



# Second Unitarian Church of Omaha

## *Second Thoughts*

December, 2015

**Join Us This Sunday!**  
**Worship Services**  
**10 a.m.**

**Leadership 101  
Seminar**  
**Saturday, Dec. 5**  
(see page 5)

**Retirees' Group  
Holiday Luncheon**  
**Tuesday, Dec. 8**  
(see page 8)

**Loss at the Holidays**  
**Wednesday, Dec. 16**  
(see page 5)

**Family Christmas**  
**Thursday, Dec. 24**  
**4 p.m.**  
**Candlelight**  
**Christmas**  
**Thursday, Dec. 24**  
**6 p.m.**

- December 6 Vicki Dudley  
**God's Apples**  
Since the serpent tempted Adam and Eve, apples have played an important role in the evolution of humanity. Apples appear in mythology, art and science.
- December 13 Rev. Frieda Gillespie  
**Talking with the Other Party**  
Conservatives and Liberals are hardly able to be in any substantive conversations together these days. Christmas is coming and many of us will be with relatives who will talk about the presidential candidates and other controversial issues. How do we talk to each other? Can we?
- December 20 Rev. Frieda Gillespie  
**Festivals of Light**  
As we near the end of Advent at the Winter Solstice, after Hanukkah has concluded, we celebrate the beauty and promise of the season in spoken word and song.
- December 24 Rev. Frieda Gillespie  
**4 p.m. Family Christmas**  
Come prepare for the coming of Christmas with your favorite carols and stories.  
**6 p.m. Candlelight Christmas**  
Reflect on the meaning of Christmas and sing with joy the carols we love.
- December 27 Worship Associates  
**Prayers for Peace**  
Come together this day and share your desire, your hope, your prayer for peace throughout the world. In the Buddhist tradition, prayer flags are written prayers that are strung up where the wind can move through them, sending the prayers into the universe over and over. What prayer would you like to send in this way? Are there ways you would like to help those who are fleeing violence?



## In the Interim

By Rev. Frieda Gillespie



The holidays are a time of friends, family, feasting, travel, gifts....and difficult conversations. At least for some of us. Growing up, I remember how tense Thanksgiving and Christmas family gatherings were when my father and brother-in-law would argue about politics. Perhaps this happens in your family too, especially with so much going on in the presidential debates. Arguments about religion, various issues, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, or any controversy can come up and be very tense.

I recently viewed a sermon by Rev. Meg Barnhouse, about how to change someone's mind about something you don't agree with. Don't we all want to be able to do this? I've tried to reason with my brother who likes to send me startling news from various alarmist groups—you know the type. I've steered him to Snopes.com where he can fact-check his beliefs, but to no avail. He just thinks I'm brainwashed (his word). Rev. Barnhouse has come up with a method of relating to this kind of stubbornness. There are several steps, but I'm still on the first one, which she says is the longest and may take days, weeks, or a lifetime. It is "Active Listening," a kind of listening that takes place when we really pay attention to the other: what they are saying, feeling, wanting, and fearing. It could take hours to begin to understand another person's perspective. We don't have a chance, though, if we are thinking the whole time the other is speaking, "That is so wrong! That's not true! How can they say that!" etc. We don't have a chance if we are dedicated to changing their mind. What if we don't try to change their mind but don't avoid what they are saying either? What if we ask questions about it, encourage them to share more, and try to understand where they are coming from? It's a hard thing to do, especially if we are reactive to what they believe. That's then our own work to figure out what is making us react.

We are sort of hardwired to want to influence others to think the way we do. It is hard to get around that. Active listening is a type of mindfulness that has the power to put aside that need and take a real interest in the other. Who knows? We might learn something. In any case, we may feel better ourselves. We can't help but feel good when we seek the truth in love.

Many blessings to you and yours during this holiday season!

Rev. Frieda



### Share the Plate for December: Siena/Francis House (Sundays) Minister's Discretionary Fund (Christmas Eve)

One half of Second Unitarian's offering received on **Sundays** in December will go to the Siena/Francis House. Founded in 1975, Nebraska's largest shelter provides food, emergency shelter, and clothing, along with outreach and case management to homeless families and individuals from Omaha and surrounding communities. They house a residential chemical addictions treatment center, day services center, employment training program, and medical clinic. The Siena/Francis House tries to never turn away any person or family who comes to them in need, regardless of the circumstances that led them to seek help. They are not affiliated with a national or religious organization. Visit [www.sienafrancis.org](http://www.sienafrancis.org).

One half of the offering received on **Christmas Eve** will go to the Minister's Discretionary Fund. The Fund helps provide emergency financial assistance to members of the Second Unitarian community, primarily for utility bills, groceries, rent, and medical needs.

To nominate an organization for our Share the Plate program, [visit the church website](#) or contact the Social Justice Committee.



## Planks and Slivers from the Board

By Craig Piquette, Chair, Board of Trustees



*Oh, Happy Days!*

We are on the cusp of Thanksgiving as I write this and we have much to be grateful for!

Our application for developmental ministry is moving forward. Our Ministerial Search Team has been named by the Board and represents a good cross section of our membership. The Search Team includes: Sue Aschinger, Lorraine Duggin, Jack Frost, Pete Miller, Jaime Short, and Rachel Yamamoto. Thank you to all for volunteering your services to this important process.

We had a good turnout for the meeting with Dori Davenport Thexton, our MidAmerica Region consultant, on November 20. It was an energizing meeting.

The Search Team and the Board met with Dori and discussed our congregational goals and the application process. We anticipate sending the application in by the middle of December, and in January should receive a list of ministers who are looking to become our Developmental Minister. The Search Team will look over their credentials and view sermons online. Once the Search Team feels they have a top candidate, they will make their recommendation to the Board, who will then negotiate a contract with the prospective minister. We would hope to have this process wrapped up by April or so. This is an exciting time for the church because we have so many new opportunities ahead!

Although having a developmental minister to collaborate with us to help us grow, we also have to create opportunities and programs to strengthen connections among all our members and help new members become involved in congregational life. Hospitality Teams have been established under the guidance of the Membership Committee. If you have not signed up to join a Hospitality Team, I encourage you to talk with Kathy Bell or anyone else on Membership to find out how you can get involved. If you are new to the church and want to meet new people, this is a great way to do so. You needn't know much about the church or even how to make coffee, but you will get so much more than the small amount of time commitment required. A special thank you to all who are involved in this new initiative at Second Unitarian Church!

The Adult Spiritual Education Subcommittee, under the leadership of Ed Bok and Fiona Matthews, has planned a number of educational offerings and are looking for volunteers to help. The recently completed 'Articulating your UU Faith' and 'UU Heritage' were big successes. The Teen Movie night organized by Anita Meyer and Jaime Short and facilitated by Bob Fischbach has a committed group of teens exploring important themes.

Our new wall will soon hold a large screen for a new projection system to enhance Religious Education, Teen Movies, and Town Hall meetings, as well as open up opportunities for Social Justice movie screenings and new and interesting ways to enhance our worship services.

There was a recent vacancy on the Endowment Committee and the Board has named Phil Phillips to join Sue Aschinger and Cheri Cody in stewarding our nest egg for the future. We are grateful to all who are serving in our many ministries and encourage all our members to participate in these opportunities.

Second Unitarian will grow only by providing value to its members and increasing opportunities for living out our values that make us Authentic, Compassionate, and Transformative. The Board is interested in helping the congregation grow in connections and in commitment to those values and welcomes input from members, affiliates and visitors. Please email your ideas to us at [Board@2UOmaha.org](mailto:Board@2UOmaha.org) and we look forward to hearing from you. We can be transformative only if we take action, so *get involved and participate*. Our future is bright, and we want you to be a part of it! As we head towards the Season of Light and of Giving, please let your light shine and share your special 'gifts' with your friends at Second Unitarian.

*Craig*



## Treasurer's Report

By Vicki Pratt, Treasurer

### October Income and Expenses

The October financial report looks good – more income than expenses.

	October 2015	Year To Date
Income	\$18,046.59	\$78,669.46 (36% of budget)
Expense	15,716.63	71,416.62 (33% of budget)
Net Over/Short	+\$2,329.96	+\$7,252.84

Income came from Stewardship Campaign Pledges (\$14,995.00); New Pledges from Current Members (\$90.00); New Pledges from New Members (\$100.00); Fundraising (\$55.00); Other Income (\$1,465.38); Offering (\$1,003.00); and Rent (\$50.00).

If you would like to see more detailed financial reports, you can join the Finance Committee, contact me at [treasurer@2uomaha.org](mailto:treasurer@2uomaha.org).

### End of Year Giving Reminder

Please remember: Your 2015 donations to the Church must be received by **Sunday, December 27**, to be recorded for the 2015 Tax Year. By the end of January, the Treasurer will send you a summary of your 2015 recorded financial contributions. Please save this statement for your tax records. If you have any questions, please contact Clyde Anderson.

— Clyde Anderson, Chair, Finance Coordinating Council



### PERFECT GIFTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Gay DeWester is selling Equal Exchange Fair Trade organic coffee, chocolates, and olive oil. Items are available most Sundays during Fellowship. Candy, nuts, and teas are available for order. Purchase quality products at a fair price. The sales are an additional source of revenue for the church. Additionally, these sales benefit farmers by providing fair prices, a voice in distribution/marketing decisions, and democratic management by workers.

Visit with Gay if you are interested in these products.



## Loss at the Holidays

By Kathie Haskins, Chair, Caring Committee



On Wednesday, December 16, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Rev. Frieda Gillespie will lead the Pastoral Care Program, "Loss at the Holidays."

Please join us in the Sanctuary for this time of meaningful reflection. This program will cover all types of losses, including death of a family member or friend, loss of job, loss of pet, relocation, and general "holiday blues."

To reserve childcare, please notify Molly Kliment-Jenkins at [dre@2uomaha.org](mailto:dre@2uomaha.org) no later than Monday, December 14.

Find us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/2uomaha](https://facebook.com/2uomaha)



### Second Unitarian Church Is on Facebook!

"Like" Second Unitarian Church on Facebook to stay informed of church news and upcoming events. Visit [facebook.com/2uomaha](https://facebook.com/2uomaha) and Like the page!

Feel free to share posts with your Facebook friends so they know what's going on and how much fun we are having at Second Unitarian.

If you have any questions regarding signing up for Facebook or accessing the 2U Facebook page, please see Elise Brazeal-Daganaar at the Social Media table in the back after the service.

— Elise Brazeal-Daganaar, Ad Hoc Social Justice Task Force

### 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.



## Religious Growth & Learning

By Molly Kliment-Jenkins, Director of Religious Education

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“I know. I'm lazy. But I made myself a New Year's resolution that I would write myself something really special. Which means I have 'til December, right?”  
— Catherine O'Hara

Well, we have made it to December. Have your resolutions? Every year I decide to make little changes around the new year, try to change a little thing to improve myself. And every fall I do the same for our RE program. I make little changes and see how they are faring by the time December rolls around. It takes time to see if a change is working...or not. Too often, we try something once or twice and then walk away, not truly giving the change a chance to come into its own.

I'm hoping that some of the small and large changes we have made in RE are working for you. We made a major rearrangement to the classrooms and meeting areas in the garden level. It has taken time for all of us to get used to the new routes on Sunday. But I also hope you are enjoying looking into the classrooms without having to walk through the classroom, stepping over kids and their crafts, or feeling like you're interrupting a serious conversation. I know the kids are more focused and experiencing a more worshipful Sunday.

At this time of the year, I start to ask for volunteers in the Sunday classes again. Folks move away, and I am left with classes that need facilitators. I try to make this an easy way to be involved in church life and contribute to the next generation of UUs. I provide everything you will need in the class. You don't have to know any answers (after all, we're all UUs so none of us do have all the answers)!

Please consider making a new year's resolution to step out and try a new type of church involvement; try leading a Sunday class. You can make it a once a month commitment or take one of our available World Religion classes the youth are doing and expand your understanding of another faith.

With hope for a wonderful 2016 for all of us,

Molly

## Service Learning Project Coordinator Wanted

By Molly Kliment-Jenkins, Director of Religious Education

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This is a volunteer position for someone with an interest in creating opportunities for the entire congregation to come together on a project supporting our values and providing all ages with a chance to learn. Some projects are new and others happen annually. You work independently with the Director of Religious Education and Religious Growth and Learning Committee to schedule, coordinate, and promote Service Learning Projects. Contact [Molly Kliment-Jenkins](#) or Jaime Short to learn more.

## Teen Movies

By Anita Meyer

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The teens are taking December off from movie night, but will pick back up again in 2016. On **Sunday, January 17**, we plan on viewing and discussing *Doubt*, starring Philip Seymour Hoffman and Meryl Streep.



## Building and Grounds

*By Clyde Anderson and Tom Rundquist, Co-Chairs*

The Technology and Building & Grounds Committees are installing a new video projection system in the Sanctuary. Thanks to Tom Peterson, Carla/Bill Kuhn, Rick Bell, Craig Piquette, and Tom Rundquist for their many hours spent over the Halloween weekend constructing the new wall in the front of the Sanctuary that will support the new projection screen.

Carla/Bill is working with a vendor to install the ceiling-mounted projector. Audio controls will be relocated to the rear of the Sanctuary. Hopefully, the installation will be completed and ready for use by mid-December. The new video system was funded by a generous memorial gift for Gary Piquette, Craig's brother.

Last Spring we started using volunteers to do the church custodial chores every other weekend and the contract cleaning service the other weekends. We did this to help keep custodial costs down, and it seems to be working well. However, now that winter is almost here, we need more help with the extra dirt getting tracked in and those pesky spider webs. If you would like to be added to a list of Janitorial Helpers to assist for 30 to 60 minutes on a Saturday afternoon or evening, please contact Clyde Anderson. Thanks to Rick Bell, the Kuhn/Kirn family, Tom Rundquist, and Roger Nicolaisen for their efforts cleaning the church.

### ***WHOOOO has OWL stuff?***



OWL-Y about junk around the house? Well, if any of it happens to have an **owl** theme, we'll gladly take it off your hands! We're looking for some fun owls to help us decorate for our upcoming **OWL** classes. Candleholders/lanterns, charms/jewelry, stuffed animals, wall decor, fabric... anything with an **OWL** is welcome! Drop it off in the Religious Education office at church.

### ***Weather-Related Cancellations***

If weather or road conditions cause services or a major church event to be cancelled, we will notify you by:

1. Placing a message on the church phone (402-334-0537),
2. Sending a message to the weekly email list,
3. Sending a message on Facebook, and
4. Placing a message on the church website ([www.2Uomaha.org](http://www.2Uomaha.org)).



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

If you arrive at church and experience patches of ice on the walks and parking lot, deicer and sand are located in the foyer under the coat rack. Feel free to use them or alert a member of Building & Grounds to treat the ice. A shovel and broom are also available for snow.



## Retirees' Group

*By Carol Johnson*

Please join Retirees' Group on **Tuesday, December 8, at noon** for our holiday lunch at Big Mama's Kitchen, Turning Point Campus, 3223 N. 45th Street, Building A.

This will be a demonstration of support for locally-owned minority businesses. Lunch is on your own and we'll order from the menu.

**RSVP by December 4** to [bigmama@2uomaha.org](mailto:bigmama@2uomaha.org) if you plan to attend, so that Big Mama's staff can set up for us. Parking is free but limited — those wishing to carpool can meet in the church parking lot at 11:30. Please say in your RSVP if you need a ride or if you are willing to be a driver.

Second Unitarian Retirees meet monthly for socializing, fun, personal growth, and learning.

## Women's Alliance

*By Kathi Oliver*



Women, and those who identify as women, from First and Second Unitarian are invited to the December Women's Alliance Holiday Get-Together at First Unitarian, 3114 Harney St., on **Monday, December 14**. The evening begins with socializing and beverages at 6:30 p.m., we will enjoy "heavy" appetizers and desserts at 7, and our annual "white elephant" gift exchange will be at 8.

Please bring an appetizer or dessert and a wrapped gift. Re-gifting is strongly encouraged. Alliance asks for a donation of \$15 which goes into the Alliance's Merritt Education Fund. (First time attendees will be the guests of the Alliance.)

The Alliance will be collecting donations for Youth Emergency Services (YES) which serves a large population of pregnant and parenting teens. They are asking for baby/toddler toys, pacifiers, burp cloths, bibs, and baby hygiene items for both boys and girls. If you would like to help wrap gifts for the holiday season for YES, please contact Kim Callaghan.

**RSVP by December 11** to [wa@firstuuomaha.org](mailto:wa@firstuuomaha.org). When making your reservation indicate whether you will be bringing an appetizer or a dessert.

## Meditation Group

*By Kevin Dunlop*

The Meditation Group meets on the **third Thursday of each month at 7:45 p.m.** downstairs at church.

At our meetings, we have both a meditation-related discussion and an actual meditation. No previous meditation experience is necessary, and we love "drop-in" visitors or anyone curious about meditation.

Meditation is a wonderful way to neutralize the stress of the frantic world we live in, and it's a perfect antidote for the stress of the holidays.

Upcoming meetings are **Thursday, December 17 and Thursday, January 21**.



## Membership Journeys

By Kathy Bell, Chair, Membership

### Reconnect During the Holidays

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, affiliates, and guests of Second Unitarian Church!

### 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!

Attendance	
Date	Adults in Worship
10/25	60
11/1	54
11/8	81
11/15	71
11/22	70

Second Unitarian Church of Omaha  
3012 South 119th Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68144  
402-334-0537  
[www.2Uomaha.org](http://www.2Uomaha.org)  
Find us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/2uomaha](https://facebook.com/2uomaha)

### Staff

#### Rev. Frieda Gillespie, *Interim Minister*

Office 402-334-0537 ext. 111      Cell 508-207-7566  
[RevFrieda@2Uomaha.org](mailto:RevFrieda@2Uomaha.org)

#### Molly Kliment-Jenkins, *Director of Religious Education*

402-334-0537 ext. 112  
[dre@2Uomaha.org](mailto:dre@2Uomaha.org)

#### Gary Emenitove, *Office Administrator*

402-334-0537 ext. 114  
[info@2Uomaha.org](mailto:info@2Uomaha.org)

#### Donna Zebolsky, *Music Director*

[music@2Uomaha.org](mailto:music@2Uomaha.org)

#### Pam Curtiss-Smith, *Nursery Supervisor*

**Second Thoughts Staff:** Rev. Frieda Gillespie,  
Nancy Amsler, Richard Koelling, Betty Segell,  
Kathie Haskins, Gary Emenitove

**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***