



Second Thoughts

Second Unitarian Church of Omaha

Inside this issue:

Minister's Musings	2
Board of Trustees	3
Share the Plate	3
Treasurer's Report	4
Yule/Solstice Celebration	4
Christmas Eve Service	5
Strategic Planning	8
New Church Logo	9
Lifespan Religious Growth & Learning	11
Membership	12
New Era of UUism	13
Calendar	14
Church Information	15

Join Us This Sunday!

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

The December Worship Theme is Peace

December 2

In Waiting and Expectation

Rev. Sarah Gettie Burks

This is the time of the year when our society looks toward the coming month with much preparation and expectation. But what is it that we, as Unitarian Universalists, are preparing for? This Sunday, as the nights lengthen and the first snows fall, we consider our role in the magic and wonderment of the holiday season.

December 9

The Peace of Parenting

Rev. Scott McNeill

From everything I've read, leading a family or an organization is about comfort with chaos. This Sunday, we look at the idea of being non-anxious in times of growth.

December 16

(Dis)Belief

Rev. Scott McNeill

As Unitarian Universalists, we are charged with spiritual exploration and faith development. In worship, we will explore theological issues suggested by members and grapple with hard topics of belief and faith.

December 23

Holiday-palooza

Rev. Scott McNeill

This Sunday, our whole church will celebrate and learn about various December holidays with song and story. Join us for fun and festivities.

December 24

Christmas Eve Family Service at 4 p.m.

Rev. Scott McNeill

December 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 6 p.m.

Rev. Scott McNeill

December 30

Looking Ahead?

Join us for worship as members of Second Unitarian share their stories and thoughts about the future. With 2013 around the corner, we try to balance staying in the moment with anticipation.



**Share the Joy --
Adopt a Family**
see page 11

Parents' Group
Sunday, December 9
see page 8

**Yule/Solstice
Celebration**
Saturday, December 15
see page 4

**Christmas Eve
Services**
Tuesday, December 24
see page 5

Second Thoughts is a monthly publication of Second Unitarian Church of Omaha.
Please send your articles and submissions to: info@2Uomaha.org.
Deadline is the fifteenth of each month.



Minister's Musings

By Reverend Scott McNeill



December's worship theme is Peace, which is a bit ironic to me. Given all of the busy errands and events, all the festivities and frantic running around, peaceful is the last thing I feel in December. Usually the New Year's Eve countdown brings in a new year – and a chance to relax, knowing that the holiday season is merely twelve months away.

So maybe it's good that Peace is the theme – to get me wrestling with balancing calm with Christmas. However you spend your December, I hope that you're able to find some time for relaxation and reflection. Too often, we can worry about what must be done while ignoring the life in front of us in the present.

Not too long ago, I met a woman who mentioned that for Christmas, she gave her grandchildren a gift of a whole day with her where they could do whatever they wanted, but with grandma.

One granddaughter wanted a nice lunch and manicures. One grandson wanted to play at an arcade and eat pizza. And the last – well, she wasn't so sure what she would want to do with grandma. You see, she never liked to inconvenience someone or choose what to do for fear of annoying others. So she had a difficult time with a day that was to be all about her.

After some time, the granddaughter found the right mix of her desires plus what she thought grandma would like and they went off to a concert of Celtic music and had a great time. But it would seem as though the real gift that her grandmother gave to her was the gift of peace. It was hard for the granddaughter to accept it and enjoy it, but eventually she did.

After it was all over, the grandmother spent more time with the kids than she would've had she merely bought them presents. And she definitely spent more money (so, beware if you take this idea for yourself – it's not as cheap as you might think!). The point for her wasn't to lessen her Christmas work or time or money spent. Instead, she reveled in the idea that she would get the chance to enjoy more time with her family and see what they liked.

The lesson? Experiences matter. Maybe you can't spend the day with family doing what they'd like. Or, maybe they need a pair of jeans more than the time together. But if it's possible in your life, know that giving someone your attention and love can be a touching gift.

The present of presence stays with people far longer than any electronic or toy.

If this time of year stresses you out (for whatever reason – the cold and dark days, the frenzied pace), try to slow down your pace so that you can find a moment of peace. Not every pie has to be made. Not every decoration has to be hung. In fact, the way to a perfect moment lies not in the time you spend making it, but in the time you spend with others.

May you find some excitement and peace throughout this month, in whatever you choose to do. Our church will be open all month so that we can come together and commiserate and celebrate. Join us as you experience good times and bad, pressured and peaceful!

In Faith,

Rev. Scott



Planks and Slivers from the Board

By Nancy VanderSluis Chair, Board of Trustees



Hello and holiday greetings from the Board of Trustees.

It's colder outside and the shorter daylight hours of winter have put the natural world into winter dormancy, sleeping under a blanket of cold and snow. Not so the people and programs of Second Unitarian Church. We actively come together for this time of holiday communion to rejoice in all of the sensations of the season: bright red and green decor, twinkling lights, inspired music and ministry, the scent of pine, the taste of great food, and the warmth of fellowship.

To make it all possible, many hands have been busy with planning and preparation. I would like to recognize those who make our holiday brighter by the work they do. Rev. Scott brings his professional presence, leadership and spiritual grounding to this celebration and throughout the year. *THANK YOU!* The church staff have worked hard behind the scenes to ease our load so we can enjoy our time together. They give to us by doing so many things. Whittany Eisermann is our nursery attendant, watching over the littlest Unitarians. *THANK YOU!* Our office administrator, Gary Emenitove, is the face and voice of the church as he orchestrates the administrative and financial work that we all depend upon. He is the glue that keeps us functioning in coordination. *THANK YOU!* Recently departed Mike Brockman and now Brett Harvey have provided janitorial service that makes our sanctuary sparkle. *THANK YOU!* Kirsten Stiles and Naomi Solomon create a special community and religious education experience for our youth. *THANK YOU!* Donna Zebolsky leads our music program and graces us with her musical gifts during worship. *THANK YOU!* Kathy Bell continues to voluntarily fill in as membership coordinator, educating and lighting the path to membership for our newcomers. *THANK YOU!* Our volunteer treasurer, Pat Caffrey, performs the specialized and time intensive task of managing the church finances. *THANK YOU!* And to the tireless army of you who have volunteered to help out in ways big and small as individuals or via all of the committees, *THANK YOU!* Each of you supports our community with your presence. We are made whole by each authentic one of you. *THANK YOU!*

This December, as you partake in the sacrament of giving and receiving gifts, remember to thank those whose gifts have made our church community possible and whose work has enriched the pleasures of this holiday, holy day season.

Shalom,

Nancy



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 three 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, 2012

Thank you to all who made the Fundraising Event — the Peter Mayer Concert — a success! A total of \$1,050.57 was raised and a great time was had by all!

YTD Pledge Income/Current Year: \$58,400.99
reflects 34.81% of \$167,758.00 Total Pledged for 2012-13.

YTD New Pledge Income/Current Year: \$1,135.00
received of New Pledges for \$6,875.00 for 2012-13.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	<u>October</u>	<u>Year-To-Date</u>
Income	\$15,560.61	\$69,413.29
Expenses	<u>-\$15,810.62</u>	<u>-\$64,731.45</u>
Net Over/Short	<u>-\$ - 250.01</u>	<u>\$ 4,681.84</u>

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

Thank you!
Treasurer
Pat Caffrey

Celebrate Yule with the Pagan and Earth-Based Spirituality Group!

On December 15, we will gather at the church to celebrate Yule, the Germanic Pagan festival observed on the winter solstice. On Yule, we celebrate the (re)birth of the sun as represented by the god and the holiday includes many recognizable symbols and traditions in common with Christmas, such as caroling, holly, feasting, evergreens and gift-giving.

We will gather together at the church from 6 until 9 p.m. for a ritual marking the birth of the god and the turn of the wheel of the year towards the light as the days start getting longer again. After the ritual, we will feast together, so please bring a dish to share that represents the sun (perhaps something round, yellow or hot) or something traditionally associated with Yule/Christmas.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Leslie Harvey or Gypsi Ballard.

Christmas Eve Services

Join us for worship on Christmas Eve, Monday, December 24!

Our 4 p.m. worship will be a *family-friendly service* as children and adults prepare for the fun and festivities of Christmas. Join us for an exciting, energetic worship filled with songs and stories!

If you prefer the *quieter, more contemplative services*, our 6 p.m. worship is right for you. Each year, we have a candlelight service which calls on us to reflect on winter, anticipation, and our lives.

Last year, several people came to both as Christmas Eve is a great chance to slow down and reflect on life during all of the hustle and bustle of the season.

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 Religious Education 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 non-aspirin pain reliever 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.

Snow & Ice: Winter weather is upon us! Although we have a contractor who plows the church driveways and parking lot, we rely on volunteers to clear snow off the walks, steps, and porches. Snow shovels, sand, and deicer are located in the foyer under the coat rack. Please feel free to use these items when necessary when ice and snow make walking the church grounds dangerous.

If you see something unsafe inside or outside the church, please refer to the Emergency Contact Information sheets posted on the bulletin boards and furnace room doors, or notify Building & Grounds as soon as possible: Contact Clyde Anderson or Tom Rundquist.

Thanks to the Church Cleanup Volunteers October 6 and November 3

Thanks to the hard work of our Building & Grounds volunteers, the church interior and yard really look nice with trees pruned, leaves raked, windows cleaned, several minor repairs made, and preparations made for winter. Our dedicated volunteers include Marco Ballarin, Rick Bell, Neva Cozine, Pam Curtiss-Smith, Donna Dudley, David & Carol Johnson, Melissa Konecky, Bill Kuhn, Tom Lundahl, Roger Nicolaisen, Dodie Robison, Tom & Shirley Rundquist, Nancy VanderSluis, and Michaela Weiss.

Thank you very much for your time and effort!



LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation Committee

By Tammy Hunter



Night of a Thousand Stars 20th Anniversary Gala Nebraska AIDS Project Fundraiser Saturday, December 1 / World AIDS Day

Please join the LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation Committee for our annual fundraiser for the Nebraska AIDS Project (NAP). It will be a party at the home of Dan and Ferial Pearson, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 1 (World AIDS Day).

We will have hearty appetizers, wine, and dessert. We are asking for a suggested donation of \$25 to NAP, although any free-will donation will be gratefully accepted.

For those who would also like to attend the Night of a Thousand Stars Gala at the Magnolia Hotel (1615 Howard Street in Omaha), tickets will be \$60, or \$30 for students. The Gala will be held from 9 p.m. to midnight, following the party at the Pearson home. Those who purchase tickets to the Gala will not need to make any additional donation to NAP in order to attend the party at the Pearsons'. Please check your church directory or contact Ferial for her address.

All proceeds from this event will support the education, outreach, and client services programs at Nebraska AIDS Project. Nebraska AIDS Project leads the community in the fight to overcome HIV/AIDS and its stigma through education, supportive services, and advocacy.

RSVP by Wednesday, November 28. Please sign up in the coffee hour area or contact Tammy Hunter.



Women's Alliance

By Ellen Shurson

Attention women of First and Second Unitarian Churches! 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. Wrap it up and bring it with you. The holiday gift exchanges are an evening of fun, surprises, and lots of laughter!

For this meeting, each of us will also bring an appetizer or dessert to share. Please indicate what you will bring when signing up.

We will also be collecting hygienic items for our neighbors who come to the Community Meals to give them in a holiday gift bag. Please bring as many of the following items as you can: toothpaste/toothbrush, bar of soap, facecloth/towel, deodorant, small comb, Men: disposable razor/shaving cream, Women: sanitary products.

The cost of \$12 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 10, at 6:30 p.m. for social time, 7 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 7. to Janet West. We hope to see you at the meeting.



Healthcare Chaplaincy

By Rev. Sarah Gettie Burks, Affiliated Community Minister



Some of you must wonder what it is hospital chaplains do and what I do in my community ministry as the Team Lead in Pastoral Services at Methodist Hospital. If you ever find yourself on the patient-end of a chaplain visit, you might also wonder how you, as a Unitarian Universalist, might receive such a visitor (what are the chaplain's intentions coming to visit me, after all?). Have no fear! Chaplains are there to support you and meet you where you are in that time and place. Below are answers to some typical questions patients have of chaplains.

Q: I'm not sure what a chaplain does. What is the role of the chaplain in healthcare?

A: A hospital chaplain supports patients and family members, emotionally and spiritually, during a hospital stay. Through completing a spiritual assessment, chaplains determine a patient or family member's spiritual wellbeing, taking note of what strengthens and supports the person in the midst of crisis, as well as what hindrances may inhibit a sense of holistic wellness. Chaplains then determine spiritual goals of care in conjunction with the interdisciplinary care team and according to the patient's medical status. Chaplains also facilitate ethical and moral guidance for patients and families by asking questions and allowing them to discover for themselves answers that are in integrity with their personal moral and ethical value system. When specifically religious support services are requested, chaplains offer those services or make connections with a patient's faith community to meet the spiritual needs of the patient.

Q: How does one become a chaplain? How do Chaplains differ from Parish or Church Ministers/Priests?

A: Most hospital chaplains have received education and applied training to provide ministry *specifically* within the healthcare setting. For many chaplains, this Clinical Pastoral Education is in addition to receiving the Masters of Divinity or Masters of Theology degree. This education trains chaplains to be open and receptive to people of all different faith backgrounds (or none at all), to be an effective member of the interdisciplinary care team, to bring a non-anxious presence in the midst of challenging or conflictual situations, and allows chaplains to develop effective communication skills for providing excellent patient care.

Q: Are there other responsibilities chaplains may have?

A: Many hospital chaplains also serve on hospital committees and develop policies and procedures in conjunction with hospital administration. In my work at Methodist, I serve on the following committees: Patient Rights and Ethics, End of Life, Women's Hospital Council, Integrated Oncology Council, and Harper's Hope (a committee for patient support services at the Estabrook Cancer Center). In many hospital systems, chaplains assist patients with completing Advanced Directives, such as documents for Medical Power of Attorney and Living Wills. Hospital chaplains also often serve as chaplains to staff members, holding debriefings after particularly tough patient cases and creating spaces in which healthcare providers can focus on self-care to combat compassion fatigue. It's not uncommon for chaplains to likewise provide education within the hospital on caring for patients and families from a holistic, spiritually-minded perspective.

If you encounter a clinically-trained chaplain during a hospital visit, I encourage you to engage him or her as a resource for spiritual support for you and/or your family members. Send me a note if you have further questions, and if you ever want to complete Medical Power of Attorney and/or Living Will legal documents, as a Notary Public, I'd be happy to assist you with them any time!



Strategic Planning Committee

By Carol Johnson

Members of the Strategic Planning Committee are learning about long range planning in a contemporary congregation from a book entitled: *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*. The definition of planning presented in this book and adopted by the Strategic Planning Committee is the following: "A structured conversation about what a group of people believe they are called to be or to do."

To actuate this definition, the role of the committee becomes that of facilitator of conversations and discovery. This also means that all members have a role in voicing their perceptions of who we are at Second Unitarian and what we are called to be or do in this community.

Here are some points to stir our thinking as we prepare for upcoming conversations:

- Here's where we are now
- Here's where we want or feel called to be in the future
- Here's a description of the gap between where we are and where we want to be
- Here's what we have to learn or do in order to get there
- Here are our options for making the changes to get there

This plan will have your "stamp" on it and will weave together our collective picture of what we can become as a congregation. The Strategic Planning Committee (Steve Abraham, Carol Johnson, Rich McArdle, Stephanie Peterson, Craig Piquette, and Rev. Scott) looks forward to thoughtful and meaningful conversations about our future.

Parents' Group Meets December 9

Join us on Sunday, December 9, at 4 p.m. for a **Parents' Group** meeting.

If you are expecting new life in your family, or are the parent of a little one, we invite you to meet with us as we take a break and connect with other parents.

This month, we will offer special blessings to our parents-to-be

Darren and Courtney as they prepare to deliver!

Snacks and childcare are provided.

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!



New Church Logo

By Nancy Amsler, Marketing Advisory Council

The Marketing Advisory Council (MAC) is pleased to announce that we have selected a new logo to represent the church and the Board has approved it. Our rationale for accepting this design is that the tulip shape denotes growth, nurturing, spring (new life) bringing hope and beauty. We feel that the path expresses our searching for our own path. We feel that it is a timeless design, vibrant, a contemporary design with traditional elements of the U shape and the chalice and flame, and think it has a youthful look.



MAC is working on ways to make this logo available to your group. Please contact MAC for more information or with your ideas. This is a big project which will take time to be fully implemented, and we look forward to working with your group with our new "look."

*** Holiday Shopping Suggestions ***

Fair Trade for the Holidays

As you make your holiday shopping lists, remember our fair trade products for sale in the foyer between Sunday services. Coffee, tea, and chocolate make great stocking stuffers, host/hostess gifts, and treats for co-workers and friends.

All products are organically grown using sustainable practices and ensure farmers and workers are paid fairly. A small markup here supports our congregation's social justice work.

Peace Coffees

Peace Coffee is the country's first 100 percent certified organic and fair trade coffee company. They started with importing organic fair trade green coffee beans from Mexico and Guatemala to sell to local roasters. A partnership with Nobel Peace Prize laureate Rigoberta Menchu led to the creation of Guatemalan Peace Coffee which became Peace Coffee. Peace Coffee now roasts fair trade coffee from Ethiopia, Columbia, Sumatra, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and the Dominican Republic.



Varieties include ground, whole bean, decaf, high roast, and dark roast. Peace Coffee has changed packaging to smaller bags that now sell for \$8 each.

Equal Exchange Teas

Teas come from small farmer partners in India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, and the U.S. Varieties include decaf, herbal, and English Breakfast. \$5 each.



Equal Exchange Chocolate

Milk and Very Dark chocolate bars support small-scale farmers and their families. The bars combine Swiss standards in chocolate making with cocoa from farmer co-operatives in the Dominican Republic, Panama, Peru, and Ecuador; fairly traded organic sugar from co-operatives in Paraguay; and fairly traded vanilla from Madagascar. \$3 each.

Shop at Amazon.com and Help Second Unitarian Church

Your online holiday purchases can help the church! Visit the church website at www.2Uomaha.org, under Quick Links click on Books, and then click on the link for 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!





Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU)

By Naomi Solomon, Youth Programming Coordinator

YRUU teens and advisors have been doing a great job recently of taking the time to have some deep discussions about what we value as UUs and how we can make those values better known to those we interact with. More visits with folks from local congregations are still being planned for the next few months as we continue to learn about our spiritual and religious neighbors in Omaha.

This month we will continue a great YRUU tradition with the white elephant gift exchange planned for December 12. We also would like to welcome back any former YRUU members for a grand reunion on December 19!

Remember, YRUU is open to any teen in grades 7 through 12 who is free on Wednesday evenings from 6:45-8:30 for camaraderie, purposely spiritual games & discussions, and free-thinking UU worship. Please contact Naomi Solomon at yruu@2uomaha.org.

We look forward to meeting new friends!



Second Circle

By Gay Robinson Abraham



All teens are invited to join **Second Circle**, meeting downstairs during the second service at 11:30 a.m. on the **first and third Sundays** of the month, September through May. Please join us in our new space downstairs this year!

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.

Please refer questions to Gay Robinson Abraham.

Meditation Reincarnated

By Kevin Dunlop

Meditation Reincarnated is a group that meets monthly in the church downstairs to learn about and practice meditation. We are currently studying the book *You Are Here* by Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh, which teaches the reader about discovering the magic of the present moment. Both the book and our meditation practice are designed for everyone, whether monk or beginner. No previous meditation experience is necessary.

Please join us most months on the fourth Thursday at 7:30 p.m. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, our November meeting is on the 29th. We will not meet in December. We will resume our normal schedule on January 24.



Lifespan Religious Growth & Learning

By Kirsten Stiles, Director of Religious Growth & Learning



We asked the children what they are grateful for this Thanksgiving. Here are a few of their answers:

- I am thankful for my mommy, she got me new socks, and my daddy because he loves me.
- My warm cozy home.
- My grandma when she visits me.

DECEMBER FAMILY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

Share the Joy of December's Family Service Learning Project with your children. Select a gift tag, take your children with you to the store, let them pick out the needed gift, let them wrap it, and take the opportunity to let them be part of the Magic of Christmas for another child this year! See *Share the Joy this Holiday Season* below.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS DECEMBER 9

Holiday Happenings is sponsored by the Lifespan Religious Growth and Learning Committee and will be held during coffee hour on December 9. Snacks and refreshments will be provided. Come prepared to share your blessings. Thinking of how every snowflake is different is symbolic to our differences. Every flake is just as important as the next, yet so different. Each flake is necessary to make it snow!

JANUARY FAMILY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

The Nebraska Humane Society is letting us in for a behind-the-scenes tour of their facilities for our Family Service Learning Project on January 27 at 11:30 a.m. They need blankets, towels, one-gallon Ziploc freezer bags, distilled water, clear plastic tubs, yarn, box fans, rubber-backed rugs, and more. A complete list is available in the back of the sanctuary.

If you do not plan to visit the Humane Society with us on January 27, feel free to bring the items to church and place them in the collection boxes. If you do plan to attend, please keep the items at home until we meet on January 27. After our tour we will round up all we have collected.

Kirsten

Share the Joy this Holiday Season -- Adopt a Family!

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 three local families: a single parent with four children, ages 2, 6, and twins that are 16; a single parent with three children ages 2 to 6; and a family of five with two 7-year-olds and a newborn baby. 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.

Participate in this wonderful event. In the church foyer is an area where you may 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 in this same area. One of our families buys their groceries at No Frills, one at Walmart, and the other at Hy-Vee, so gift cards to buy food for holiday meals are always welcome.

Please wrap your gift donations with the gift tag attached to identify the contents. Bring them to the church by Sunday, December 16. 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 Becky Scherbring or Katie Tessin to volunteer to shop, sort, wrap, and/or deliver the gifts. -- Anita Meyer

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.

Membership Journeys

By Kathy Bell, Volunteer Membership Coordinator

Please take a moment to welcome our newest members! Their pictures and bios will appear on the New Member board in the foyer in the coming months.

If there is someone you have not seen at church in a while, take a moment to call them or send a note during this holiday season. A simple phone call or message can warm a cold December day.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS to all members and affiliates of Second Unitarian Church!

Attendance					
Date	Adults in Worship	Adults in R.E.	Children in R.E.	Youth in Second Circle	Family Service Learning
10/28	66	<i>Family Service Learning</i>			36
11/4	87	5	11	4	--
11/11	85	5	6	--	--
11/18	83	<i>Intergenerational</i>			--



Our Congregation's Role in a "New Era of UUism"

by Vicki Pratt



MidAmerica: The Heart of Unitarian Universalism

Our congregation has a vital role in a proposal for a New Era of Unitarian Universalism. The proposal is to merge three districts in the geographic center of the United States, including what is now the Prairie Star District, into one MidAmerica Region.

Districts Background: In the mid 1960s, the U.S. was divided into 19 administrative districts, created for ease of travel at that time. Nebraska is part of the Prairie Star District along with Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, and small areas of Wisconsin and Missouri. Central Midwest District and Heartland Districts are to our east and include Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Kentucky. Each of the districts has paid staff and provides services to

congregations in their districts. Services include assistance with growing membership, training local leaders, finding ministers, and religious education programs. Funding for each district comes from the Unitarian Universalist Association and local congregations. Each district is governed by an elected Board of Trustees. The UUA Board includes a trustee elected from each district.

How Decisions are Made: Each district holds an Annual Meeting to elect its Board of Trustees and make other decisions. Each congregation in the district is entitled to send delegates to the Annual Meeting and vote on behalf of their congregation. Each congregation names their delegates.

Historic Vote: The next Prairie Star Annual Meeting is April 5-7, 2013, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Our congregation's delegates will cast an historic vote: whether to dissolve the Prairie Star District and merge it into a newly created MidAmerica Region. This merger is referred to as "regionalization."

Advantages of Regionalization: Cost savings and financial stability are the obvious reason for regionalization. But there are many other advantages: specialized services from staff; administrative and technology efficiency; collaboration on social justice work; covenanting with other congregations and partner organizations; and increased visibility for our UU faith.

Next Steps: Everyone in our congregation needs to keep informed and guide our delegates toward this historic vote. Be watching your email and newsletter for news from Prairie Star and details about a congregation information meeting.



Camp StarTrail 2013

Join us July 28 to August 2, 2013, to celebrate the fifth anniversary of Camp StarTrail. Located on the Platte River midway between Lincoln and Omaha, Camp StarTrail is the premier summer event for Unitarian Universalists in the Midwest.

Less camp and more retreat, Camp StarTrail is a refreshing and rejuvenating multi-generational experience. Theme speaker for 2013 will be Rev. Meg Riley, a Huffington Post Blogger and Senior Minister of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, a 3,500 member UU "Church Without Walls."

Register for Camp StarTrail before January 1, 2013, and receive a \$20 per person discount. Online registration begins December 1, 2012, at <http://www.psduua.org/Camps/CampStarTrail2013>. Send questions about camp to campstartrail@psduua.org.



Second Unitarian Church Calendar

December, 2012

Mon., Dec. 3, 7 p.m., Fellowship Committee (FH)
Tue., Dec. 4, 1 p.m., Communications Committee (DNW)
6 p.m., Committee on Ministry/Burks (FH)
Wed., Dec. 5, 6:30 p.m., Lifespan Religious Growth & Learning (DN)
7 p.m. Social Justice Coordinating Committee (DNW)
Sat., Dec. 8, 10 a.m., Writing for Spiritual Growth (DNW)
Sun., Dec. 9, 12:45 p.m., Lunch for Newcomers (DNW)
4 p.m., Parents' Group (SA)
Mon., Dec. 10, 1 p.m., Committee on Ministry/McNeill (MO)
6:30 p.m., Women's Alliance (offsite)
7 p.m., LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation (FH)
Tue., Dec. 11, 1 p.m., Retirees' Group (FH)
6:45 p.m., Music & Worship (DNW)
7 p.m., Strategic Planning (FH)
Sat., Dec. 15, Noon, Transgender Youth Group (SA)
6 p.m. Yule/Solstice Celebration (SA)
Mon., Dec. 17., 7:15 p.m., Library Committee (FH)
Tue., Dec. 18, 5 p.m., Caring Committee (FH)
7 p.m., Membership Committee (FH)
Wed., Dec. 19, 7 p.m., Board of Trustees (DNW)
Mon., Dec. 24, 4 p.m., Christmas Eve Family Service
6 p.m., Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Tue., Dec. 25, *Christmas* (Church Office Closed)
Tue., Jan. 1, *New Year's Day* (Church Office Closed)

Regular Events:

Sundays, 9:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m., Worship Service
Sundays, 10:30 a.m., Fellowship & Refreshments
First & Third Sundays, 11:30 a.m., Second Circle
Wednesdays, 6 p.m., YRUU (offsite)
Thursdays, 7 p.m., Choir Rehearsal

15th of Every Month: *Second Thoughts* deadline

Save These Dates Next Month:

January 12: Program Council

January 13: Social Justice Movie Night

January 26: Sing for Your Supper!

January 27: Family Service Learning Project

Love to make a joyful noise and have fun with a delightful group? **Please join the Second Unitarian Choir!** If you enjoy singing we'd love to have you join us in the choir! *We are in special need of men's voices.* No prior experience is necessary. Rehearsals are Thursday evenings at 7 p.m.

Calendar Codes:

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

All events are subject to change.

To check the latest church calendar updates anytime, visit
www.2Uomaha.org
and click on CALENDAR,
or call the church if there is a question.

Contact Us

Staff

Rev. Scott McNeill, Minister

Office hours by appointment
402-334-0537 ext. 111
minister@2Uomaha.org

Rev. Sarah Gettie Burks, Affiliated Community Minister

communityminister@2Uomaha.org

Kirsten Stiles, Director Religious Growth & Learning

402-334-0537 ext. 112
dre@2Uomaha.org

Gary Emenitove, Office Administrator

402-334-0537 ext. 114
info@2Uomaha.org

Donna Zebolsky, Music Director

music@2Uomaha.org

Naomi Solomon, Youth Programming Director

YRUU@2Uomaha.org

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

Board of Trustees

board@2Uomaha.org

Trustees with terms expiring June 30, 2013

Cheri Cody
Nancy VanderSluis, Chair

Trustees with terms expiring June 30, 2014

JoAnne Draper, Vice-Chair
Anita Jeck

Trustees with terms expiring June 30, 2015

Bill Kuhn, Secretary
Michael Lynne

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.2Uomaha.org

Committees

Building and Grounds

Clyde Anderson & Tom Rundquist, Co-Chairs

Caring

Dodie Robison, Chair

Committee on Ministry

Richard Koelling, Contact

Communications

Nancy Amsler & Carlynn Hartman-Kurtz, Co-Chairs

Marketing Advisory Council

Nancy Amsler, Contact

Fellowship

Betty Segell & Judy Eller, Co-Chairs

Finance Coordinating Council

Clyde Anderson, Chair

Endowment Fund

Stu Burns, Chair

Fundraising

Chris Peters & Stephanie Peterson, Co-Chairs

Stewardship

Clyde Anderson & Joel Haskins, Co-Chairs

Library

Pete Miller, Chair

Lifespan Religious Growth and Learning

Anita Jeck & Anita Meyer, Co-Chairs

Membership

Kathy Bell, Volunteer Membership Coordinator

Music & Worship

Tom Peterson, 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

Strategic Planning

Carol Johnson, Chair

Technology

Bill Kuhn, Chair

Most church communications are sent via email. 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**

"Our Mission is to be Authentic, Compassionate, and Transformative in our lives, in our faith, and in the world."

Adopted May 20, 2012