

May 2015

The Flame



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

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Reverse Offering
Update



Sunday Services this month

Photographer: Kathi Oliver

May 3—Two Services at 9:30am and 11:15am

“Blah, Blah, Blah”

Rev. Frank Rivas

We try to convince ourselves that words matter more than action. They don't.

May 10—Two Services at 9:30am and 11:15am

“Women's and Men's Liberation: A Mothers Day Reflection”

Nellie Chenoweth, Lori Hefeli, Anne Rivas, and Frank Rivas

A shared exploration of women's liberation, its effect on men, and a reminder that all are created equal.

May 17—One Service at 10:30am
“Choir & EMR Concert”

The First Unitarian Choir led by Bob McMeen and the Early Morning Risers, accompanied by Stan Harper, will present a wide variety of music including favorites from this year's services.

May 24—One Service at 10:30am
Lemon Sermon: “Caring for Misfits... My Momma Had It Right”

Alex Nather

Once I passed 20 and got over the words my Momma used, I began to realize that the ease I have working with illness was not based on my college education or years of experience, but on the little, teeny, tiny actions I learned as a child. Each day starts and ends with Charity and Grace. Are these two present in our beloved community or are there imposters in our midst?

May 31—One Service at 10:30am
“Flower Communion”

Please join us for this annual tradition of sharing with one another all that is beautiful in our congregation. Please bring a cut flower to participate.

Rev. Elations

Monthly Column from our Minister, Rev. Frank Rivas

There are moments that shape our church community, and two such moments are at our doorstep.

The first is an extended moment. As I reported in the sermon on April 19, we are ready to publicly explore a connection with Clair Memorial United Methodist Church, a predominantly African American church on the north side. A small group of individuals from both churches has identified several initial steps:

- sharing events (the first is a yard party at Clair, announced elsewhere in this issue),
- sharing pulpits (I will preach at Clair in May, and Rev. Portia will preach here in June), and
- sharing our lives (we will organize several small groups with members from each church).

The goals will be to make authentic connection, to learn from one another, and to discern a shared calling in the greater community.

The second, by comparison, happens in an instant. At the annual meeting, you, the congregation, will vote on whether to call me as minister of this church (an explanation is in an article by Jaime Alexander, also elsewhere in this issue). My observations:

- Our process has been excellent. Instead of voting on a minister who was in your midst for one week, we have lived with one another for three years. It's my first time and our first time to approach calling in this way, and I like it.
- For the process to work optimally, we must each speak and vote our conscience as we address what would best serve the future of this church.
- My perspective is clear. I love the church, the members, and serving as minister. I have two caveats. The first relates to my age: I won't work beyond my effectiveness. The second is that, as the Unitarian Universalist Association recommends, I will not accept a call of less than 85%. There has been a history of congregational divisiveness after a closer vote, and I will not lead the church in that direction.
- If I am not called, I will serve one more year as a developmental minister. During that time, I will help the congregation through the search process.

Nothing stays the same. Even good things change. So much changes without our input, but these changes are different. We each have a say. May we each act with authenticity, with openness, and with wisdom.

Blessings and love,
Frank



The Children's Choir on Easter. *Photographer: Kate Wiig*

Note from Church President *by Louise Jeffrey*

I write this last letter as president of the Board of Trustees as we approach our annual congregational meeting on May 17. It's been an interesting year for me, and I thank all of you for the opportunity to have served and to have been able to learn so much about the church over the last two years.

The list of folks to thank for their volunteer service to the church is indeed long and of course includes all of those who served on the Board and Ministry Team Council this year. Their names are listed in the Annual Report, which will be available soon. All of you who have been team leaders and who have served on teams, as well as those of you who have taken on individual tasks, are the people who really make it all happen. Our musicians, artists, and educators are beyond spectacular, and I think few of us not closely involved with these tasks truly appreciate the time involved in making their end results so very beautiful. I especially want to acknowledge some of the less "visible" volunteers who keep our building and grounds in tip-top shape and do the behind the scenes work which makes the rhythm of Sunday mornings appear so effortless. Dave Rosser will retire as House & Grounds Leader this summer after many years and with our profound thanks. Dave, Jack Perry, and Dean Christensen are always there to fix, replace, talk to outside contractors, figure out how to, and notice that it needs to be done in the first place. Sharon Conlon and her helpers keep our garden beautiful all season. Ever wonder who keeps us in candles? That's Kay Lynn Goldner. Who does the Orders of Service every week? That's Carolyn McNamara and Linda Hruska. Bill Ross does the IT work, Barb Ross manages the data base, Clyde Kramer helps with the accounting work, and Vanessa Timberlake keeps the attendance records. Additional Friday volunteers who ready the church for Sunday services include Kim Callaghan (who also keeps us in coffee), Lana Hammel, Audrey and Dale Freyer, Frank McKee, Pat Will, Evelyn Whitehill and Debbie Hunsberger. Many of these volunteers do more than one job, but because of space limitations I have mentioned them only once. Although our crack administrator, Catharine Dixon, does the majority of the work on the *Flame*, proofreading is done by Cyndi Nather, Scott Kemper and Lana Hammel and the assembling and folding of the paper copies of the *Flame* is done by Howard Bolton, Shelton Hendricks, Debbie Hunsberger and Kim Callaghan.

For me, the big take away is noting how many people are involved in making the church work. All this year I have attended the UU&U meetings and I'm always asked by visitors how they can become involved in the life of the church. My answer is always the same: come to services, work with us and play with us. There is plenty to be done, and plenty of opportunities for play, this summer including our CommUnity nights and our Labor Day weekend family retreat. As I step away from a very visible job, I plan to stay a part of it all! Adelante! Louise Jeffrey

Annual Meeting — May 17

The 146th annual congregational meeting of First Unitarian Church of Omaha will take place at the Church on Sunday, May 17 at 12pm. Eligible voting members* of the church will adopt an operating budget for the 2015-16 church year and elect a President-elect, members of the Board of Trustees, a Trustee of the Trust Fund, and Nominating Committee members; vote to call Rev. Frank as our settled minister; hear select reports from church leaders; amend our bylaws to allow electronic voting and reveal our Unitarian of the Year! Childcare will be provided and your Board of Trustees will host coffee hour following the 10:30am service and provide snacks and drinks to help tide you over during the meeting. We encourage all members to attend this important church event.

*Individuals are eligible to vote who have been members of the church for at least three months and have made a financial contribution in their name to the church between April 17, 2014 and April 17, 2015.

—Board of Trustees

Church Events

All Church Work Day

Saturday, May 2, 8am to 1pm.

All are invited, no matter your skill level, to help us do some spring cleaning at the church. Many hands make light work. Please join us! Pizza will be provided at 1pm in the Common Room. Questions? Contact Dave Rosser at 402-541-4393.

Spirit Circle

Sunday, May 3, offsite. We will be celebrating Beltane with a drumming circle at the Narrows River Park in Council Bluffs, IA. We will carpool from church and plan to leave parking lot at 6:30pm. Strawberry shortcake will be served!

Women's Alliance

Women, and those who identify as women, are invited to attend the gathering on Monday, May 11 at 6:30pm. We will meet at Lake Zorinsky for a brown bag dinner at Picnic Area #2 (alcohol is not permitted—sorry ladies), and then we'll travel to Diane Withem's horse stables for a tour and other activities. Please do NOT wear open-toed shoes or shorts.

We ask for \$10 which goes to the cost of dinner, the Merritt Education Fund, and the Partner Church scholarship. If this will be your first time

attending a WA get-together, please be our guest.

The brown bag dinner will be provided by Jersey Mike's Subs and Sandwiches. It's important to let Kathi Oliver know which sandwich you prefer when you RSVP.

Option 1. Ham and Provolone

Option 2. Turkey and Provolone

Option 3. Veggie: Provolone, Swiss and Bell Peppers

Chips, bottled water, and dessert will also be provided.

RSVP by May 5 to

wa@firsttuomaha.org, or call Kathi at [402-214-2718](tel:402-214-2718) or via First U's Facebook event page.

Young Adult Craft Night

Friday, May 15 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. Let's celebrate May with a craft day, so instead of traditional game night, we will be crafting signs for the annual Heartland Pride parade. We will need markers, crayons, anything crafty that you have lying around your house! Signs will be provided. This year's theme is Paving the Way. No RSVP needed. Just come and craft! And bring anyone and everyone with you!!

One Service Sundays in the Summer

Beginning Sunday, May 17 we will have one service at 10:30am followed by a coffee hour in the Common Room.

Choir & EMR Concert

Sunday, May 17 at 10:30am in the Sanctuary

Organist, Pat Will, the First U Choir, directed by Bob McMeen, accompanied by Keith Hart & Reuline Nightingale, the Early Morning Risers, with Stan Harper, and the Children's Choir, directed by Caitlin Seguin and Rene Harper, will all take part in the service that day.

The Women's Religious Studies Group

This group is discussing the book *The New Atheism: Taking a Stand for Science and Reason* by Victor J. Stenger. We meet in the Merritt Lounge from 1-2:30 pm most Thursdays. Questions? Contact Rae Barry at 402-422-1404 or raeb1@hotmail.com.

Adult RE Class:

The History of First Unitarian Church

Thursday evenings in the Common Room. Remaining classes: 4/30 and 5/14.

This class led by Dave Richardson will focus on the events and people who have helped shape our beloved community. This course will follow a presentation/discussion format.

(continued on next page)

Church Events Continued...

(continued from previous page)

Each meeting will be devoted to a 50-year portion of our 150 years of existence, beginning with our founding in 1869. In the process we will look at some photos and artifacts from our archives. We will also discuss the upcoming sesquicentennial of our founding and the centennial of our building in 2018-19, and how we might celebrate our church's heritage. To sign up for the class please call (402-345-3039) or email admin@firstuuomaha.org the church office.

Flint Discussion Group

Tuesday, May 19 at 7pm in the Common Room.

More information will be announced later in the enews. These forums are designed to offer a platform for in-depth presentation of information and dialog on topics ranging from ethics, morals, art, religion. The name "Flint" refers to the rock that is used to create a spark. Each program will run 90 minutes. Attendees wishing to bring their own dinner are welcome to join others at 6pm to share conversation. All are invited. Coffee and water will be available.

The Women's Religious Study Covenant Group

Thursday, May 21 at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. Marcia Leise will be our facilitator for Addiction, the sixth chapter in our book, *Soul to Soul*. If you're interested in joining us, please contact Harriet Major at 402-391-0248 or hmajor323@cox.net. We have a covenant statement which needs to be signed before attending the group.

Exploring Humanistic Perspectives in Literature with Ron Knapp

Tuesday, May 26 at 7pm in the Common Room. Drawing from a variety of literary sources, prose and poetry. This program, in cooperation with OMAHA (Omaha Metro Area Humanist Association) is presented in an informal, coffee house type of atmosphere. This month we will discuss Confucius and Lao Tzu: Two (Incompatible?) Chinese Sages.

UU & You Class

Sunday, May 31 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Room.

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. 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 1:15, although those interested in a brief tour of the church may be a little later. If you need childcare please let us know by the Monday before. RSVPs or questions can be addressed to uuclass@firstuuomaha.org or call Jaime Alexander 402-657-9386.

Book Club

Monday, June 1 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. Our book selection is *Bird Flu: A Virus of Our Own Hatching* by Michael Greger, M.D. All are invited to attend our meetings. Please contact Dave Richardson at drrichardson@westside66.org for more information. We will meet again in August.

Church Events Continued...

CommUUnity Night

Friday, May 1 at 5:30pm in the Common Room

CommUUnity Nights are a fun, laid-back all-church event. We gather together for a pot-luck of side items (the main dish will be provided by RE) and eat together as a group and then just chill. We will give the teens the Merritt Lounge as a fortress of solitude against the chaos of family life. The adults talk, play games, and just enjoy each other's company. If you can't bring anything or you're feeling too rushed to grab or make something last minute, COME ANYWAY! There is always plenty of food and what we really want is YOUU!

Come and Enjoy the "Yard Party"

Saturday, May 16, 10am – 2pm at Clair Memorial United Methodist Church (5544 Ames Avenue)

Rev. Frank Rivas, Kabin Thomas, Elaine Wells, Doug Wagner, and Janet West have been meeting with Rev. Portia Cavitt, pastor of Clair Memorial United Methodist Church, and three members of her congregation. Our reasons for coming together are to facilitate the two congregations getting to know each other and to do meaningful activities together. Church members and friends are invited to Clair Methodist's "Lots-to-Know Party."

There will be a Bouncy House for the little ones and free hot dogs for everyone. This event is a FREE garage sale. All donated items will be given away to those from the church and neighborhood who attend the party. As you are doing your spring cleaning, collect all of your unwanted household items, clothes, shoes, non-perishable foods; and bring your useable treasures to Clair Church on the Wednesday and Thursday before the Yard Party. Also, feel free to attend the "Yard Party" and meet and interact with members and friends of Clair Memorial UM Church. For more information, call Janet (402-598-8230) or email her at jmasonwest77@yahoo.com.

Speakeasy Soiree...Back by popular demand!

Friday, May 29 at 6pm in the Common Room

*"Bob your hair, flaunt your flapper
and come all dressed up, oh so dapper."*

We will be hosting a night of torch songs from another time... a time of intrigue and romance. Some favorites include Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Harry Connick Jr, just to name a few. Festive cocktails will be available at the bar. Please join us and bring your friends!

Vocal talents:

Kate Wiig

Rene' Harper

Instrumentalists
extraordinaire:

Salvatore Cuilla

Stan Harper

Church Events Coming Up in June

Tolerant Atheist Discussion Group Meeting—Preview

Thursday, June 11 at 7pm in the Common Room.

This May Flame preview of the next meeting is an appetizer. At our February meeting we had two similar but different in scope topics. First up was “What kind of church do we want?” That fascinating discussion expanded to fill nearly all of the time available. It was great! The planned second subject was “What kind of TADG do we want?” The June 11 meeting will provide the opportunity to briefly (maybe) revisit the first topic before considering the second topic. Mark your calendars: TADG on Thursday, June 11. Bring your own dinner at 6pm. Agenda opens at 7pm. For information about TADG, please email jaimealexander@cox.net.

Pride Parade: Paving the Way

Saturday, June 20

We will march with Second Unitarian Church. To see the parade route please visit this website: <http://heartlandpride.org/pride-2015-festival-paving-the-way>.

We hope everyone can come join us! Questions? Contact Lori at lhefeli@gmail.com.

Hear Ye, Hear Ye: Shakespeare on the Green

Saturday, June 27

Volunteers (Sirrahs, Mistresses, and Cousins) are needed for this year’s Shakespeare on the Green’s production of Othello on June 27. Duties include handing out flyers, talking with guests, passing out surveys, and collecting donations. Methinks this year will be just as fun as last year!! There are a few perks for signing up which will be shared at a later day. Please go to: <http://vols.pt/BHo4HR> to sign up to be a volunteer or visit the First Unitarian Facebook page (under events) for a direct link. More details are coming.



The Kids in Sunday School have been learning about Islam and creating art.



Photographer: Jan Wilson

Arts Camp for Children

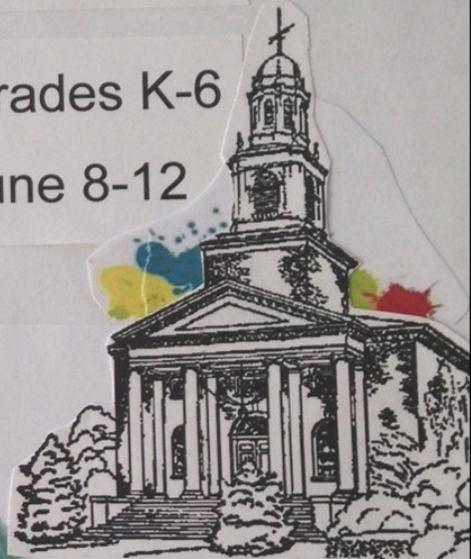
Summer
2015

Grades K-6

June 8-12



ARTS CAMP



First Unitarian Church

9:30-12:00 Classes
12:00-1:00 Sack Lunch
1:00-3:30 Field Trips

Donations accepted
for tuition.

Please email uusummercamp@firstuuomaha.org to reserve your child's spot.

What is “Calling Frank” All About?

By Jaime Alexander

For me it was wonderful news when I read President Louise Jeffrey’s announcement in the April *Flame* that our Board voted unanimously to recommend the “calling” of Rev. Frank by congregational vote at the Annual Meeting on May 17. It occurs to me though that it might be useful, especially for our newer members, to review why that decision is coming up now. So here is a little background.

We first met Rev. Frank in the fall of 2008 when he filled in for Rev. Rohde during a couple months of disability leave. Frank did a fine job on short notice. After Rev. Rohde’s resignation at the end of 2011, many of us thought of Frank. When asked by our Board, I led our search team tasked with the job of determining if Frank was interested and available, and if so then check his references, interview him and make a recommendation back to the Board. The short of a long story is circumstances worked out very well, and the Search Team voted unanimously (that word again) recommending the Board hire Frank.

The two most common alternatives for churches hiring a new minister are “interim” minister for a year or two, or a “settled” minister with a long-term intention. Neither met the philosophical needs of either Frank or the Board. Both wanted more than a short-term, not extendable, relationship but also wanted to have a gracious way out if either felt it wasn’t working and a way forward if it was working. Here are the words from Frank’s contract addressing this issue: *Because we have prior experience working together, we believe that we have a unique opportunity to enter into a less traditional form of ministry known as developmental ministry. The developmental format allows us more flexibility to manage the transitions according to our joint needs as they evolve and does not arbitrarily limit our ability to continue our relationship.*

Some terms of the contract, paraphrased: Frank serves a three-year term ending July 31, 2015, with two additional automatic one-year terms unless either wants out. And: Nothing in this agreement limits the ability of the Congregation to call the Developmental Minister to be its settled minister – except that the call shall not be issued during the first two years of this Agreement.

The calling process has two parts: we vote and the minister accepts, or not. Traditional ministerial protocol is around 90% affirmative to accept. The bar is high. The consequence of a failed call would be our need to very soon embark on a search. Frank would start his planning to leave.

In summary, the Board’s recommendation to call Frank is timely. Frank would like to be called. During his ministry our church has, in my opinion, become a more vibrant, more cohesive, and better place. We have this wonderful opportunity to call Frank as our settled minister at the Annual Meeting. I heartily recommend we call Frank.

For more information about our Annual Meeting to be held on Sunday, May 17, please see page 4.

Hospitality Teams

Looking to meet new people? Searching for a way to get involved at church? Check out: [Hospitality Teams!](#) These teams take responsibility for all of the jobs (coffee hour hosts, ambassadors, and greeters) on a given Sunday. Each team consists of twice as many people as it takes to do these jobs. Our goal is 10-12 people per team. Because each team will have more people than are needed for Sunday, absences will be easily managed within the team.

8 teams take responsibility for 1 Sunday every 2 months. For example, your team might be responsible for the 3rd Sunday in odd-numbered months. Thus, you will be asked to serve only 6 times in a year and you will know well in advance when that will be. The 9th team will take months with a 5th Sunday and other special services.

Here are the Team tasks:

- *Greeters, who distribute the orders of service and receive the offering.*
- *Ambassadors, who welcome new visitors and help them get settled.*
- *Coffee hour hosts, who set up, serve, and clean up after our social time.*

Here is what one person said, "I have met new friends and been able to give back to the church. It's an easy way to get involved! I love my team!"
—Member of Team 3

We are looking for new members for each team now!

Signing up is easy. Just go to: <http://www.firstuomaha.org/#!/hospitality-teams/c1uuz>

Join a Team!

Odd Month Teams

1st Sunday—*Fireballs*
Leader: Bill Ross

2nd Sunday—*The Un-Holy Rollers*
Leader: Louise Jeffrey

3rd Sunday—*Triple Threat*
Leader: Kim Callaghan

4th Sunday—*W/W*
Leader: Janet West

Even Month Teams

1st Sunday—*Flaming Chalices*
Leader: Kim Dunovan

2nd Sunday—*Friendly Faces*
Leader: Joe Schaaf

3rd Sunday—*Rounders*
Leader: Jack Round

4th Sunday—*Singing Sensations*
Leader: Kay Lynn Goldner

5th Sunday for any month—*The 5th Sunday Fill-ins*
Leader: Sandy Host



Photographer: Royal Bush

The Holland Lecture Series Turns 10

By Dave Richardson

A little over ten years ago local philanthropist, and longtime member of First Unitarian, Dick Holland decided it was high time for Omaha to have a semi-annual lecture series presenting noted speakers on critical issues and progressive ideas. He recalled as a young man in the 1950s enjoying the Hoagland Lecture Series sponsored by First Unitarian. It was Dick's wish that no admission would be charged and no "good will" offerings would be taken up, much like Sarah Joslyn's original vision that the Joslyn Art Museum would always be free to the public. Beginning in 2006 with the noted ethicist Peter Singer, Dick's vision became reality.

The series affords an opportunity for the wider community to hear speakers and topics they would probably not get to hear in person otherwise. Speakers have come from a variety of areas. We have been treated to internationally known economists, scientists, diplomats, public intellectuals and social critics (see the gallery of previous speakers to the right). We have hosted several speakers of "rock star" status who filled the Holland

Performing Arts Center to capacity. They include the famous evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, the man who discovered "Lucy" the oldest known hominid, Donald Johanson and most recently, the noted activist and scholar Angela Davis.

The Holland Lecture Committee headed by Steve Hutchinson serves in planning and advisory roles for the twice-yearly lectures. Previous chairs include Shelton Hendricks and Jaime Alexander. The series has achieved a superb reputation and has established itself as a "don't miss" event for many Omahans. The first three years the lectures were held at The Scott Center at UNO. As popularity increased we outgrew the space so, beginning with the estimable Dr. Dawkins, the event was shifted to the more spacious and elegant Holland Performing Arts Center.

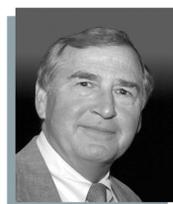
The positive impact on the community is impossible to calculate. I frequently hear in conversation with church members and other friends and acquaintances, references to ideas and even quotes from previous Holland Lecturers. I know I have been greatly enriched by the exposure to the ideas and utterances of these important thinkers. It is also difficult to estimate the increased visibility of our church

in the community. From the beginning, we have been identified as the "host" of the lecture series, and our minister is always the first person introduced at the lecture. Shelton Hendricks remarked that the Holland Lecture Series serves the function that a successful athletic team does for a university. It embraces the wider community and puts our brand on a very important cultural event in Omaha.

Gallery of Past Speakers



Dr. Peter Singer, Professor of Bioethics, Princeton University, on "*The Changing Ethics of Life and Death*"



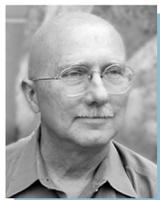
Dr. Graham Allison, Douglas Dillon Professor of Government and Director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University on "*Nuclear Terrorism: A Preventable Catastrophe*"



The Rev. Debra Haffner, Director of The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing, on "*Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing*"



Dr. Irving Weissman, Professor of Pathology and Developmental Biology, Stanford University, on "*Stem Cells Meet Politics and Religion*"



Dr. Henry Pollack, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Geological Sciences, University of Michigan on "*Earth's Changing Climate: What is in Store for the Future?*"

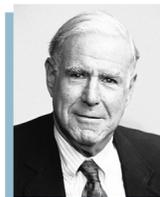


Donald Johanson, PhD., paleoanthropologist, with Maurice Taieb, and Yves Coppens discovered the skeleton of the female hominid known as "*Lucy*". His April 2011 talk: "*Lucy and Our Human Origins*"

Ambassador Dennis Ross, the Washington Institute's counselor and Ziegler distinguished fellow, on "*Statecraft and How to Restore America's Standing in the World*"



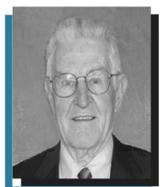
Dr. Alan J. Russell, Director of McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine, Professor of Surgery—University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. His April, 2012 talk: "*Regenerative Medicine: Where Science, Politics, Theology and Media Collide*"



Dr. Henry J. Aaron, Bruce and Virginia MacLaury Senior Fellow in the Economic Studies Program at the Brookings Institution on "*Universal Health Coverage: Not If, But When*"



Barry C. Lynn, Senior Fellow and director of the Markets, Enterprise, and Resiliency Institute at the New America Foundation, His October 2011 talk: "*The New Age of Monopoly: Remaking American Democracy or Destroying It?*"



Dr. Ernie Friesen, teacher of 40 years and dedicated advocate of helping courts become more effective, on "*Political Judges VS Democracy*"



Fred Wertheimer is the founder and president of Democracy 21 and for 17 years, president of Common Cause. His October 2012 talk: "*A Disaster for Democracy: The Campaign Scandals of 2012*"



Richard Dawkins, British ethologist, evolutionary biologist and popular science author, on "*Purpose of Purpose*"



Dr. Samuel Meisels, holds a doctorate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dr. Meisels has published over 200 articles, books, and monographs his May 1, 2013 talk was titled: "*Why the Early Years Matter*"



Jacob S. Hacker, PhD., Stanley B. Resor Professor of Political Science at Yale University, Resident Fellow at the Institution for Social and Policy Studies. "*The Middle Class At Risk: The New Economic Insecurity and What Can Be Done About It*"



Dr. Richard D. Wolff, is Professor of Economics Emeritus, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he taught economics from 1973 to 2008 His April 16th 2014 talk was titled: "*Capitalism in Crisis: How Lopsided Wealth Distribution Threatens Our Democracy*"



James K. Galbraith, Senior Scholar of the Levy Economics Institute and chair of Economists for Peace and Security at the University of Texas, on "*Predator State*"



Dr. James K. Galbraith, Senior Scholar of the Levy Economics Institute and chair of Economists for Peace and Security at the University of Texas, on his October 9th 2013 talk was titled: "*From the Crisis to Crackpots: How We Ended Up in this Mess*"



Susan Jacoby, A graduate from Michigan State University and is director of the New York branch of the Center for Inquiry. "*The Dumbed-Down Politics of Unreason: Anger or Sheer Ignorance?*"

The last two speakers



Eric Liu is an author, educator, civic entrepreneur and Time Magazine contributor. He's the author of *The Accidental Asian* and *Guiding Lights* and co-author of *Imagination First*, *The True Patriot* and *The Gardens of Democracy*. Liu served as a White House speechwriter and the deputy domestic-policy adviser to President Clinton and also writes for, *The Huffington Post* and *The Atlantic*. He is a graduate of Yale University.

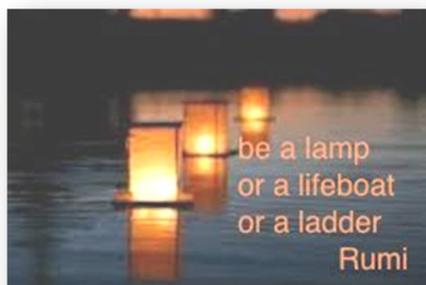


Angela Davis, is a writer, activist and scholar and comes to Omaha to share her unique perspectives on prison reform, a topic front and center in current state as well as national debates. She envisions a future without prisons and advocates for dissolving what she coined the "prison industrial complex." Davis has written nine books and is Professor Emerita in the History of Consciousness and the Feminist Studies departments at the University of California Santa Cruz.

The
Holland
Lecture Series

What is Hope in Action?

Our church believes in community, and that is what Hope in Action, a sub-team of the Caring Team, is all about. Any one of us might need assistance, and we want to make it easier for you to ask for support and easier for you to offer support when others are in need.



WHO IS SERVED?

Church members, friends, regular attendees and their spouses are eligible for assistance from Hope in Action.

WHO CAN HELP?

Everyone! Hope in Action is an opportunity for everyone in our church community to support each other by sharing knowledge, skills and resources.

Hope in Action will use church communications, including the enews, to let our church community know when help is needed to respond to a request for support. And we will report back to the church community about how we were able to respond. All communication will be done in a manner that maintains the degree of confidential-

ity requested by the person seeking assistance.

WHAT SUPPORT CAN BE EXPECTED?

Hope in Action is there when people are dealing with a medical problem, need transportation or help around the house, can use assistance with referrals to social service agencies or just need someone to talk to about the ups and downs of life. Our response will vary depending on the type of support that is needed in our church community and what resources we have available.

Although Hope in Action is not able to respond to emergencies, short-term financial assistance may be available for lodging, food, clothing, medication, transportation and utilities. Financial disbursements are not made directly to the person making the request for assistance.

HOW TO ASK FOR SUPPORT

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

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

in the church foyer.

WHO DECIDES WHAT SUPPORT WILL BE OFFERED?

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

What is Community Meals?

Community Meals is an outreach to people in need in our church's neighborhood.

Every Saturday members of various "First" churches and others take turns providing a hot meal and groceries to those in need at First Baptist Church (our neighbor just one block east of our church). First Unitarian Church has been part of this effort for several years. Four times a year our church "caters" and serves the meal and distributes the groceries provided by Trader Joe's. There are First Unitarian Church members who work at the site on a weekly basis and additional help is always welcome. Need more information? Call or email Diane Withem, 402-679-8916, dianewithem@gmail.com.

Parking Garage Info at First Unitarian

If you are able to park in the MidTown Crossing Garage to the west of our parking lot, it would leave our small parking lot for visitors and those who need to park closer to the building.

Here's the drill: Use any entrance to get in. Punch the button and take the ticket. Use only one exit to get out—on Farnam St. (north-side, middle-level, only one with an attendant.) Give him/her your ticket. 3 hours are free. If you're at church more than 3 hours, run your ticket through the machine that is downstairs in the Common Room for free parking or pay \$1/hour. Thank you for your help!

Note: Please do NOT move the machine. If you have any questions or concerns, contact the church office at admin@firstuomaha.org.



Wayside Pulpit

Do you have a favorite quotation, proverb, or inspirational message that you would like to share with passersby on Harney Street? The Wayside Pulpit needs you! We are replacing our worn but well-loved signs with new wisdom. Please submit your quotes to the [church office](#) by May 15 to be considered for use. Who knows? Someone driving by may see your message and change the world!



Share the Plate—PFLAG

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. In the month of May we share the plate with [Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays \(PFLAG\)](#), the United States' largest organization for parents, families, friends, and allies united with people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ).

GROWING OUR CHURCH!

By Jackie Anderegg,
Membership Team Leader

Energized by the church we already are and inspired by growing into the church we want to be, our Membership Team, supported by our Board, our Treasurer, and Rev. Frank, is proposing that we hire a part-time Membership Coordinator. This will involve about 10-15 hours a week with someone qualified to work with our database, who understands and supports Unitarian Universalist principles and can work well with our administrator, Rev. Frank, our Membership Team and our members and visitors. The cost of that position would be about \$10,000 annually.

The good news is that in 2014, our church had 291 first time visitors! An amazing number. In growing churches, the ratio of new visitors to existing members needs to be 1:1. We were above that number. Our membership count is approximately 215. The bad news is that despite a lot of activity by a large group of people, we only had 6 new members. That was offset by the normal loss of members who die or resign or move.

It is true of our church that our membership has stalled for a number of years at between 200 and 250. It became clear to our Membership Team in early January that we were headed for a negative growth, or at best a

break even point. Here is the good news: this church by most accounts is a truly happy, spirited place now and most of us are enthusiastic about what we have to share with new people and about enriching and deepening our experience in this church.

We have a very high number now of frequent visitors who are people that have returned to our church more than eight times. The challenge of enriching the connection of our members who become slowly disengaged, integrating new members into our community as well as establishing on going engagements with new visitors and our large population of frequent visitor was more than volunteer effort could sustain.

We organized an all-church forum in March with the Director of Congregational Life in the First Unitarian Church in Des Moines who was inspiring and precise about what is necessary to maintain vitality and growth in churches. Thanks to our own research and her solid consultation, we now have some clear ideas about what we need in a part-time coordinator to maximize what we have to offer to enrich the experience for us and our visitors.

Please contact any Board Member, any Membership Team Member or Rev. Frank or me at janderegg@cox.net if you need more information or would like to involve yourself in a new effort for this church!



“WHAT? You shop
AMAZON
and don't support
First Unitarian?”

It's easy!! Visit
www.firstuomaha.org and
click the **AMAZON** logo

OR

Visit www.smile.amazon.com,
update **CHARITY** information
to **FIRST UNITARIAN OF
OMAHA.**

Support First Unitarian
Church with EVERY purchase
you make!

The Membership Team:

Jaime Alexander
Jackie Anderegg
Kate Godfrey
Lana Hammel • Jack Heidl
Carolyn McNamara
Lois Norris • Barbara Ross
Caitlin Seguin • Tom Seguin
Ellen Shurson
Vanessa Timberlake
Janet West • Ron Withem
Judith Wright

Reverse Offering: Generous UUs

On Sunday, April 5 for the first time First Unitarian Church gave out a reserve offering. The idea was simple. Give everyone in the congregation money to help others they find in need in their own communities. The response has been overwhelming.

Here are just a few stories that have come in so far. Please share your story with us by emailing the office at admin@firstuomaha.org.

My husband Marty and I spent some time figuring out how best to do good with the reverse offering. I'm on a Pay-it-Forward website on and we started looking through recent posts to see current requests. One in particular stood out to us...it was a young man who had just gotten custody of his seven-month-old daughter, but was not able to get any state aid for another week. He was requesting help with formula. This was something we could do! We pooled our money and added a little and purchased the formula and took it to his mother's house. She invited me in and let me tell her the story about our awesome church and the reverse offering. She asked me to tell everyone thank you and how much this little act of kindness was going to help her son start on the right foot. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to get outside ourselves and expand our circle of love.

— Andrea Hayes

I took my \$5 today and helped a lady at the grocery store buy her groceries. I saw that she kept digging in her pockets for change to pay for her items. When she realized she didn't have any more change, she asked the clerk to put back the jar of peanut butter she had on the conveyor belt. Instead of me just finding the change for her in my purse, I handed her the \$5 dollar bill and only asked one thing: to take the change from that \$5 and pass it on to someone else in need. I thanked her for allowing me to "butt-in" when normally I wouldn't and just asked that she pass it along whenever she can.

— Kathi Oliver

One of the families in our Boy Scout Troop has three boys. Two would like to go to summer camp. The eldest brother recently lost his new kidney, so they're facing a tough time. Our troop is helping out by sending them meals and by helping pay for camp for the younger brothers. Our \$10 went to the camp fund.

— Bruce Godfrey

Instead of giving this \$5 to a person holding a sign at traffic lights and explaining that the money came from my church, I am giving it back to the church office so more funds will be available for the minister and church administrator to give to people who come to the church and ask for help in meeting their needs.

— Clyde Kramer

The photo below was posted by member Royal Bush on Instagram. The caption read: Light. What does it mean to you?



Minister

Frank Rivas

minister@firstuomaha.org

Director of Religious**Education**

Jan Wilson

dre@firstuomaha.org

Office Administrator

Catharine Dixon

admin@firstuomaha.org

Organist

Pat Will

Choir Director

Bob McMeen

Nursery Aide

Jackie Dross

Custodian

Bobby Medrano

Early Service Pianist

Stan Harper

Choir Accompanists

Reuline Nightingale

Keith Hart

Minister Emeritus

Ronald Knapp

Nominating Committee

Mary Bort, Abby Cape,
Nadine Keith, Joe Schaaf,
Dave Olson, Kim Callaghan

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

THE FLAME

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

admin@firstuomaha.org

Editor/Designer: Cat Dixon

Proofers: Cyndi Nather,

Lana Hammel,

Scott Kemper

*Newsletter cover photograph by
Scott Kemper*

Meet Our Leaders

Board Members

Louise Jeffrey (President), Dean Christensen, Sheri Conner,
Lynette Ryder, Jack Round (President-Elect), Ron Withem,
Cy Leise, Jack Heidel

board@firstuomaha.org

Trustees of the Capital Trust

Tim Duggan (2016), Sandy Host (2015), Steven Hutchinson (2017)

Committee on Ministry

Jaime Alexander, Katrina Schmidt, Marie Sedlacek, Alan Vovolka

Ministry Team Council

Rev. Frank Rivas, Barb Herring, Jack Round, Amy Barlow

mtc@firstuomaha.org

Ministry Teams and Team Leaders

Adult Religious Education - Crystal DiGiorgi

Archives - Dave Richardson

Caring - Douglas Lee-Regier

Chalice Guild - Kay Lynn Goldner

Community Meals - Diane Withem

Fellowship - Judith Wright, Nadine Keith & Nellie Chenoweth

Finance - Walt Jesteadt

Fundraising - Donna Neff & Kathi Oliver

Governance - Alex Nather

Hope in Action - Kim Dunovan

Hospitality Teams - Kim Callaghan

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

Religious Services - Megan Gustafson

Women's Alliance - Nellie Chenoweth

Young Adult Group - Maria Wallace

YRUU - Ben Wallace & Shawne Coonfare

Church Events

CommUUnity Night

Friday, May 1 at 5:30pm in the Common Room.

See page 7 for details.

All-Church Work Day

Saturday, May 2

See page 5 for details.

Spirit Circle

Sunday, May 3 at 6:30pm in the parking lot

See page 5 for details.

Women's Alliance

Monday, May 11 at 6:30pm in the Common Room

See page 5 for details.

Board Meeting

Tuesday, May 12 at 7pm in the Common Room

Adult RE Class: History of First Unitarian Church

Last class: Thursday, May 14 at 7pm in the Common Room

See pages 5-6 for details.

Flame Deadline

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

Young Adult Craft Night

Friday, May 15 at 7pm in the Common Room

See page 5 for details.

Yard Party

Saturday, May 16, 10am-2pm at Clair Memorial United Methodist Church (5544 Ames Avenue)

See page 7 for details.

Choir and EMR Concert

Sunday, May 17 at 10:30am (one service only begins this Sunday)

See page 5 for details.

Annual Meeting

Sunday, May 17 at 12pm

See page 4 for details.

Women's Religious Studies Covenant Group

Thursday, May 21 at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge

See page 6 for details.

Exploring Humanistic Perspectives in Literature

Tuesday, May 26 at 7pm in the Common Room

See page 6 for information.

Concert: Speakeasy Soiree

Friday, May 29 at 6pm in the Common Room

See page 7 for details.

UU & You Class

Sunday, May 31 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Room

See page 5 for details.

RE Council Meeting

Sunday, May 31 at 12pm in Jan's office



Pictured above: Spring Celebration Game.

Photographer: Scott Kemper

Recurring...

Women's Religious Studies Group

Meets most Thursdays at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge

See page 5 for information.

Bridge Group

Meets the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month after the second service in the Whitney Young Room or in the corner of the Common Room.

Choir Rehearsal

Meets every Wednesday evening at 7pm in the Sanctuary.

YRUU

Meets every Wednesday at 7pm in the Common Room.

Looking ahead...

Book Club

Monday, June 1 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge

See page 6 for more information.

Tolerant Atheist Discussion Group

Thursday, June 11 at 7pm in the Common Room

See page 8 for more information.

UU Kids' Summer Camp

June 8-12

See page 9 for details.

Choir and Early Morning Risers Concert

Sunday, May 17 at 10:30am

Please join us as the Choir and EMR present favorite songs from the past year.
This is an annual event you will not want to miss!



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

Family Labor Day Weekend Retreat



Registration form for Church Family Retreat

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

___ 1 person attending: \$138

___ 2 people attending: \$111/person

___ 3 people attending: \$99/person

___ 4 people attending: \$89/person

___ 5 or more people attending: \$78/person

\$ _____ Total

(Please note: kids 5 and under are free)

Please list the names of those in your party:

If you require financial assistance please let us know how much you need so we can make sure you are able to attend.

Please place this form in an envelope and send to the church office.

Highlights

We will gather at Swanson Lodge of the Carol Joy Holling Camp, close to Mahoney State Park.

We will share games, hikes, meals, and worship. In addition, adult activities will include spiritual practices like sitting meditation and yoga (children also welcome); children's activities will include spiritual practices like walking meditation and art projects (adults also welcome). Four meals (Saturday lunch and dinner; Sunday breakfast and lunch) as well as snacks are included in the price. Family can leave immediately after lunch on Sunday, or enjoy the camp for another couple of hours before returning home. Please join us! **Fill out the form to the left and return it to the church office.**