>



## Website Project Update *by the Website Team*

The website project was authorized by the Ministry Team Council and we started our work in November. Our goal is to learn how well our current website is supporting the work of our Ministry Teams and to gather ideas about how it might be improved. Most of our work has been behind the scenes so far, but we will be much more visible in January. Our goal is to visit with each Ministry Team, our church staff, and with you. You can learn more about our assignment and project plan by visiting our web page. We will also be available in the common room after the services each Sunday in January.

On January 5 at 12:45pm we will present a brief overview of the website project. Following that, Shawna Foster, an intern minister with the Church of the Larger Fellowship, will share some of that organization's insights. The CLF is a UU congregation that does its entire ministry online. Many of you have already viewed the video of Rev. Christine Robinson discussing the challenges facing our faith. The CLF is already living with many of the issues raised by Rev. Robinson. Shawna's presentation will help us stretch our vision to include the technology that will need to be in place to meet these challenges.

We hope to complete all of our formal interviews with individual Ministry Teams by the end of January. We'll then spend most of February understanding and organizing the information that we received. In addition to learning what our Ministry Teams see as possible improvements to our existing website, we are also asking team

members to review how other churches are using their websites. We would appreciate individual volunteers to step forward to help with this effort.

## The Future of Everything: Technology in Ministry

**Sunday, January 5 after the second service**

Jet Packs? Facebook? Twitter? Livestream? Apps? Texting? Google Glass? Tablets? The technological march continues, and we here at First U are going to take advantage of it to serve our mission. Join the webteam as they present the future of our faith: What the UUA is doing with the Church of the Larger Fellowship and what we are doing here at First U with our website. Check out what's on the horizon and all the possibilities and give your input. Light snacks and child-care provided. Please RSVP for childcare to [admin@firstuomaha.org](mailto:admin@firstuomaha.org)

## It Is Time for Our 2014 Church Assessment

Both our Board of Trustees and Reverend Frank Rivas agree that regular assessments of the internal status of our church are healthy and necessary to advance the spiritual health of our congregation. It has been a little over two years since we last did a congregational assessment in the fall of 2011, so it is time for us to go through this process again. In order for data to be meaningfully compared to the previously collected data (in 2011) the questions asked in this survey will be essentially the same as they were in the 2011 survey. Once again, it will be available online for most of us, but it will also be available in paper form for those who request this format. Rev. Frank has asked his Pastoral Advisory Team (PAT) to implement the assessment and for the PAT to be available for the congregation to answer any questions you might have about this assessment (you can also discuss this assessment with Rev. Frank as well). As before, the assessment process will protect your privacy by keeping your responses confidential. The PAT thanks you in advance for your participation when the survey commences.

Your Pastoral Advisory Team.

Susan Thomas, Jaime Alexander, Alan Vovolka, Joseph Schaaf

## Assessment of Development Ministry — Board

Rev. Frank Rivas started August 1, 2012 as our Developmental Minister. The Board evaluates the progress of this ministry and revises Developmental Goals by January 31st of each year. If you would like input into this process on how you feel things are going, you have two opportunities in January. The Pastoral Advisory Team (Jaime Alexander, Susan Thomas, Joe Schaaf and Alan Vovolka) will be conducting a survey concerning church life. That is one method and they will address and pass on comments to the Board. If you have specific comments concerning the Developmental Ministry and Rev. Frank please contact them with any comments or contact one of the Board members. As always, you are welcome to attend the January Board meeting on January 14th, 2014.

## Bountiful Harvest — Food Co-op

Members of Neighbors United, inCommon, and concerned neighbors are forming a food co-op that will serve low-income individuals and families. The co-op is being modeled after a highly successful program in Atlanta, Georgia and will be the first co-op in Omaha for low income families. The co-op will be open the second and fourth Monday's of the month and will be stocked with Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, and Heartland Food Pantry donations. The purpose is to help low income single and family units with occasional shopping needs but not to fulfill the monthly food requirements. The co-op will begin with family 25-30 units. There is a \$5 one-time membership fee and then \$4 participation fee each time the co-op is open. That fee is not for food but to provide for co-op expenses. Members will be trained to organize and run the co-op then the founding leaders will step out with the exception of transporting donations to the site. Active membership involvement will include the unloading, sorting, managing the co-op and cleaning up after as well as participating in a meeting (held each time). Members need to attend each session or let someone know they will not be able to attend. Members are expected to have the means to transport their food and non-food items home. The co-op will be housed in the dining room at First Lutheran Church 542 S. 31st Street (corner of Jackson and 30<sup>th</sup>). The first food distribution meeting will be Monday, January 13, 2014. For more information, call Tom at 402-571-4684.

Bountiful Harvest is our Share the Plate recipient this month. See page 3 for details.

# New Members: Kim and Brian Callaghan

*by Carolyn McNamara*

Marching in last summer's Gay Pride Parade was serendipitous for Brian and Kim Callaghan. While walking with the Union Pacific entry, they talked with the First Unitarian participants ahead of them. Because they were interested in finding a church home, Brian and Kim did a little research and discovered not only an upcoming UU&You class, but a youth group meeting for daughter Johanna. By the time they attended their first service in August, all three felt like they had found their home. They became members on November 17.

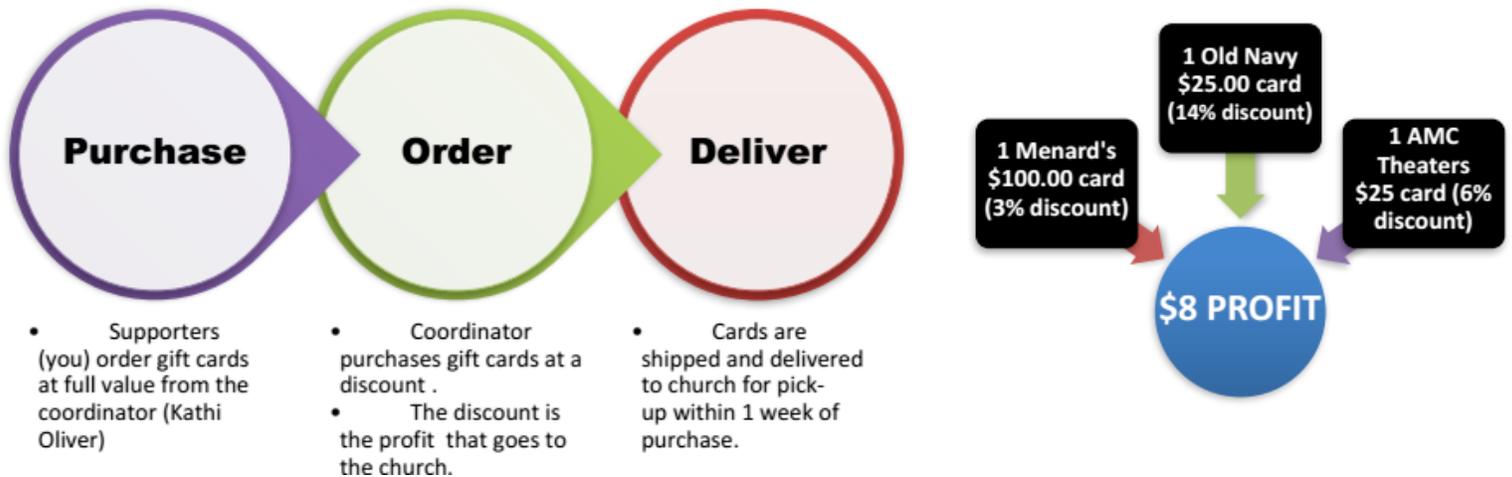
Both became actively involved in church life from the very beginning. The day after they first attended a service, Kim could be found painting the RE wing! She is helping to catalog the religious education library, is a member of the Caring Team, and enjoys attending Women's Alliance meetings. Brian is an active member of the House and Grounds Team. They can often be found working together in the kitchen during coffee hour or participating in the Community Meals program because they believe "many hands make for light work."

Kim, a native Nebraskan, is a retired certified medical assistant and stay-at-home mom. Brian, a database administrator with Union Pacific Railroad, was born in Guam. In addition to Johanna, Kim had three children from a previous marriage — two daughters and a son who passed away at age 6. They also have five grandchildren. Brian is heavily involved with the technical side of local theater and is on the Board of Directors of SNAP! Productions. Kim assists at the theater and is a school volunteer and PTA member. In her free time, Kim enjoys sewing, card making, reading and baking while Brian likes reading, recreational math and (no surprise) theater.

Kim and Brian love being involved with the church and truly feel that this is the place they belong. Please welcome them.



**Make your shopping easy while benefitting the church by buying a gift card from First Unitarian! Hundreds of options. Make your life easy and your friends' and family's spirits bright with Scrips!**



### What does the scrip say?

Introducing a NEW, EXPANDED scrip (gift card) program to benefit First Unitarian Church! We now can order scrip cards for 100+ retailers and restaurants!! Many of your favorite stores are on the list. We will also still have Baker's/Kwik Shop scrip cards available for groceries and gas.

A full printed list of scrip vendors will be available on Sundays at the UUnique Boutique (soon to be located in the Common Room).

Ordering is easy!

1. Fill out an envelope with your name
2. Check-mark the gift card(s) you want to purchase
3. Insert cash or check into the envelope and seal
4. Give the envelope (with payment inside) to Kathi Oliver or Donna Neff who will then place an order
5. Receive your order the following week at coffee hour (or reserve a pickup time via email)

By using same-as-cash gift cards to make your normal purchases, you don't need to spend extra money AND First Unitarian earns a percentage from EVERY card purchased!

How much you ask? 3%-15% (depending on the vendor)

Example: Kathi wants to give her family gift cards for the holidays. She decides on one Menard's gift card for her mom, one Old Navy card for her sister-in-law, and one AMC card for date night. By purchasing these three gift cards at coffee hour, she gives First Unitarian \$8 back in profit but spends nothing extra compared to buying these gift cards elsewhere. (See above chart)

So, what does the scrip say? Make First UU scrip cards a part of your everyday and holiday shopping.

Buy it, try it, buy it now!

### Special Thank You

We are very grateful for Bob Hess who took photographs of many church members and friends in October and November. Thanks to Bob, the new pictorial directory is almost complete and will be available on our church website on January 15! Paper copies will be available by contacting the church office.



**Saturday, January 11 at 7pm**  
**Come enjoy an evening of show**  
**tunes performed by Dave Rosser**  
**and Katrina Schmidt with pianist**

**Victory Sedlacek.**

**This is a fundraiser for the**  
**church. Cost is \$20/person.**  
**See page 7 for more details.**

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