



Second Thoughts

Second Unitarian Church of Omaha

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**Don't miss
HOLIDAY
HAPPENINGS
Saturday, December
17, at 5 p.m.**

**CHRISTMAS EVE
4 p.m. Service:
Family Friendly**

**6 p.m. Service:
Contemplative,
Candlelight**

**CHRISTMAS DAY
No Morning Services
5 p.m. Vespers
Service**

Join Us This Sunday!

**Worship Services 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.
Fellowship and Refreshments 10:30 a.m.**

December 4 *Where We Gonna Go From Here?* Rev. Scott McNeill
This worship will feature a child dedication to celebrate the joy of new life and it will encourage our community to deeply ponder where Second Unitarian heads in its future ministry. Come prepared to be inspired, called to action and to imagine a world transformed by our church.

4 p.m. **Writing for Spiritual Growth** David Martin

December 11 *A View from the 1%* Rev. Scott McNeill
With much media attention on the Occupy Wall Street movement, Rev. Scott McNeill will preach from his experience and status as a 1%-er. You read that right. Come this Sunday to hear a message sure to surprise.

December 18 *Let us Sing of Hope and Joy* Rev. Scott McNeill
On the Sunday before Christmas, our community comes together to celebrate in the holy days and holidays of our culture. Let's join together for great music, community with our youth, and a festival that encourages us to look deeper into this season.

December 24, 4 p.m. *Christmas Eve Service I* Rev. Scott McNeill
This late afternoon service will be family friendly.

December 24, 6 p.m. *Christmas Eve Service II* Rev. Scott McNeill
This evening service will be a quiet, contemplative, candlelight service.

December 25 Christmas Day 5 p.m. – NO MORNING SERVICES
Our Hopes Rev. Scott McNeill
On this Sunday evening, we come together to share in our hopes for 2012, for our lives, for our church, for our city – for the world. We will sing together and share stories of our hopes coming true and what we wish for.

January 1 (New Year's, we will ONLY have 1 service, at 11:30 a.m.)
Creating Justice
We encourage you all to be safe for the New Year and rest well, and then show up for worship at 11:30 a.m. This Sunday, our worship will focus on the role of justice in our spiritual lives, as the theme of the month is Justice.



Minister's Musings

By Reverend Scott McNeill



As we approach December, our theme of the month is **Hope**. My hope for the year – really for all of my ministry here at Second Unitarian – is that I can assist this church in finding its mission, its true sense of purpose and that we as individuals can take that into our own lives so that we can grow and develop.

So as we continue to grow, I encourage you to share with me, to meet me for coffee or lunch, to come into the office, and let me know – what do you hope for in life? What do you dream about – for yourself, your family, your community, your world, the whole world?

What are your gifts and talents? What are you able to contribute that no one else can in quite the same way? We all have skills and stories to share, all have hopes and dreams to build upon. My hope is that we take a risk with one another and leap toward a new year full of exploration and development, giving ourselves the opportunity to be the best we can be, whether in our own lives or at the church.

In the coming months, the Board and Nominations will be looking for folks who are willing to lead our church and to develop that leadership through experiences like our District Assembly or Midwest Leadership School where people hone their skills and talents and learn more about our faith. If you're interested, even slightly, in developing your talents – please let us know! I hope that we can help you grow and that in return, Second Unitarian grows from your wisdom.

And, some business:

After three full months of two services, we are experiencing roughly a 20-person increase in average Sunday attendance (72 in Sept-Nov of 2010-11 vs. 90 in Sept-Nov 2011-12). That's 25% higher in 2011 than 2010! In addition, we've had 8 people join the church this fall, for a total of 16 people in the past twelve months. The total membership hasn't grown too much, though, as some members have left the church, moved, or not given in the past twelve months. But – we are thrilled to see such growth and enthusiasm in the congregation.

Yet, moving to two services has its difficulties. There are weeks that people miss one another because they show up at the other service. We miss the joys and sorrows in one another's lives. There are lots of ways to make the connections missed by having two services (or a large church with one service), and so we encourage you to:

- Join a covenant group or other small group (pagan, retirees, etc)
- Share your joy or sorrow via the coming "Tree of Life," a physical space in the church where people can write down what's going on in their life
- Invite someone you know or don't know to coffee or lunch.

We're here to live our lives authentically, with compassion and therefore to be transformed. We do this best through relationship – and so I encourage you to find ways to deepen your connections to others.

May your December and the holidays be full of love and warmth, however you celebrate them,

In faith,

Rev. Scott McNeill



Planks and Slivers from the Board

By Cheri Cody, Chair, Board of Trustees



As I struggle sometimes to write something of worth and interest for this column I wonder why it's so hard. I think part of this struggle comes from being basically reserved and introverted. I understand that the previous sentence will make several people laugh out loud but it's true. I think you could say I'm "introverted but opinionated" as opposed to "extroverted"!!

It seems that Unitarian Universalism is attractive to introverted people and extroverted people appear to be in short supply. Thinking about this tendency towards introversion reminded me of the many comments I've heard over the years about how anxiety producing it is to participate in "small talk" at coffee hour. It's tempting to just find someone we know well and talk to them. This can lead to two missed opportunities: welcoming new people into our fold and getting to know some really interesting people. Several years ago, we actually had someone come to a meeting after church to give us some pointers on how to successfully navigate the "small talk" conundrum; it was titled "What Do You Say After You Say Hello?"

My intent was to share some of her pointers with those of you who have this same anxiety, but I wasn't able to find the papers. This will come as a surprise to the former members of the Search Committee where I developed a bit of a reputation as a "hoarder" for rivaling the church archives with old financial and membership records!! So, here are a few tips from others on how to navigate through "small talk."

- If you haven't met, introduce yourself and say a sentence or two about yourself
- Ask what the other person enjoyed about the service
- Ask what first attracted them to the church
- Listen well and offer your thoughts in response

See you at coffee hour. I'm looking forward to my next conversation with you.



Share the Plate for December: Minister's Discretionary Fund

One half of Second Unitarian's offering received on December will go to the Minister's Discretionary Fund at the Second Unitarian Church of Omaha.

Started two years ago, the Minister's Discretionary Fund is a way to assist people in need, offer scholarships and funding for education and development, and purchase unbudgeted items for the church's needs. Historically, this fund has been used primarily to pay for electric bills, groceries, rent and medical needs for people connected to the congregation.

Some generous members of Second Unitarian Church have supported this Fund throughout the year by regular giving. In order to sustain the Minister's Discretionary Fund, half of the offering received by Second Unitarian Church during December will be donated to the Fund.

To nominate an organization for our Share the Plate program, visit the church website or contact the Social Justice Coordinating Council or Rev. Scott.



Treasurer's Report

By Pat Caffrey, Treasurer

Second Unitarian Church
Treasurer's Report
Month End for October 31, 2011

YTD Pledge Income/Current Year: \$53,630.08 reflects 34.21% of \$156,747.00 Total Pledged for 2011-12.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	<u>October</u>	<u>Year-To-Date</u>
Income	\$13,045.37	\$58,107.60
Expenses	-\$13,889.78	-\$52,721.51
Net Over/Short	<u>\$ -1,108.41</u>	<u>\$ 5,386.09</u>

New Pledge Income/Current Year: \$66.00 received of New Pledges for \$1,325.00 for 2011-12.

If you would like more detailed financial statements, please contact me.

Thank you!

Treasurer
Pat Caffrey

House Meetings Planned for 2012 Stewardship Campaign

By Clyde Anderson, Stewardship Chair

For the past two stewardship campaigns visiting stewards talked with you one-on-one about the mission of our congregation and funding that mission through annual pledges.

For 2012 we are planning to invite members to attend one of several house meetings to discuss the mission of the church. Appreciative Inquiry will be used to affirm what we are doing well and identify problems that need attention. Our vision for the future will be presented and then we will discuss funding this vision through pledging. Visiting stewards will visit members who are unable to attend a house meeting.

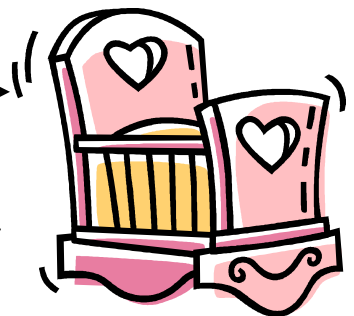
Although our plans are tentative, the campaign kickoff will likely be Saturday, February 25, and the house meetings will be scheduled during the following two or three weeks.



The Office and Nursery Are Swapping!



Be on the lookout for some serious moving this month, as the church office and nursery swap rooms. Thanks in advance to Building & Grounds and Technology Committees for helping to make this happen. Please check your Weekly Email for ways you can help...and after the move, be sure to leave your paperwork and babies in the right room!





Holiday Happenings

Come celebrate the beautiful holidays of the season!

Saturday, December 17, at 5 P.M.

The Lifespan Religious Growth and Learning Committee invites you to share in the joys of the season with us. **Holiday Happenings**, our annual **multigenerational event**, promises **fun and fellowship**. We will have activities to honor the season's holidays including a variety of **games, crafts, movement, and more!**

And, of course, what is a holiday event without **food**?

The committee will provide the main dish as well as beverages. You are welcome to bring a side dish if you wish, or a plate of your favorite holiday goodies.

All ages are welcome, so please come celebrate the many beautiful holidays of the season!

As always - volunteer help is needed and appreciated. Talk with a member of the committee, chaired by Jaime Short and Kelly Hanneman.

Holiday Services 2012

Sunday, December 18, 9:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. - All-Church Winter Holiday Worship Service

This Sunday, our worship will include people of all ages as we celebrate the various holidays in our community and the season of winter as one community!

Saturday, December 24, 4 p.m. – Christmas Eve Service I

This late afternoon service will be a **family-friendly** opportunity to worship with other members of Second Unitarian and reflect on the Christmas stories of hope and wonder. Worship will last approximately 45-60 minutes. The church will be open between the services if anyone would like to bring cookies and connect with one another (informal dessert potluck).

Saturday, December 24, 6 p.m. – Christmas Eve Service II

This evening service will be a quiet, contemplative, **candlelight** service that calms the mind and soul around the busy holiday of Christmas. This worship will also last approximately 45-60 minutes.

Sunday, December 25 – NO 9:30 or 11:30 a.m. Service

Sunday, December 25, 5 p.m. – Vespers

On Christmas Day, we have chosen to have worship only in the evening so that the mornings are less complicated. Our Vespers service will be less formal than most Sunday morning services and will focus on hopes for the New Year. We invite you to join us that evening, if you can.

Looking to Make Friends?

Autism Society of Nebraska's Coffee Talk: A Group for Caregivers and Loved Ones of Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Our Caregivers for Adults with Autism support group has shared a couple of meetings already and we have had deep discussions about the needs and lives of Adults who are on the Autism Spectrum of Disorders, as well as their caregivers. While we are open to anyone who needs to process Autism and its related concerns, primarily we are a group of people who are caring for adult children, adult partners or loved ones, or their parents. We look forward to exploring more and supporting our caregivers through all the work they do. Meetings take place monthly on first Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. For more information, contact Rev. Scott McNeill at minister@secondunitarianomaha.org.

"No More Time Cards" -- Retirees Group

Our retirees group has gone strong for two months now - and we are encouraging anyone else who would like to join (feel free to invite people who are outside Second Unitarian Church, too)! Topics have included humor and how retirement doesn't always equal not working! We're open to new topics and information, and the group is made up of a vibrant crew of folks! We look forward to seeing you at 1 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at Second Unitarian, immediately following the weekly "Lunch @ the Church" (Tuesdays noon-1 p.m.).

Pagan/Earth-Based Spirituality Affinity Group

November launched the Pagan/Earth-Based Spirituality Affinity Group. Since the group's first meeting is after the newsletter deadline, we can only assume that the group went very well and had tons and tons of visitors and members! If you missed the first meeting in November, we would love to welcome you to the next meeting in December. It's scheduled for Monday, December 26 (the fourth Monday of each month). Please email Rev. Scott if you'd like to connect with the group in any way, so that we can communicate with you!

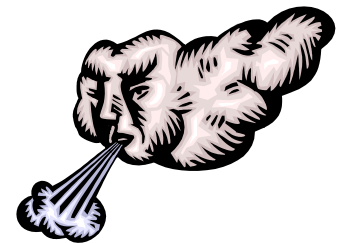
Small Group Ministry

Starting December 4, Second Unitarian is hosting a Covenant Group on the 1st and 3rd Sundays at 6 p.m. in the church sanctuary. Covenant Groups are small discussion groups (7-10 people) that are facilitated by a trained leader. Covenant Groups start each meeting with a short check-in and then delve into theological discussion topics, ethical questions, or general themes like hope and humor in religion. Covenant Groups give us a chance to connect with people we don't know as well as those we know but could know deeper. The format of a 90-minute, regular meeting allows for these connections to be made and kept. Although there are times that covenant group members experience very deep issues and have to process them, covenant groups are not meant to be support groups or social groups. They do build relationships and connections that last beyond the group's one year tenure. After a year, groups change up members so you get to learn from and share with new people (don't worry - this doesn't take away friends - it increases them!). Please let Rev. Scott know minister@secondunitarianomaha.org if you're interested in joining this group.

Weather-Related Cancellations

If weather or road conditions cause services or an all-church event to be cancelled, we will notify you by:

1. Placing a message on the church phone (402-334-0537),
2. Sending a message to the weekly email list,
3. Placing a message on the church website, and
4. Placing a notification on our Facebook page.



In case of a Service cancellation, we will also contact local media with our information.



Lifespan Religious Education

By Kirsten Stiles, Religious Education Coordinator

Change for Change

Our "little ones" have started a "little collection!"

The RE kids have started a loose change collection. The children are encouraged to bring in their change. The money will be collected in a basket at the Story for All Ages or in a glass jar in the downstairs worship area. The money will be collected all year for Heifer International. <http://heifer.org/> Heifer is based on the simple idea of giving families a source of food (a cow, chicken, sheep, etc) rather than short-term relief. The families share their animals' offspring with neighbors, along with their knowledge, resources, and skills. Not only are these neighbors sharing a food source but hope, dignity, and self-reliance. Heifer has worked successfully for over 65 years giving to millions of families in 128 countries.

A little bit of something can make a big difference!

-- Jaime Short

Making a difference

We are still seeking volunteers to be a guest during one of our Religious Education classes. We would love to hear how you make a difference. It could be through your professional knowledge and skills or by means of a favorite hobby. Do you have a cause or a passion that you would like to share with our young UUs? We are looking forward to your visit. Email dre@secondunitarianomaha.org or call 402-334-0537 ext. 112 to schedule your date and time.

Donations

Many thanks to all the wonderful and extremely helpful donations to the RE program. To show their loving hearts, the Leises donated some wonderful toys, learning games, and magazines with neat pictures of some unusual insects. We also received a wooden table and chairs set for the tots in the nursery as well as some toys. Special thanks to the Kelemens for their helping hands! And for all the paper product rolls that have been donated by many, thank you for your open minds!

Dear Friends,

As I sit to write this letter, even though I have been with the Second Unitarian community for such a short period of time, I feel like I am saying good bye to a fellowship of friends. It has been approximately two months since I accepted the generous offer to join your staff. Please know that I joined the community with excitement as I was looking forward to the possibility of returning to school and being a part of a community of fellow seekers. Life throws unexpected circumstances at us and our world can change quickly. After accepting the DRE position, I was also offered a full time position as a pastor, developing programming for an entirely new ministry. I thought I would be able to function in both positions, but found them to be more than I could plan for well. The community at Second is such a talented and exciting community, you deserve a DRE who can provide more energy for the ministry than I am able to give at this point in time. While I am resigning my position, I look forward to visiting from time to time. Know that I hold you in high esteem and will keep you all in my prayers.

*Shalom,
Jodi Wangsness*

The Reverend Kate Rohde, minister at our fellow church in town (First Unitarian), announced her resignation in mid-November in an email to that congregation. We share that letter with you all so that you may know more about what's happening at First Unitarian. I hope you'll share with her your memories of shared vision and faith and wish her well on her future plans. Omaha has been blessed by her ministry and the First Unitarian Church of Omaha; and, we hope that First Unitarian continues its journey toward healthy, vital Unitarian Universalism. We are blessed to walk beside them in faith.



FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OMAHA
many journeys
one congregation

November 17, 2011

Dear Members and Friends of First Unitarian Church of Omaha,

It is with some sadness and deep regret that I write to inform you of my decision to negotiate a resignation from my call as your minister. Although I was willing to extend my service to you into next summer, the Board and I agreed that I would, instead, serve through December 31st of this year. I am grateful that given that UU ministers have no unemployment insurance and I am unlikely to find a new position until August, you have offered me severance which will help support me and my family in the interim.

It has been an honor to serve as your minister. I would like to especially express my gratitude to those of you who welcomed me into your lives and into your homes. I would like to thank the current staff at the church whose talents are considerable and who make it a pleasure to work here. I am proud of many of the things we have accomplished as a church over the past four years: better attendance at worship, the addition of a successful alternative worship service, more service and visibility in the community, increased interfaith relationships, and a modernization of our communications.

I hope I will have the opportunity to say good bye personally to most of you. I welcome invitations to tea, coffee, or lunch. I welcome any conversations you may wish to have regarding my decision.

I decided on this course when it became clear to me that former congregational leaders who had been questioning my ministry here since last winter, and who escalated their efforts in the spring, had a determination to see me leave that would be satisfied with nothing less. This has tied up the Board and the church for six months and two evaluations of the minister. Our congregation has had difficulty with three of its last four settled ministers. I believe that a good congregational assessment and hard work on the part of the church can change that. I came to this congregation believing that it had the potential to serve twice as many UU's as it currently does and that it could be a real force for good in Omaha. I still believe in your potential and I hope you will find a way to realize it.

My best wishes to you all,
Rev. Kate Rohde

phone: 402.345.3039 | fax: 402.346.2662 | 3114 Harney St, Omaha, NE 68131 | www.firstuomaha.org | minister@firstuomaha.org

Vespers Services: 5 p.m. on the Fourth Sunday

Sunday, December 25, 5 p.m.: It's Christmas Day and in place of this month's Vespers Service, we invite you to join us at worship at 5 p.m., instead of our normal Sunday morning worship.

Sunday, January 22, 5 p.m.: *Our Joys and Sorrows* - this worship service will encourage us to look at those things in our lives that deeply move us. This Sunday evening, we will center our thoughts on those Joys and Sorrows we have heard and that have been written and we will offer our compassion to those who need it.

Living Our 7th Principle - "Hungry for Change"

By Marcia Leise

The 7th principle, which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote, is "respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are all a part."

When the 2008 UUA General Assembly selected "Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice" as the Congregational Study/Action Issue for 2008-2012, they created an opportunity for congregations to study and search for the truth about what this principle really means.

This is an opportunity to study some of the most challenging social issues of our time: hunger and malnutrition, free and fair trade, labor and exploitation, animal rights and human responsibilities, neocolonialism and globalization, environmental degradation and climate change.

Many members of Second Unitarian enjoyed sharing experiences and concerns while studying *Menu for the Future*, a discussion course offered by the Northwest Earth Institute.

***Hungry for Change: Food, Ethics and Sustainability*, a new course offered by the NWEI, will begin Tuesday, January 3**, at 7:00 p.m. downstairs at Second Unitarian, and continue the first Tuesday of each month for 6 sessions. For details or book order, see Marcia Leise or Vicki Pratt. A flyer with course description is posted on the bulletin board in the foyer.

With a cup of hot tea in hand, let's start the New Year 2012 together discussing *Hungry for Change*.

CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

Adopted May 23, 2010

To strengthen the bond of peace within and beyond the Second Unitarian Church of Omaha: We pledge

- to create a religious community where we freely explore our values and honor our diversity as a source of communal strength.
- to build healthy relationships by respecting our differences and assuming good intentions.
- to listen appreciatively and endeavor to speak directly, honestly, and compassionately, particularly when we are in conflict.
- to do our best to forgive if we hurt one another, to make amends and to reconnect in a spirit of gratitude and generosity.
- to abide by this covenant in celebration of the common purpose that unites us.

Faithfully done, our work carries forward the ministry of this church to create loving community and supports our mission to grow as a beacon of hope—sharing a vision of a world community that embraces diversity, justice, and respectful stewardship within the interdependent web of existence.



Night of 1,000 Stars

By Ferial Pearson

Please join the LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation Committee for our annual fundraiser for the Nebraska AIDS Project at the Night of A Thousand Stars, **Saturday, December 3**. We will begin at a party at 5:30 p.m. at the home of Dan and Ferial Pearson with hearty appetizers, wine, and dessert, where you will receive tickets for the Gala.

We will go from the party to the Gala at the Magnolia Hotel from 8:00 p.m. until midnight with this year's honorary chair, Dick Holland. Enjoy a fabulous evening there with entertainment by Dueling Duos, complimentary appetizers, and a cash bar. There will also be a silent art auction featuring works by notable and emerging Omaha artists. Suggested donation is \$25, age 21 and over only. Please check your church directory or contact Ferial for the address of the Pearson home. The Magnolia Hotel is at 1615 Howard Street in Omaha.

RSVP to Tammy Hunter.

Building & Grounds

By Clyde Anderson, Co-Chair

We Strive for Safety First!

Part of Building & Grounds mission is to maintain a safe environment both inside and outside the church.

Fire Safety: Fire exits are clearly marked with illuminated signs. For the sanctuary use the main entrance to the south or exit via the minister's office near the northwest corner of the sanctuary. That's why the door to the minister's office must be left unlocked during events in the sanctuary. There are four wall-mounted fire extinguishers: on the west wall of the foyer near the coat rack, on the east wall of the minister's office next to the door to the sanctuary, in the downstairs worship area next to the double doors, and in the northwest corner of the kitchen next to the sink. There is also a small fire extinguisher on the podium shelf in the sanctuary.


First Aid Kits: The church has two wall-mounted first aid kits which are OSHA and ASNI compliant designed for medium-sized assembly areas. They are located near the fire extinguisher in the foyer (west wall by the coat rack) and west wall of the kitchen (downstairs). In addition to a wide assortment of bandages, ointments, burn spray, and eye wash, the kits have supplies of aspirin and extra-strength pain reliever (like Anacin) in packets of two tablets. Please feel free to use any of the first aid supplies when needed. Please notify Building & Grounds when items from the first aid kits are used so we can replenish them.

If you see something unsafe inside or outside the church, please notify Buildings & Grounds as soon as possible. Contact Clyde Anderson or Tom Rundquist.

Church Inside Work Party Saturday, December 10, 8:00 a.m. to noon

Since the focus of our Fall Church Cleanup Day October 8 was the church yard, we still have a long list of indoor tasks to complete, and we have scheduled an Indoor Work Party for **Saturday, December 10**. However, if you want to brave the cold, there are lots of leaves to rake!

Come anytime between 8 a.m. and noon that fits your schedule. Building and Grounds Committee members will arrange to have a supply of tools and materials available. For more information, contact Clyde Anderson or Tom Rundquist.



At the November 12 Celebration for Rev. Scott and Rev. Sarah Gettie's wedding, the following words were spoken. A card and cash gift were presented to the bride and groom.

Invocation & Presentation of a Gift from Second Unitarian Church

This community welcomes you all today to celebrate the commitment of two people to each other, who are very important to us all. They now share a covenant similar to the one our community has made. They have built a healthy relationship by respecting their differences and know that their words and their deeds are offered with good intention. They will listen first, consider thoughtfully and act honestly and directly. There will be times that they will be in conflict, or may be hurt, but they will forgive and their relationship will be stronger for it. We celebrate because they are a part of us and there is great joy in our being together. I would like to read a poem about what this commitment means for Sarah Gettie and Scott

***Take a lump of clay,
Wet it, pat it,
Make a statue of you
And a statue of me,
Then shatter them, clatter them,
Add some water,
And break them and mold them
Into a statue of you
And a statue of me.
Then in mine, there are bits of you
And in you there are bits of me.
Nothing ever shall keep us apart.***

***By Kuan Dao-Sheng
Quoted by Theodor Reik***

Scott and Sarah Gettie, please accept this gift as a token of our community's esteem for you both. You will always be a part of us.

Written by Craig Piquette, Spoken by Nancy VanderSluis

HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING

Fair Trade for the Holidays



The fair trade products for sale during the 10:30 Sunday Coffee and Conversation hour make wonderful holiday gifts. The chocolate bars are fun stocking stuffers or gifts for co-workers, friends, or teachers. Take our coffees and teas as hostess gifts, or potluck offerings.

Fair trade products provide farmers in South America and Africa a living wage for growing organic coffees, teas, and chocolate. Sales also benefit the UU Service Committee and our own local social justice projects.

Just in time for the holidays we now have peppermint herb tea in addition to English Breakfast, Earl Gray, green, and rooibos. Many coffee flavors in beans or ground. Chocolate bar choices: milk or very dark.

Shop at Amazon.com and your purchases will help Second Unitarian Church

Visit the church website at secondunitarianomaha.org click on Bookstore, and then click on Shop Now @ Amazon.com.

Up to five percent of your purchase will be donated to the church. What a great and painless way to shop and help the church at the same time!

During the 2010-2011 church year we received \$233 in referral fees from Amazon.com which helped pay for our website!

Spread the Word -- Share the Joy!

By Pam Curtiss-Smith

We at Second Unitarian are fortunate to have a loving community of friends with whom to celebrate our joys, ease the pain of our sorrows and join in the fellowship that surrounds the winter holiday season. As we know, many people do not have these same privileges or the means to celebrate the season with their families.

In cooperation with Heartland Family Services, the Lifespan Religious Growth and Learning Committee is coordinating the sponsorship of two local families: a single parent with a five year old son, and a large family of eight, including six children age 6-15 years of age. Second Unitarian members and friends can provide the gifts, cash, or gift cards to help make the season a little brighter for these needy families.

You can participate in this wonderful event. A "gift tree" is on display at the back of the sanctuary. Please take one or more gift tags and purchase the wished for items. Donations of cash and gift cards are also welcome and can be dropped in the box located near the tree.

Please wrap your gift donations with the gift tag attached to identify the contents. Bring them to the church by Sunday, December 11. This will allow the families to do additional shopping before the holiday. If you want to take a larger role in this joyous and meaningful experience, contact Anita Meyer to volunteer to shop, sort, wrap, and/or deliver the gifts.





Second Circle

FOR TEENS OF SECOND UNITARIAN

By Gay Robinson Abraham



All teens are invited to join **Second Circle**, meeting between the two services at 10:30 a.m. on the **first and third Sundays** of the month, September through May. We gather in the church foyer and walk over together to our space across the street. Our time is spent focused on connection—connecting to each other, to the outer community, to the world, and to our religious and spiritual selves. We explore through discussion, ritual, media, and a variety of activities. All meetings are facilitated by two adult volunteers from our church community.

Questions to Gay Robinson Abraham.

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists

By Rev. Scott McNeill

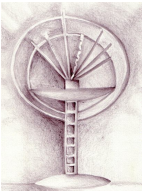


Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) is a joint program for students between 7th and 12th grades. YRUU meets every Wednesday night at 7 p.m. in the Common Room at First Unitarian Church of Omaha, 3114 Harney St.

Starting in **January**, Second Unitarian is privileged to be hosting YRUU. For years, the program has met at both locations and next year, they will return to Second Unitarian on Wednesday nights for the January-May 2012 semester. We look forward to having their energy fill

the space at Second Unitarian!

If you have questions, please talk to Rev. Scott McNeill. All 7th through 12th graders are welcome to this teen program, as well as our Sunday morning program, Second Circle!



New Church Directory Coming Soon

Please Update Your Info!

The Membership Committee is busy checking with Second Unitarian members and affiliates to update information for the Church Directory. If your contact or family information has changed since last January, please contact the church office at 402-334-0537 or info@secondunitarianomaha.org

Love to make a joyful noise and have fun with a delightful group? *Please join the Second Unitarian Choir!* Our 2011-2012 year is kicking off with our fantastic music director, Donna Zebolsky. We would love to have you join us! Email Donna at music@secondunitarianomaha.org. Rehearsals are Thursdays from 6:30-7:30 and the choir performs about once a month!

PRIVACY POLICY FOR CHURCH PUBLICATIONS

As stated in church policies: *Respect for the privacy of members, friends, and visitors is a primary consideration. When newsletter submissions contain personal information (phone number, street address, email address, etc.), it is the author's responsibility to get the subject's permission to publish this information.* Since many of our communications are transmitted electronically and information therein may more easily be re-transmitted, it's essential that any personal information be approved for inclusion. In general, it's preferable to omit personal information, but in those cases where it's necessary (such as a location for an offsite meeting), those who submit articles should ask for permission to publish the personal information. An alternative is "Please call or email the church office for contact information." Contact the Office Administrator for more information.

Regarding published photographs: If you do not want your photo published (including in the newsletter or on the website), please inform the Office Administrator in writing. Thanks!



IS ANYTHING MISSING FROM YOUR CHURCH NEWSLETTER?

Are there features, articles, columns, or other insights that would inspire you to better enjoy your copy of *Second Thoughts*?

Are there layout improvements you'd like to see?

Is your church's newsletter meeting your expectations?

Let us know! newsletter@secondunitarianomaha.org

or 402-334-0537 ext. 114

- **Travel and stay in homes of people who share your ideals**
- **Learn about hosting people in your home to earn extra money**

The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) offers a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and are happy to open their home to like-minded people. Travel to different cities and stay in reasonably priced accommodations or become a host and enjoy meeting new friends.

For more information, visit www.UUreHome.com or write to info@uurehome.com



www.UUreHome.com
43 Vermont Court
Asheville, NC 28806
828-281-3253

Remember to Recycle

Please help our church recycling program by using the paper recycling bin in the foyer and the bins for aluminum cans and plastic bottles to the left of the refrigerator in the kitchen.

The church also provides bins in the foyer for recycling your clean second-hand clothes for Siena/Francis House.

Your old electronic equipment can be recycled! For details how you can keep this junk out of the landfills, please read the article about recycling posted on our church web site.

Go to

http://www.secondunitarianomaha.org/?id=Recycle_computer

Attendance				
Date	Adults in Worship	Adults in R.E.	Children in R.E.	Youth in Second Circle
10/30	89	5	6	--
11/6	103	5	11	7
11/13	86	5	11	--
11/20	87	<i>Intergenerational Service</i>		

Writing for Spiritual Growth

We're now meeting at **4 p.m. the first Sunday of every month**, downstairs. We celebrate by placing our understanding of spirituality into poetry and prose, which adds clarity and passion to our lives. Join us in creating the world we desire through the written word. All members and friends of the Second Unitarian Church of Omaha are welcome to participate. We welcome all sojourners who wish to share the paths on which they walk in search of enlightenment. We have no creeds, no goals, no competitive members, and no grades. Our group's motto is "Just Write." Our belief is the truth for each person will appear, when we write enough. - *David Martin*

Immigration Forum Report

by Social Justice Committee

Omaha Together One Community held an Immigration Forum this fall. Members of Second Unitarian were part of the diverse group of 450+ in attendance. The overflow crowd learned how to work together to improve the treatment of immigrants in Nebraska.

Local resident Jorge shared examples of real impacts to children when their parents are deported. Patricia, a college student, spoke about the need for passing the Dream Act. Business leader Armando Salgado and UNO professor Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado detailed economic benefits to Nebraska from immigration. United Methodist Bishop Ann B. Sherer Simpson and Nebraska Catholic Conference Director Jim Cunningham challenged participants to live up to our faith traditions. Omaha Police Department Deputy Chief Schmaderer spoke about how officers should interact with immigrants and committed to continue working with OTOC to improve relationships. Professor David Weber of Creighton Law School explained how immigration enforcement is governed by federal, not state law. Four Omaha area state Senators pledged to work with OTOC on pending legislation affecting immigrant families.

This event gave OTOC leaders renewed energy for the work ahead to shape just immigration policy at the local, state, and national level.

If you are interested in joining OTOC's Immigration Reform Action Team, contact Vicki Pratt. Watch for announcements about upcoming "Immigration as a Moral Issue" discussions.

Women's Alliance

By Ellen Shurson

Attention Women of First and Second Unitarian: Let's have a "Green" Holiday Celebration this year!

The December Women's Alliance meeting will feature a "Re-Gift/Recycle" Gift Exchange. Check around your home for something that you no longer want or need that may surprise, amuse, or delight someone else. The holiday gift exchanges are an evening of fun, surprises and lots of laughter!

Wrap it up and bring it with you. For this meeting, each of us will also bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

The cost of \$10 per person will go entirely to the Merritt Scholarship Fund. If you are joining us for the first time, please be our guest. Join in the fun Monday, December 12 at 6:30 p.m. for social time, 7:00 for dinner, followed by the gift exchange, all held in the Common Room at First Unitarian Church.

Reservations must be made no later than Friday, December 9, to Janet West. We hope to see you at the meeting.



Second Unitarian Church Calendar

December, 2011

Thu., Dec. 1, 5:30 p.m. Executive Committee, (DNW)
7:30 p.m., Choir Rehearsal (offsite this week)
7:30 p.m., ASN's Autism Caregivers (SA)
Sat., Dec. 3, 5:30 p.m., Night of 1,000 Stars (offsite)
Sun., Dec. 4, 4 p.m., Writing for Spiritual Growth (DNW)
6 p.m., Covenant Group (SA)
Mon., Dec. 5, 7 p.m., Fellowship Committee (FH)
Tue., Dec. 6, 7 p.m., Lifespan Religious Growth & Learning (FH)
Wed., Dec. 7, 7 p.m., Social Justice Coordinating Council (DNW)
Thu., Dec. 8, 7 p.m., Board of Trustees (DNW)
Sat., Dec. 10, 8 a.m., Interior Church Work Day (WH)
Sun., Dec. 11, 12:45 p.m., Lunch for Newcomers (DNW)
Mon., Dec. 12, 6 p.m., Advertising Advisory Council (FH)
6:30 p.m., Women's Alliance (offsite)
7 p.m. LGBTQ Welcoming (DNW)
7 p.m., OTOC Steering Committee (offsite)
Tue., Dec. 13, 1 p.m., Retirees Group (FH)
5 p.m., Caring Committee (FH)
6 p.m., Committee on Ministry/Burks (FH)
6:30 p.m., Stewardship Task Force (DNW)
Wed., Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. Finance Coordinating Council (DNW)
Thu., Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m., Music & Worship (DNW)
7:30 p.m., Meditation Reincarnated (SA)
Sat., Dec. 17, 5 p.m., Holiday Happenings (WH)
Sun., Dec. 18, 6 p.m., Covenant Group (SA)
MON., DEC. 19 - FRI., DEC. 30: NURSERY/OFFICE PROJECT
Mon., Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m., Library Committee (FH)
Tue., Dec. 20, 1 p.m., Communications Committee (DNW)
Sat., Dec. 24, 4 p.m., Christmas Eve Service I
6 p.m., Christmas Eve Service II
Sun., Dec. 25, 5 p.m., Christmas Service (NO morning services)
Mon., Dec. 26, 7 p.m., Earth- Based Spirituality (FH)
Tue., Dec. 27, 7:30 p.m., Blackstone Book Club (FH)

Regular Events:

Sundays, 9:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m., Worship Service
Sundays, 10:30 a.m., Fellowship & Refreshments
Sundays, 4 p.m., "Forum" (check weekly)
First & Third Sundays, 10:30 a.m., Second Circle
Tuesdays, 12 noon, Lunch @ Church
Wednesdays, 7 p.m., YRUU (at First Unitarian)
Thursdays, 6:30 p.m., Choir Rehearsal
15th of Every Month: *Second Thoughts* deadline

Calendar Codes:

RE=Religious Education, (FH)=First Hour Area, (SA)=Sanctuary, (DN)=Downstairs, (DNW) = Downstairs Worship Area (OS)=Offsite, (WH)=Whole Church, (PR)=Private Rental, (KI)=Kitchen, (MO)=Minister's office: scheduled by Minister only.

Save These Dates Next Month:

January 1: One service today @ 11:30 a.m.
January 3: "Hungry for Change" begins
January 11: YRUU moves to Second Unitarian
January 14: Pathways to Membership class
January 21: Sing for Your Supper!

Let us know how you use this calendar. Do you post it on your refrigerator? Do you use it to remind you of a meeting you need to attend? Or perhaps do you prefer to check the online calendar which is updated regularly, not just once a month like this calendar in the newsletter? Please let us know how important this calendar is to you, and if you have suggestions for improvements. **Thank you!**

All events are subject to change.

To check the latest church calendar updates anytime, visit www.SecondUnitarianOmaha.org and click on CALENDAR OF EVENTS in the left-hand column, or call the church if there is a question.

Contact Us

Staff

Church Phone (402) 334-0537

Rev. Scott McNeill, Minister

Office hours by appointment

402-334-0537 ext. 111

minister@secondunitarianomaha.org

Rev. Sarah Gettie Burks, Community Minister

communityminister@secondunitarianomaha.org

**Kirsten Stiles, Religious Education & Childcare
Coordinator**

402-334-0537 ext. 112

childcare@secondunitarianomaha.org

Gary Emenitove, Office Administrator

402-334-0537 ext. 114

info@secondunitarianomaha.org

Donna Zebolsky, Music Director

music@secondunitarianomaha.org

Second Thoughts

Staff: Rev. Scott McNeill, Nancy Amsler, Richard Koelling, Betty Segell, Gary Emenitove

Board of Trustees

board@secondunitarianomaha.org

Trustees with terms expiring June 30, 2012

Kathy Bell

Lorraine Duggin

Don Shennum, Secretary

Trustees with terms expiring June 30, 2013

Cheri Cody, Chair

Laura Neece-Baltaro

Nancy VanderSluis, Vice-Chair

Trustees with terms expiring June 30, 2014

JoAnne Draper

Anita Jeck

Appointed by the Board of Trustees

Pat Caffrey, Treasurer

Second Unitarian Church Of Omaha

3012 South 119th Street

Omaha, Nebraska 68144

(402) 334-0537

www.secondunitarianomaha.org

Committees

Audit Committee

Richard Baltaro, Chair

Building and Grounds

Clyde Anderson & Tom Rundquist, Co-Chairs

Caring

Dodie Robison, Chair

Committee on Ministry

Richard Koelling, Contact

Communications

Nancy Amsler, Chair

Fellowship

Janet Nichols & Betty Segell, Co-Chairs

Finance Coordinating Council

Vicki Pratt, Chair

Endowment Fund

Stu Burns, Chair

Fundraising

Chris Peters & Stephanie Peterson, Co-Chairs

Stewardship

Clyde Anderson, Chair

Library

Melissa Konecky, Chair

Lifespan Religious Growth and Learning

Jaime Short & Kelly Hanneman, Co-Chairs

Membership

Kathy Bell, Volunteer Membership Coordinator

Music & Worship

Julie Kirn, Chair

Aesthetics/Second Showing

Dodie Robison & Pam Curtiss-Smith, Contacts

Nominations/Leadership Development

Sue Aschinger, Chair

Personnel

Carol Johnson, Contact

Social Justice Coordinating Council

Pat Caffrey, Chair

Care for the Environment

Contact to be announced

Closing the Economic Gap

Pat Caffrey & Cheri Cody, Contacts

Welcoming Congregation / LGBTQ Beacon

Tammy Hunter, Contact

Technology

Bill Kuhn, Chair

Writing for Spiritual Growth

David Martin, Contact

Many church communications are sent via e-mail. A weekly e-news update is transmitted each Wednesday. If you have no access to a computer, please let the church office administrator know the best way to convey information to you.

Second Unitarian Church

3012 S. 119th Street

Omaha, NE 68144

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**MISSION STATEMENT
SECOND UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OMAHA**

“Second Unitarian Church of Omaha is an inclusive and nurturing religious community engaged in thoughtful pursuit of truth and meaning. Our mission is to grow as a beacon of hope – sharing a vision of a world community that embraces diversity and promotes justice and respectful stewardship within the interdependent web of existence.”

Adopted May 16, 2004