



Second Unitarian Church of Omaha

Second Thoughts

April, 2014

Join Us This Sunday!

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

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

***Considering the
Conversation:
A Workshop on
Decisions and
Communicating
Them***

Monday, April 14
(see page 7)

Spring Celebration
Sunday, April 20
(see page 5)

***Holland Lecture:
Capitalism in Crisis***
Wednesday, April 23
***Follow-up Circle
Discussion***
Thursday, April 24
(see page 9)

April 4

Rev. Scott McNeill

Setting the Captive Free

April's theme of the month is **freedom**, which is timely given the situation between Russia and Ukraine, but we often long for freedom in our lives as well. This week's worship encourages us to work for freedom on both the individual level as well as the international level.

April 13

Rev. Sarah Gettie McNeill

Living Fully, Dying Well

In our society, it is common to think of death as something to not think about at all. Many of us deny its presence, avoid it, run from it, and when it finally reaches us, feel it is an event over which we are powerless and to which we must succumb. In this service, we will explore living empowered and continuing to grow even into the last moments of our lives.

April 20

Rev. Scott McNeill

Staying Alive

Admittedly, naming this sermon after the Bee Gees song from the '70s feels a little cheeky (also, you're welcome for now having that song stuck in your head all day). On this Easter Sunday, we'll reflect on what it means to die and what it means to stay alive, not necessarily physically but by people remembering our words and deeds and keeping us with them.

April 27

Rev. Scott McNeill

Frozen

With any luck, the weather won't match the sermon topic this weekend, but April in Nebraska can go either way. Over the winter, many people fell in love with the movie, "Frozen," a Disney film that threw out many of the usual fairy tale clichés. This film offered many laughs but also many lessons on the meaning of true love, communication, and embracing your true self. Consider this a spoiler alert – the worship will talk a lot about the movie, so if you're worried about spoilers – watch it before Sunday!

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

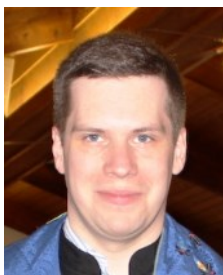
Please send articles and submissions to info@2Uomaha.org.

Deadline is the fifteenth of each month.



Minister's Musings

By Rev. Scott McNeill



I have to admit – usually when I watch television, I stay away from educational programs or shows with a clear redeeming value, opting instead for fluffy, mindless entertainment. Basically, I eschew the vegetables only to binge watch the TV equivalent of junk food.

The good news is that every so often, the mostly fun shows veer into serious topics and I'll feel a little better about my vice. Such was the case with the most recent episode of *Scandal*, a TV show well known for being addictive expressly because of its surreal, soap opera style storylines.

Without giving away anything about the show (in case you want to watch it or need to catch up), I was amazed to hear a very strong theological statement from one of its characters. The show is predicated on the fight between good and bad; the first season often referenced the terms, "White Hat" and "Black Hat." These terms are used in lots of places; perhaps they're best known when hackers either hack a program to help security (white hat) or to damage something (black hat).

In a show that talks a lot about justice and doing what's right, you'd think that spiritual or theological themes might come into play often, but that's not particularly true with *Scandal*. One main character is overtly (and/or overly) religious, but for the most part they shy away from faith.

That's why I was so surprised to hear a character say this,

"Everyone is worth saving.

Even the monsters, even the demons.

Everyone is worth saving.

In the face of darkness, you drag *everyone* into the light."

I think that our society often discourages us from trying to help people who do bad or are bad. After the school shooting in Newtown, CT, the media, lawmakers, and people in the community would reference the 26 or 27 who were lost in the tragedy (leaving out the shooter and sometimes his mother). So imagine my shock when this show advocated that we try to save everyone.

This episode aired in March – when our theme was redemption – which really made it sink in for me. Of course, the line was scripted and the scene was pure fantasy. I rarely am able to suspend disbelief for very long, but having this Universalist theme so clearly articulated really piqued my interest.

As Unitarian Universalists, we've long believed that everyone *was* worth saving, even if we couldn't find the redemptive qualities in the person ourselves. Our Universalist ancestors were divided on the topic, at least in terms of what role humans played in this redemption. But one thing they all agreed on was that each person was to be cared for, even (or especially) if we couldn't justify their actions.

I think about this a lot in our world – reading about people who seem to kill in cold blood or torture others, and I wonder what my response should be to their actions. This quandary came up for many of us in the end of March when Fred Phelps, leader of the Westboro Baptist Church, died. For much of his life, he spewed hatred toward his family and strangers – so when he died, many of us were left to wonder how to respond.

These high profile cases are the ones we often jump to when discussing the idea that all are loved and can be saved or that all of us are born with worth and dignity (from our first principle that we all have inherent worth and dignity). Every time that idea comes up with non-UUs, they ask about Hitler or some other hard-to-justify situation. But truthfully, when I wrestle with the idea, I often think about my own life and the more mundane situations we all face.

Minister's Musings
continues on page 4



Planks and Slivers from the Board

By JoAnne Draper, Chair, Board of Trustees



Hear ye! Hear ye! Please mark your calendar for this year's Annual Meeting on **Sunday, May 18, starting at 1:00 p.m.** The Board will be providing lunch with the business meeting to be right after. Members who can vote have signed the book and made a financial contribution to the church by March 18. Members who will not be able to attend may obtain an absentee ballot from Board Secretary Anita Jeck. Of course all are welcome to attend & childcare will be provided. Please make time to participate in our democratic process.

This year, the Stewardship Committee decided to do a "Commitment Sunday" and it was an outstanding success. I think Pam Curtiss-Smith said it best, *"It was a team effort with fantastic leadership to coordinate and make everything happen. Pats on the back, one and all!"* Please show your gratitude to Cheri Cody, Sue Aschinger, Tom Peterson, Judy Eller, Phil Dudley, Joel Haskins, Katie Tessin, Kathy Bell, Leslie Harvey, Janet Nichols, Clyde Anderson, Molly Kliment-Jenkins, Carol Johnson, Pam Curtiss-Smith, Dodie Robison, Betty Segell, John Knape, Gay DeWester, and Rev. Scott McNeill for finding such an inspiring speaker, Rev. John Crestwell, Jr, from Maryland.

What is *your* calling?

JoAnne

NOTICE OF SECOND UNITARIAN CHURCH ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING Sunday, May 18, 2014, 1:00 p.m.

Absentee ballots are available by contacting Anita Jeck

Check your May newsletter and Weekly Enews for details and updates



Share the Plate for April: City Sprouts

One half of Second Unitarian's offering received in April will go to City Sprouts.

Since 1995, **City Sprouts** has been combating the food desert in North Omaha by maintaining community gardens, creating demonstration plots, providing educational resources, and establishing an urban farm. City Sprouts includes a community garden at 40th & Franklin, an urban farm at 40th & Decatur, and the Sprouts House at 40th & Seward, offering workshops for all skill levels and ages from canning and naturally preserving to maintaining a garden through the growing process. Visit <http://omahasprouts.org/>

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 February 28, 2014

YTD Pledge Income/Current Year: \$127,542.52

reflects 70.14% of \$181,841.00 Total Pledged for 2013-2014.

YTD New Pledge Income/Current Year: \$5,580.00

reflects 61.29% \$9,104.00 (7) New Pledges for 2013-2014.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	February	Year-To-Date
Income	\$13,188.39	\$153,249.36
Expenses	-\$16,782.84	-\$131,312.44
Net Over/Short	-\$ 3,594.45	\$ 21,936.92

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

Thank you!

Treasurer

Pat Caffrey

Pride Players #15 at the Rose Theater

The LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation Committee invites you to support former Share the Plate recipients The Pride Players during their upcoming performances.

The Pride Players is a theater troupe of Omaha-area high school students telling stories of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and ally youth. The youth create short skits, monologues, songs, etc. to help people understand their life stories.

Thursday, April 3 @ 7:00 or Saturday, April 5 @ 7:00 - \$6

Sunday, April 6 @ 4:30 - \$6

Sun., April 6 @ 7:00 - a benefit for PFLAG, GLSEN-Omaha, and Proud Horizons - \$20

Call the box office at 402-345-4849.

Minister's Musings

(continued from page 2)

Rarely do we have to struggle with whether to commit overtly evil acts, but rather we daily face minor acts of injustice – having to choose to clearly support wrong, stay silent (and implicitly support wrong), or take a risk and work for right.

We're not always going to get it right, but that's okay because each day we have the chance to make amends for the wrong we've done. Our Universalism, and our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all, isn't a "Get out of hell free" card – as a UU leader once said, "We welcome all souls, but not all behaviors."

It's our job to always stand up for what is right, even if it's hard (especially when it's hard). And when we don't, because we can never be perfect at it, our job is to seek redemption and to offer redemption when others have harmed us. I believe that's the only way we can make it through life, since we all have been hurt and we all have been the cause of hurt.

"In the face of darkness, you drag *everyone* into the light."

In faith,

Rev. Scott



SPRING CELEBRATION

Sunday, April 20

**Come celebrate Spring on April 20 during coffee hour,
starting at 10:30 a.m.**

**Especially yummy treats (and coffee) will be
downstairs during coffee hour
to allow for extended visiting and celebrating.**

Join us!

***Shop at Amazon.com and
Help Second Unitarian Church of Omaha***

Your online 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**.

A percentage of your purchase will be donated to the church!

Thanks for Your Participation on Commitment Sunday!

By Cheri Cody, Co-Chair, Stewardship Committee

I am so grateful to all of you for a wonderful Commitment Sunday event!

A special thanks to the crew who hauled the chalice and everything else that was needed for the service and potluck. Those were John Knape, Tom Peterson, Joel Haskins, and Clyde Anderson (who also attached the paper signs to the sign frames and then did his best to get them into solidly frozen ground on Sunday). Of course, this same group hauled everything back on Sunday.

Kudos to Pam Curtiss-Smith and Dodie Robison for the flowers and decorating and to Pam for getting everything back in place at church on Sunday after the event. Fellowship Committee members again outdid themselves with a well planned potluck; they also hauled their own supplies and effortlessly (seemingly) and graciously welcomed the food on Sunday morning. Membership had nametags and greeters in place to guide people to worship. Religious Education seemed to go off without a hitch and we had a hard time snagging the rug out from under the children who were still having a good time even though it was time to leave. Thanks to Molly Kliment-Jenkins for setting up and running the R.E. space and making it safe and fun for our young people.

Our unsung hero is Sue Aschinger who drove to Hastings and back on Friday to pick up Russ who organized the **great** jazz combo that transformed our service. She also drove him back on Sunday.

Thanks to Rev. Scott for arranging the speaker, Rev. John Crestwell, and his partner, Joannie. They finally got back to Maryland even though the weather there was terrible. Thanks to Gary Emenitove for coming on his day off and making sure the Orders of Service arrived no matter the weather.



Earth Day Omaha 2014

By Vicki Pratt, Green Sanctuary Committee

Second Unitarian Church of Omaha will again have an information booth at Earth Day Omaha at Elmwood Park. This year's celebration is **Saturday, April 19, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.** Come out to enjoy sun, live music, demonstrations, variety of food from local vendors, and children's activities. The full schedule is at <http://earthdayomaha.com/>.

Second Unitarian's booth features demonstrations on "How to Vermicompost" by our own Larry Kurtz. We'll also distribute free packets of organic Oregon Giant Snow Pea seeds. These easy-to-grow plants produce 4-5" pods with sweet and tender peas.

Stop by our booth if you are at Earth Day Omaha! And **there is still time to help**: We need volunteers to help hand out seed packets and chat with passers-by for an hour or so. Please contact Vicki Pratt. This is a great family project, an opportunity to talk with our members, and a way to meet like-minded people.

Strategic Planning Committee

By Carol Johnson, Chair

The following paragraphs, goals and strategies have been excerpted from Second Unitarian Strategic Plan 2014. For more complete introduction, rationales, and tactics, please access the document in its entirety either online or in print. Questions may be directed to any member of the Strategic Planning Committee: Steve Abraham, Carol Johnson, Rich McArdle, Stephanie Peterson or Craig Piquette.

Becoming a ReNEWed Church:

"In order to grow and thrive, the members and staff of Second Unitarian Church of Omaha must clearly articulate and fully understand our evolving common community identity.

This identity is fed by our religious tradition, informed by our mission, and shared by our covenants. It must be strongly articulated by our leaders in cooperation with our professional staff. It must be clearly and tirelessly communicated to our members. The congregation must understand it, take ownership of it and project it to the larger community."

GOAL: Maturational Growth at a Personal Level

- Strategy 1: Strengthen Sunday mornings at Second Unitarian as a place and time to gather in community and grow in spirit.
- Strategy 2: Develop strong religious education programs for the whole community.
- Strategy 3: Make personal ministry a requirement of membership

GOAL: Maturational Growth at the Organizational Level

- Strategy 1: Redesign the organizational structure of the church, so that it is inclusive of more members and more open to change.
- Strategy 2: Continue to strengthen the financial foundation of the church

GOAL: Shared Ministry

- Strategy 1: Offer mentoring, training and support for congregational leaders and for specific ministries within the congregation
- Strategy 2: Regularly and publicly commit to our ministry together by integrating the various parts of ministry into our individual lives and in our church.



Connecting Our Congregation to Our Larger Faith

by Vicki Pratt, Denominational Connections Chair

Sunday Worship Isn't Just on Sundays

Ever wish you could stay connected with other Unitarian Universalists even though you may not be able to get to our church every Sunday morning? There's a solution for those who have to work, are deployed in the military, have family responsibilities, don't have transportation, whose health keeps them indoors, who live a long way from a church, or who are in prison.

The solution is the Church of the Larger Fellowship, the UU church without walls. Senior Minister Rev. Meg Riley serves this church with "spiritual leadership, working with others to envision our future, preaching, counseling, and being a general gadfly." Rev. Riley is available daily on Facebook, Twitter, email, or phone.

<http://www.clfuu.org/about/>

The online wing of this church offers discussion for groups like people under age 35 or in the military, live weekly worship services, connection to a UU minister for pastoral needs, and online classes on a variety of subjects.

If you don't have online access, printed materials and other assistance are available by calling 617-948-6150.

Live Worship: The worship services are a complete package with music, joys and concerns, spiritual message. Pick a time most convenient for you: Sundays at 7 p.m., or Mondays at 8 a.m. or 12:30 p.m. If these times don't match your schedule, you can watch an archived service.

Parents: Let your college students know about this way to stay connected with their UU heritage.

Considering the Conversation

by Molly Kliment-Jenkins, Interim Director of Religious Education

Following Rev. Sarah Gettie McNeill's sermon on April 13, on the topic of "Living Fully, Dying Well," we will be offering a workshop, "Considering the Conversation," on ways you can not only make those final decisions for yourself, but also ways to communicate them clearly so that your wishes are carried out.

Please plan on joining us **Monday, April 14, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the Sanctuary.** Our panel will include Rev. Sarah Gettie, a physician, and someone who has gone through the process of making and communicating this decision.

Rev. Sarah Gettie will bring resources including a Living Will, Power of Attorney for Healthcare, Five Wishes, Anatomical Donation, as well as an "Advance Directives: What You Need to Know" educational sheet. She will also bring her notary seal should you want to complete any documents at that time.

Although this is a serious topic, we also hope to share stories, humor, resources and find ways to make it easier to get through.

Please RSVP by Friday, April 11, to attend this great workshop. No matter what your age, these are important decisions that you should make and share with your family and friends. As in the case of Marlise Munoz, a paramedic in Texas, her conversation with her husband about end-of-life decisions made him clear as to what her wishes were. She suffered a suspected pulmonary embolism in November and was placed on life support at the age of 33.*

Childcare will be available. Snacks and light beverages will be provided. RSVP by Friday, April 11, to Molly Kliment-Jenkins at dre@2uomaha.org or 402-334-0537 ext. 112.

We look forward to a dynamic discussion on a process we will all undertake at some point.

**source: abcnews.com*



Church Spring Cleanup: Saturday, April 26

By Clyde Anderson & Tom Rundquist, Co-Chairs, Building & Grounds

Our Spring Church Cleanup is scheduled for **Saturday, April 26, from 8 a.m. to noon**. There will be plenty of tasks for everyone! For example, painting exterior areas of the building (weather permitting), fertilizing the lawn, raking leaves, setting up and repairing the irrigation system, cleaning up flower gardens and planting annuals, and cleaning windows.

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 childcare, but children with adult supervision are welcome!

Questions? Contact Clyde or Tom.

Tornado season is upon us again!

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

The safest area of the building is in the lower level. Go down either stairway and proceed to the south classroom area (under the foyer and library areas). Stay away from the east-facing windows because strong winds could blow debris through them. The windows on the west side are less dangerous because they are protected by window wells. The rest rooms, storeroom beyond the women's rest room, and kitchen are also safe areas. Please stay clear of the downstairs Religious Education worship area and church office which have large east-facing windows. Tornado shelter signs are posted as a reminder.

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

YRUU Wants Your Stuff!

By Ben Wallace and Shawne Johnson-Coonfare

Are you gearing up for some spring cleaning? Please save your donation items and books for the YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists)! The youth are planning a Garage Sale/Book Sale on **Saturday, May 3**, at First Unitarian Church, and would appreciate any and all donated items. We would appreciate that you hold your donations until Monday, April 28, when you can drop them off at First Unitarian.

Proceeds will assist greatly in funding a summer YRUU trip to Colorado where members will commune with nature and participate in a Social Action project.

Questions? Please contact Shawne Johnson-Coonfare or Ben Wallace at omahayruu@gmail.com which reaches both Shawne and Ben.

Meditation Reincarnated

By Kevin Dunlop

Our meetings are composed of two parts. First, we discuss a meditation/Buddhist related text, then we follow with an actual meditation. We discuss the text at the meeting by bringing up interesting points and asking questions of each other about the text. We also discuss any other miscellaneous meditation-related issues that anyone would like to bring up. We end the meeting with a group meditation, usually about twenty minutes or so in length. Sometimes it is a silent meditation, and sometimes we use meditation-related music or vocally guided meditation.

Meditation Reincarnated meets in the church downstairs on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:45 p.m. to learn about and practice meditation. This group is designed for everyone, whether monk or beginner. No previous meditation experience is necessary, and we invite you to come and check us out.

Holland Lecture: Wednesday, April 16, 7:30 p.m.

Holland Performing Arts Center

*Dr. Richard D. Wolff -- Capitalism in Crisis:
How Lopsided Wealth Distribution Threatens Our Democracy*



Dr. Richard Wolff is an outspoken expert on the subject of the American economic classes. He is currently a Visiting Professor in the Graduate Program in International Affairs of the New School University, New York City. His books include *Capitalism Hits the Fan: The Global Economic Meltdown and What to Do About It* and *Democracy at Work: A Cure for Capitalism*.

FREE tickets for this event are available at ticketomaha.com or 402-345-0606

Please consider joining the circle discussion
the following night at Second Unitarian (*see article below*).

Holland Lecture Circle Discussion

By Molly Kliment-Jenkins, Interim Director of Religious Education

You are cordially invited to join a discussion on the Holland Lecture -- Dr. Richard D. Wolff on "Capitalism in Crisis: How Lopsided Wealth Distribution Threatens Our Democracy" -- in depth.

If you are unable to attend the lecture, here's your chance to find out what happened. If you attended the lecture, here's your chance to delve deeper into the topic.

Adult RE: Holland Lecture Circle Discussion

Thursday, April 17, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Second Unitarian Church sanctuary

Snacks and light beverages will be provided.

Childcare available on request.

RSVP to Molly Kliment-Jenkins at dre@2uomaha.org or 402-334-0537 ext. 112, by Monday, April 14, and include whether you will be needing childcare.

Women's Alliance

By Mary Bort

Women from First and Second Unitarian Churches are invited to attend the Women's Alliance (WA) monthly get-together on **Monday, April 14**, at First Unitarian Church, 3114 Harney.

The evening will begin with socializing and beverages at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. and a "Show and Tell" program at 8 p.m.

Our April program will feature five WA members who will share their interests or hobbies or something interesting that they have made or done. Come and learn something new about some of our WA members, and learn about various activities that might be something you would like to do in the future.

We ask for \$12 which goes to the cost of dinner and our education fund. If this will be your first time attending a WA get-together, please let us know and be our guest. Our meal will be catered by Mangia Italiana restaurant, and will include a vegetarian option.

RSVP to Janet West no later than Friday, April 11. Please indicate if you want a vegetarian entrée. RSVPs are necessary so that we can order the correct number of entrées from the caterer. We look forward to seeing you on April 14!



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.

Consider joining fellow Unitarian Universalists June 29-July 5 this summer in the Missouri Ozarks at the annual **Midwest Unitarian Universalist Summer Assembly (MUUSA)**.

The week-long camp offers many workshops and activities for families, couples and singles of all ages. This year Reverend Amy Shaw will lead the daily Morning Celebration service on this year's theme: "Sailing Strange Shores: The Wisdom of the Weird."

Come gather in the beautiful forests and rolling hills of the Missouri Ozarks at YMCA Trout Lodge, where you can connect with old friends, make new ones, and participate in a wide variety of activities.

Get all the details at <http://muusa.org/> or see the notice posted on our Community Bulletin Board downstairs.





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Retirees' Group

By Carol Johnson

The Retirees' Group will meet **Tuesday, April 8, at 1:00 p.m.** in the Sanctuary.

Al Devitt, Pharmacist at Kohll's Pharmacy and Home Care in Millard will be presenting information on services available from your pharmacist.

Everyone is welcome!

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!

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