



Second Unitarian Church of Omaha

Second Thoughts

June-July, 2013

Join Us This Sunday!

Worship Services
9:30 and 11:30 a.m.

Fellowship and
Refreshments
10:30 - 11:15 a.m.

*Have a
Great Summer!*

**Summer Picnic
Intergenerational
Get-Together**

Saturday, June 22,

6-8:30 p.m.

East Lawn of Church

see page 4

**Heartland Gay Pride
Parade & Festival**

June 20-22

see page 8

Summer Series: Finding the Holy in _____

Each Sunday this summer, we're exploring where we find the divine, sacred, holy, special, or what-have-you. Bring your ideas and willingness to explore!

- June 2 **YRUU/Coming of Age**
Our youth present a service of their thoughts on what's holy and sacred.
- June 9 Rev. Scott McNeill – **Dexter Getting Arrested Is Such a Scandal**
We use television to escape life and to learn from life. But what does what we watch say about what we believe and value?
- June 16 Worship Committee – **Azaleas to Zinnias**
We will use this week to find the divine in the beauty and mystery of flowers with our annual flower communion.
- June 23 RESPECT and Sorcha Hay – **Being Yourself**
As Unitarian Universalists, we believe that we all have something special within. Join us as we celebrate our lives!
- June 30 Rev. Scott – **Getting on the Field**
Between the College World Series and the MLB All-Star Game, Americans start paying attention to baseball. This week, we reflect on how the lessons of America's pastime can apply to our lives.
- July 7 Rev. Scott – **The Friendly Skies**
Board a flight upon UUAir, as we talk about the joy of flying and how our baggage can get too heavy to carry with us!
- July 14 Anna Peters – **Covenanting Together, Pt. 1**
We talk about having covenants, but how do different faiths understand the relationship between people?
- July 21 Rev. Scott – **Covenanting Together, Pt. 2**
After hearing from Anna, Rev. Scott will lead us in looking at how and why *we* covenant with one another.
- July 28 Rev. Scott – **[A] Long Sermon on a Pretty Sunday**
This great country song talks about wanting to be outside while being in church. So, we'll explore why we do what we do in worship, and where the sacred resides in our Order of Service.

Second Thoughts is a publication of Second Unitarian Church of Omaha.

Please send articles and submissions to info@2Uomaha.org.

Deadline is the fifteenth of each month.



Minister's Musings

By Rev. Scott McNeill



This summer, our worship will focus on where we find the Holy. So what does that question mean, especially for a group of people who aren't on the same page about whether or not something is holy?

All of us, in some way, deeply value certain things. Some greatly value relationships and so we meet as many people as possible or we talk and listen as deeply as possible. Others see justice as a primary focus in life and work tirelessly to "bend the arc of the universe toward justice", as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Theodore Parker would put it.

Still yet, some of us find it in nature, in the growing of life and in the passing of life. Or in the thrill of roller coasters and exciting adventures – letting the adrenaline that comes through activities fire up our souls. Some look at various forms of art (dance, paintings, drama) and see something deeper and meaningful.

Personally, all of the above sound good, on different days. I use music to express and explore my thoughts, to use poetry and sound to find new ways to say something special. I take photographs to try and capture one moment of ... something, and then look back on that moment in awe of the life we get to live.

John Haynes Holmes, Unitarian minister in 20th century, once wrote, "When I say 'God,' it is poetry and not theology."

In other words, the idea of something being holy isn't necessarily about a being, an entity, a belief – but how to look at life using metaphor and deeper connections to something special.

Holy, divine, etc all basically mean "something of extreme worth or value." Sacred means "being set aside." So, when we ask "What is sacred in your life?" or "Where do you find the holy?", we're asking, "What's of utmost importance and why?"

Unitarian Universalism isn't about believing that everything is holy, necessarily. It is, however, about believing that anything can be holy. It's up to us to figure out what makes something special and worthy of devotion.

So, this summer, we'll explore a bunch of different ideas of how to look for the holy. And in August, when we wrap up the summer series, we will have one Sunday where we will ask you to bring poems, songs, art, stories, or whatever you can think of as holy so that we can share with one another what is special to our lives.

If you don't know what you might bring, use this summer series as a laboratory to test out different ideas and ways of thinking – look at your life and see what you spend time on, what gives you energy and excitement, and what draws you into a deeper conversation and mindset.

We have such little time to live our lives, so it's important to reflect on what we hold dear and to be intentional about what we focus on. The nice thing, and the point of our church, is that although we each have our own take on life, we can bring them together to create a beautiful, meaningful community rich with different ideas.

I look forward to seeing you in worship!

Rev. Scott

Our 2012-13 church fiscal year ends June 30.

Please remember to complete your 2012-13 pledge by Sunday, June 30.

Thank you!



Planks and Slivers from the Board

By Nancy VanderSluis Chair, Board of Trustees



Although it seemed the earth's orbit around the sun was stuck in its winter position for a bit in April and May, it has in fact proceeded on and has now traveled through a full circuit. Here we are again, back in June. This month marks the end of the church year. We have accomplished much of our work for the year. The annual business of our Congregational Meeting is concluded. Now, in the last few weeks on our church calendar, is the time of finishing up, followed closely by regrouping, reorganizing and resetting.

The smaller six-member board of trustees has functioned well this year. As Cheri Cody and I finish our third year of board service and move off the board, the newly elected members, Gay Robinson Abraham and Craig Piquette, will come in to start their three year terms on July 1.

Stephanie Peterson will fill the 2 year vacancy from Michael Lynne's board resignation. We will come together as new, current, and retiring members later this month to debrief and pass on the torch.

It has been a good year. This exercise of service to the church has provided me a sense of depth, wholeness, and meaning. I have learned so much about many things, and I have been enriched and transformed by the experience. Thank you for selecting me to serve and for supporting me in this task. I am confident in the capability of the newly composed board and I look forward to being in a support position. You will be hearing from me again in my newest role.

But right now, I'm going to relax for a bit and get reacquainted with the sun. Happy Summer and Happy New Year!

Nancy



Share the Plate for June: EFNCIL (Epilepsy Foundation)

One half of Second Unitarian's offering received in June will go to EFNCIL, the Epilepsy Foundation of North Central Illinois, Iowa, & Nebraska. EFNCIL is the regional affiliate of the national Epilepsy Foundation (www.epilepsyfoundation.org).

Their mission is to stop seizures and sudden unexpected death in epilepsy, find a cure, and overcome the challenges created by epilepsy. EFNCIL ensures that people with seizures are able to fully participate in all life experiences, and works to prevent, control, and cure epilepsy through services, education, advocacy, and research. They also teach seizure recognition and seizure first aid.

The July Share the Plate recipient will be announced in the Weekly Enews and Order of Service announcements.

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 April 30, 2013

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	<u>April</u>	<u>Year-To-Date</u>
Income	\$11,927.81	\$172,554.79
Expenses	-\$15,194.39	-\$160,282.66
Net Over/Short	-\$ 3,266.58	\$ 12,272.13

YTD Pledge Income/Current Year: \$139,886.95
reflects 83.39% of \$167,758.00 Total Pledged for
2012-13.

YTD New Pledge Income/Current Year: \$7,597.45
received of New Pledges for \$10,620.00 for 2012-13.

If you have questions after reviewing the financial statements provided at the Annual Meeting, please feel free to contact me. I also neglected to recognize the new members / new pledges for this year. So far, that includes ten new pledges which is outstanding! Thank you all for your generosity and stewardship!

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

Thank you!

Treasurer
Pat Caffrey



Looking for Some Warm Weather Fun?
SUMMER FUN---SUMMER PICNIC
INTERGENERATIONAL GET-TOGETHER
Saturday, June 22, 6-8:30 p.m.



Second Unitarian Lawn, East Side of Church
Please bring a dish to share with ten and don't forget lawn chairs.
Fellowship will provide beverages.
Good Conversation (and games) GUARANTEED!



Welcome to Summer Work Day – Saturday, June 22

By Clyde Anderson & Tom Rundquist – Building & Grounds

Thanks to the 13 wonderful volunteers who helped with our Spring Cleanup Day April 27. Although it didn't look or feel much like spring yet, the effort really paid off once spring weather arrived. The flowering trees and flowers have been gorgeous this spring!

Since it was too cool to do any exterior painting in April, we have scheduled a summer work day for Saturday, June 22, from 8:00 a.m. to noon. The church foyer may also get painted. If painting isn't your "thing," perhaps you could help us remove the big, dying spruce tree northwest of the church building (see next article).

Please note the event on your calendar, and we hope many of you can help, even for just a few hours. Refreshments will be provided. There will be no child care, but children with adult supervision are welcome to participate!

For more information, contact Clyde Anderson or Tom Rundquist.

Memorial Tree to be Removed

By Clyde Anderson



The tall spruce tree located northwest of the church was stressed by the hot, dry weather last summer. It appears the tree is dying from Cytospora cancer as evidenced by the dead branches and the presence on the trunk of white sap that has been oozing from wounds caused by the disease.

Carlynn Hartman-Kurtz and her former husband, Terry Brown, planted the tree in 1985 as part of a memorial service for losses due to tubal pregnancies. Terry Brown also made the chimes that hang at the front of the sanctuary.

Building & Grounds plans to remove the spruce tree at its June 22 work day. We welcome ideas for planting a new tree or an alternate use for the site. Please contact Clyde Anderson.

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!



Meditation Reincarnated

By Kevin Dunlop

At last month's meeting of Meditation Reincarnated, we learned from Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh about the power of directing a simple mantra to a loved one. In his book, *You Are Here*, Thich Nhat Hanh writes, "The practice of mindfulness will help you to love properly, in such a way that harmony, freedom, and joy are possible. The true declaration of love is, 'Dear one, I am here for you,' because the most precious gift you can give to your loved one is your true presence, with body and mind united in solidity and freedom."

The group Meditation Reincarnated is studying this book in our monthly meetings. **We meet in the church downstairs on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:45 p.m. Our next meeting is June 27.**

Both the book and our meditation practice are designed for everyone, whether monk or beginner. No previous meditation experience is necessary, so please come and check us out. At the June 27 meeting we will discuss chapter 7.

Strategic Planning Committee

By Carol Johnson

The Strategic Planning Committee was charged by the Board of Trustees to develop a five year plan to guide this congregation. At the outset, the committee -- Steve Abraham, Carol Johnson, Rich McArdle, Stephanie Peterson, and Craig Piquette -- determined that we wanted to formulate a plan that would challenge and inspire us as a congregation to take our message to others in the Omaha area.

Attempting to answer these questions:

- 1. Who are we?**
- 2. What are we CALLED to do or be?**
- 3. Who are our neighbors?**

has led us to study, research and listen to you via house meetings. Together, with Rev. Scott's invaluable guidance, we have deeply considered all the information we've gleaned. It has been an eye-opening and spiritually fulfilling experience for each of us.

What we want to result from our work over the next five years is:

- 1. maturational growth (at both personal and organizational levels)**
- 2. a clearly articulated and well understood common community identity**
- 3. a sense of shared ministry.**

Your Strategic Planning Committee will be writing over the summer to put detail to the five year plan. We expect to present a written draft to the Board in the fall. The Board will bring the plan to you for approval. You are invited to contact any member of the committee to ask questions or to share ideas.

We thank you for your input. We especially thank our Board of Trustees for their support of us to develop a thoughtful, discerning, meaningful, challenging and inspiring document.



Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU)

By Naomi Solomon, Youth Programming Coordinator

Thank you to all the teens, parents, and advisors who have made YRUU so fun this past year. It has been lovely getting to know each one of you, and I am thankful for the opportunity to have been able to work for the church in such a fulfilling role.

Looking ahead to the next school year, YRUU is going to continue as a combined youth group serving teens from both churches. This will work well with our strong volunteer advisors who each have years of experience, and the creation of a covenant for right relations between the leaders of each church.

Teens and parents of teens, please look for more information later this summer about the creation of that covenant, as you are strongly encouraged to attend the facilitation session in August to let your ideas be heard.

We at Second Unitarian Church of Omaha want to thank Naomi for her time working with the YRUU program. Naomi spent countless hours helping our youth ministry and we will miss her spirit and wisdom. Thank you, Naomi!

Blackstone Book Club

By Gwen Eurich

We recently selected our reading choices for the coming year. As usual, our readings represent a wide variety of both fiction and nonfiction titles. We invite you to our monthly discussions. We will read *The Dry Grass of August* by Anna Jean Mayhew in July and *When the Killing's Done* by T. C. Boyle in August. During the coming year, other titles will include *The White Masai* by Corrine Hoffman, *What It Is Like To Go To War* by Karl Marlantes, and *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak.

Please note that we will not meet in June. **We will resume on July 23, which is the fourth Tuesday of the month, at 7:30 p.m.**, at the church for our discussion of *The Dry Grass of August* as mentioned previously. If you would like additional information, contact Gwen Eurich.

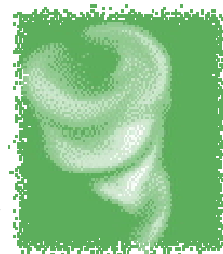
Tornado season is upon us again!

What if a severe storm with a possible tornado approaches our area during Sunday church service? **Do you know our tornado evacuation plan?**

The safest area of the building is in the basement. Go down either north or south stairway. Proceed to the south classrooms area (under the foyer and library areas) and stay away from the larger east-facing windows because the strong winds could blow debris through them. The windows on the west side are less dangerous because they are protected by window wells. The restrooms, storeroom beyond the women's restroom, and kitchen are also relatively safe areas. Please stay clear of the downstairs worship area and church office which have large east-facing windows. Tornado shelter signs are posted as a reminder.

How do we tell if a severe storm is close? There is a tornado siren about two blocks away, and we have a weather radio in the kitchen that will sound a loud alarm automatically whenever the National Weather Service issues a weather warning for Douglas County.

-- Building & Grounds Committee





Heartland Pride Parade & Festival

By Tammy Hunter, LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation Committee

Please join us for the annual Heartland Gay Pride Parade and Festival, taking place June 20-22. Our involvement enables us to proudly affirm our support for LGBTQ individuals to be fully themselves, as well as our commitment to work for equal rights for all. We'll be joined by First Unitarian Church in both the parade and the festival. The following events will take place at Stinson Park in Aksarben Village:

- **Thursday, June 20, 7:30-9 p.m. – Harvey Milk Candlelight Vigil**
- **Friday, June 21, 7-10 p.m. - Opening Ceremonies (Gates open at 6 p.m.)**
- **Saturday, June 22, Festival – Gates open at 11 a.m.; Shows start at 1 p.m.**

The Pride Parade will take place on Saturday, June 22, in Council Bluffs this year. The parade will form beginning at 8:30 a.m. near 9th Avenue and Main Street. The parade will begin at 9:30 a.m.

Please watch the Weekly E-news and Sunday Orders of Service for details about opportunities to participate in building our parade float, marching in the parade, and staffing our booth in the festival. Or for more information, contact Tammy Hunter.

On the weekend of the Heartland Gay Pride Parade and Festival, join us for Sunday services on June 23 and experience the program “Standing Up” from RESPECT. This program addresses bullying that uses gay slurs to hurt others. They focus on the severe consequences this type of bullying can have on targets and those who may be questioning their own sexuality. It also focuses on the power bystanders can have in helping targets in these situations.

RESPECT was founded to address bullying in schools. RESPECT programs consist of educational theatre presentations paired with panel or group discussions led by community professionals and actor-educators. RESPECT's goals are to decrease acts of bullying, but even more important, to empower kids and adults who may be on the sidelines to take action and stand up to help a target.

Attendance				
Date	Adults in Worship	Adults in R.E.	Children in R.E.	Family Service Learning
4/28	87	<i>Service Learning</i>		12
5/5	79	5	9	--
5/12	70	4	11	--
5/19	98	4	4	--

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



Lifespan Religious Growth & Learning

By Kirsten Stiles, Director of Religious Growth & Learning



Keeping Our Kids Safe

The weather is getting nice and kids want to be outdoors. We all hope our kids know about stranger danger and how to make a right choice if ever a situation were to occur. In May several of the children had the opportunity to view a video hosted by John Walsh. They learned about "don't knows" and "kind of knows" as well as who is a "sidekick superhero." Ask your children about what they learned from the video. If your child didn't have the opportunity to see it or you would like to view the 45 minute video with your child, please contact me at dre@2uomaha.org or 402-334-0537 ext. 112 to make arrangements.

Try Something New this Summer

As a child I used to love show and tell. In fact I would often try to sneak an extra thing to show. I would have three months worth of show and tell planned in advance. My dad seemed to have an endless supply of awesomeness. I was the only kid with an actual piece of the original cable from the Golden Gate Bridge. My parents took a trip to Hawaii and brought me back a real sugar cane that I took for show and tell and then shared with my classmates. I had a big beautiful blue monarch butterfly that had been preserved in a display case. As an adult when I visit with my friends, silly as it sounds, that's pretty much what we do. Needless to say we can't get enough of sharing as kids or as adults.

Last summer our family started our own show and tell night once a week just before bed. This was a great way to help them remember special gifts that they had received, sharing who gave the gifts and why they were special. My children started to take better care of the things they were sharing with the family. This was an excellent way to connect in a not so awkward way.

Summer Religious Education Classes

Over the Summer months we will continue learning about the Toolbox of Faith. During the summer, RE will be offered only at the early service. However, childcare will still be available for both services. The childcare for the late service will be available for age 6 weeks up to 6th grade.

Volunteers

We are seeking interested volunteers for teachers and helpers for the early service during the summer months as well as volunteers for childcare/nursery at the late service, also just during the summer months. Contact me at dre@2uomaha.org or 402-334-0537 ext. 112 for more information or if you have questions. I hope to see some new faces!

Kirsten

Retirees' Group

By Richard Koelling

The Retirees' Group programs in June and July will deal with money and the "culture of aging." Don Mundy will chat with us on **Tuesday, June 11, at 1 p.m.** about the practical aspects of how we manage our money, even if we don't have much.

The July meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 9, at 1 p.m.** for us to learn about the "culture of aging." Both topics should be enlightening.

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