

February 2019

The Flame



**The Monthly Newsletter of
First Unitarian Church of
Omaha**

Page 2

Sunday Services

Pages 4 & 5

Church Events

Pages 8-11

Ministerial Search
Information

Sunday Services

Sunday, February 3 at 10:30am
“Don’t Go Changin’”

Guest Speaker

How do we navigate the seemingly constant call for our personal growth and transformation with the knowing and affirmation that we have worth and dignity just the way we are? How does the call for transformation of our individuals selves impact on the larger call to transform the world into one of love and justice?

Sunday, February 10 at 10:30am
“Right Relationship”

Rev. Michelle LaGrave

Relationships within our congregations must be based in trust in order to sustain strong, vital, healthy, (while still imperfect) churches. What does it mean to be in right relationship with one another? How does it work and what does it look like? Come hear about the work of the newly-formed Right Relations Committee and the proposed Covenant of Right Relations which will come before the congregation for a vote at the next Annual Meeting.

Sunday, February 17 at 10:30am
“Hearts Broken Open”

Rev. Michelle LaGrave

What happens when we are able to be vulnerable and allow another person to see the essence of who we are? These are moments in which we can choose to extend grace to one another; a human grace which is just as sacred and as holy as any form of divine grace.

Sunday, February 24 at 10:30am
“Sacred Trust”

Rev. Michelle LaGrave

In this era of #MeToo and with the recent revelations of clergy abuse in Omaha, questions about sexual ethics and sexual misconduct abound. Ministers, pastors, priests, rabbis, etc. hold relationships with the members of their congregations in sacred trust. What does it mean for our congregations when this sacred trust is all too often broken?

Social Justice Fair

Sunday, Feb. 3 during coffee hour

Interested in learning more about Social Justice? Want to get involved? This is a good opportunity to do so. Find out what others in church are doing for our community and city. Please email Peg if need more information or if you still want to help with the fair:

sjconnect@firstuomaha.org

Sunday Forum

We only have ONE forum each month. The forum will focus on the Soul Matters topic for that month. This month’s forum information:

Sunday, February 10 at 9:30am in the Common Room. Soul Matters Monthly Topic: Trust with Denise Allain

In religious circles, 'trust talk' most often revolves around having faith that life will look after us. This call to trust life's support comes to us as a gift. After all, its all too easy to convince ourselves that life is a foe. SO we need our faith communities to restore our faith that life is ultimately a friend. We need the reassurance. We need to know that when we fall we can count on being picked up. Join the Soul Matters folks as we explore what it means to be a people of trust.

Nominating UUs

Our Nominating Committee wants to hear from you. We’re looking for leaders for our 2019-2020 church year. Plus, we need your nominations for our annual awards. See pages 15 & 16 in this newsletter to learn more. You can also nominate future leaders and award winners easily on our church website.

Visit www.firstuomaha.org/nominating today!

Deadline for leader nominees is March 1st. Deadline for award nominations is April 1st.

Your Nominating Committee thanks you for your help!

Ministerial Musings from the Interim Minister

By Rev. Michelle LaGrave

Just recently, I met with the Pathways to Membership class. I was asked to speak about Unitarian and Universalist history and thea/ology. One particular topic of discussion centered on Universalist theology of the afterlife. Over the course of the nineteenth century, Universalist ministers and congregations were divided in their support of two competing theologies: that of the Restorationists and the Ultra Universalists. Restorationists believed that all souls would ultimately be restored to God at some point after death; but for some there might be a period of purification before restoration. Ultra Universalists believed that all souls would be immediately restored to God's presence at the time of death.



Today, I learned of the death of Mary Oliver, a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet with strong ties to Unitarian Universalism. She was the Ware Lecturer at General Assembly in 2006 and published many of her works with Beacon Press. In tribute to a great poet, I'd like to share one of her poems here. It is called *When Death Comes*.

When death comes
like the hungry bear in autumn;
when death comes and takes all the bright coins from his
purse

to buy me, and snaps the purse shut;
when death comes
like the measles-pox

when death comes
like an iceberg between the shoulder blades,

I want to step through the door full of curiosity,
wondering:
what is it going to be like, that cottage of darkness?

And therefore I look upon everything
as a brotherhood and a sisterhood,
and I look upon time as no more than an idea,
and I consider eternity as another possibility,

and I think of each life as a flower, as common
as a field daisy, and as singular,

and each name a comfortable music in the mouth,
tending, as all music does, toward silence,

and each body a lion of courage, and something
precious to the earth.

When it's over, I want to say all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.

When it's over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.

I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world

Church Events

CommUUnity Night

Friday, Feb. 1 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. The main dish is provided by RE. Everyone is welcome to come to this relaxed monthly potluck dinner. Bring games! Chit chat! There will be childcare.

Social Justice Fair

Sunday, Feb. 3 during Coffee Hour. Interested in learning more about Social Justice? Want to get involved? This is a good opportunity to do so. Find out what others in church are doing for our community and city. Please email Peg if need more info or if you still want to help: sjconnect@firstuuomaha.org.

Young Adult Discussion Group

Sunday, Feb. 3 at 11:45am in the Merritt Lounge. This group welcomes everyone ages 18-35 from all over the Omaha metro. Questions? Please email: youngadults@firstuuomaha.org.

CUUPs Imbolc Celebration

Sunday, Feb. 3 at 6:15pm in the Common Room. Imbolc is the beginning of the Spring season on the Pagan calendar. It is a time for renewal and change. We'll hold a Ritual renewing our commitment to Social Justice in the world and in our community. We invite you to join us in spirit or in person by answering one or both of the questions below and depositing them in the scales in the common room. Then come and join us as we celebrate the coming of spring and renew our dedication to helping light the world with Love and Justice. Please keep your answer relatively short as these will be read aloud during our ritual. They will be anonymous so don't write your name, we want the spirit of community to rise about individual energy. If you have any questions please reach out to the members of the CUUPS Leadership: Stephen Switzer, Denise Allain or Kate Godfrey. Email: cuups@firstuuomaha.org. **Questions: What change would you like to see in your community? How can you shine your light into the world?**

People's Film Festival

Monday, Feb. 4 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *A Perfect Day*. The setting is 1995, "somewhere in the Balkans." Through it all, the group handles the less-than-glamorous realities of life in a combat zone the only way they know how: with selfless bravery and a healthy dose of irreverent humor.

Compassionate Communication Group

Meets the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the Common Room. Using Compassionate Communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg, PhD, we learn to connect with ourselves and others with empathy and to act in greater harmony with our values. Learning to communicate more compassionately, like speaking a new language, takes practice. No prior experience needed. Contact Suzanne: nvcsuz@gmail.com for details. If you need childcare, please let us know at least two weeks in advance.

Breaking Bread for Believers

Tuesday, Feb. 5 at 6:30pm in the Merritt Lounge. Are you a Believer or a Christian in any form? This group is to share/express Christian beliefs. As Unitarians, ALL religious and spiritual paths should be considered equally valid and therefore need to be represented within our community. This group will give you a sanctuary to hold those spiritual beliefs close to your heart. Questions? Email Joe at joehammer95@gmail.com.

The 3F Book Bonanza Group

Friday, Feb. 8 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. The book we'll read is *The Hate You Give* by Angie Thomas. If you have questions, please email: denise.allain@yahoo.com.

Compassionate Communication Workshop

Saturday, Feb. 9, 9am to 1pm in the Common Room. Explore the idea of empathy (play Empathy Poker!), learn about universal needs, and gain awareness about observations vs. judgments. This is a step in the process of preparing our congregation to develop a plan for and a covenant of Right

Relations. Join us for a continental breakfast at 9am. We will provide desserts and beverages. Bring your own brown bag lunch, and discover what Compassionate Communication is and how it can help our church. Please join us. Important: This workshop only has 25 spots—13 spots are already taken. Don't delay. Deadline to RSVP is Feb. 1. **Please RSVP to the church office:** admin@firstuuomaha.org.

POPS (Parents of Preschoolers)

Saturday, Feb. 9 at 5:45pm at Second Unitarian Church, 3012 S 119th St, Omaha (offsite). All parents of preschoolers (from littles through primary grades) are invited to attend (Parents of Preschoolers) Potluck Nights to connect with other parents from both First and Second Unitarian communities. Childcare is provided (please RSVP in advance at least one week prior). Grown-ups gather together for food, fun and fellowship while kids eat and play in the nursery. For any questions or fun ideas, please contact Sarah Eades Hamilton (email: seades.hamilton@gmail.com or call/text: 402-306-6339).

Baby Shower for Sara Switzer

Sunday, Feb. 10 at noon in the Common Room. Please help church member, Sara Switzer, welcome her first baby girl into the world! Babysitting provided with RSVP. Sara will have a c-section at UNMC and the baby will go into surgery at Children's Hospital immediately after and will be there for 10-12 days. Some gifts they will appreciate are girls clothes, gift cards to restaurants near Children's Hospital (Noodles & Co., Panera, Jimmy Johns, etc). She also would appreciate Target and Amazon gift cards to go towards purchasing a car seat. This is a potluck shower and Sara has gestational diabetes. Please consider bringing low carb snacks to share such as fruits, veggies, and egg dishes. Sign-up Genius for the event is here: www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAA28A0F49-switzers See Facebook event here: www.facebook.com/events/619546508465184/.

Church Events

Women's Alliance

Monday, Feb. 11 in the Common Room. Socializing and beverages start at 6:15pm and dinner at 6:30pm. All who identify as women are invited to attend this gathering. Program: To Be Announced. Dinner: a selection of hot, delicious, homemade soups by Louise Jeffrey and Sheri Conner, paired with Great Harvest breads. Freewill Donation: We ask for a freewill donation of \$15, which goes to the cost of food and the Merritt Education Fund. Please let us know if you are a first time attendee. Need childcare to join us? No problem! RSVP with your child's name and age. RSVP FOR CHILDCARE NO LATER THAN Monday, Feb 4th. PLEASE RSVP TO ATTEND NO LATER THAN Friday, Feb 8th. Please RSVP via the [Facebook event page](#) or by EMAILING Denise Allain at denise.allain@yahoo.com.

Young Adult Game Night

Friday, Feb. 15 at 6pm in the Common Room. All are invited to join the Young Adults for this event. We will have childcare! Bring snacks and board games. Questions? Email: youngadults@firstuomaha.org.

Leadership Talk Back

Sunday, Feb. 17 at 11:30am in the Common Room. The MTC and the Church Board want to hear from you. Have questions? Suggestions? Please join your church leaders at a table in the Common Room during coffee hour.

People's Film Festival

*Monday, Feb. 18 at 7pm in the Common Room. We will watch *Love vs. Kentucky*. On April 28th, 2015, six couples walked into the U.S. Supreme Court case with plaintiffs and attorneys from four states to argue their right to marriage equality.*

Women's Religious Studies Covenant Group

*Thursday, Feb. 21 at 1pm in the lounge. This group meets the 3rd Thursday of each month. Our book is *Lifecraft* by Forrest Church. We welcome all self-identified women. If you're interested, please contact Rae: raeb1@hotmail.com.*

First Steps Class

Sunday, Feb. 24 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Classroom. Join us for an introduction to First Unitarian Church and Unitarian Universalism. This session is run by Carrie, our membership coordinator. All are welcome to attend.

Let's Go Make a Kite

Sunday, Feb. 24. Fun for the whole family. RSVP required. See page 7.

Book Club

*Monday, Feb. 25 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. Our selection is *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl* by Timothy Egan. Questions? Contact Dave at drichardson821@gmail.com.*

Taoism Discussion Group

Tuesday, Feb. 26 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. Join us to discuss anything and everything related to Taoism! This February meeting is our last meeting. Questions? Email: gerickson03@gmail.com.

Recurring Events

Women's Religious Studies Group

*This group meets every Thursday, except for the 3rd week of the month at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. We're reading *Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and the Environment* by Manish Mishra-Marzetti and Jennifer Nordstrom, Editors. For questions, please contact Marcia at mkleise@cox.net.*

Dharma Chautauqua

Every Thursday, 6pm to 7:30pm, in the Whitney Young Classroom. More info can be found online: dharmachautauqua.drycreekhost.net/.

Bridge Group

Meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month in the Conference Room at 11:30am. Contact Scott Kemper at scott.kemper@gmail.com.

YRUU (Youth Group)

Meets every Wednesday at 7pm in the Common Room. For more info, contact Jan at DRE@firstuomaha.org.

Choir Rehearsals

Every Wednesday at 7pm in the Sanctuary. For more info, email: choirdirector@firstuomaha.org.

Parent's Choice Listening Circle

Meets the 2nd Sunday of the month at 11:45am in the Merritt Lounge. For questions or to join, please contact Sarah Eades Hamilton (402-306-6339/ seades.hamilton@gmail.com).

AHA Listening Circle--Open to new members!

Meets the 3rd Sunday of the month at 11:45am in the Merritt Lounge. Please contact AHA@firstuomaha.org with questions.

Future Events

Stewardship Brunch

Sunday, March 31 during Coffee Hour. See page 6.

Memorial Concert for Sid Wilson

Sunday, April 7 at 2pm in the Sanctuary. More details will be shared next month.

Save the Date: The 2019 Pride

Parade & Festival is scheduled for Saturday, June 29 this year. Please go to "[2019 Pride Parade & Festival](#)" on Facebook for more information. The parade will be held in Omaha this year and not Council Bluffs. We hope to have a vehicle or float this year in line with the theme of the day, the 50th Anniversary of Stonewall. We would like everyone who wishes to participate in the parade be able to do so this year. More information to come in March. Interested? Please email Peg at sjconnect@firstuomaha.org.

See page 13 for Heart & Hand Auction Events and Ways You Can Help and Get Involved at Church!

Stewardship Campaign

It's that time again! Kickoff for the 2019-20 Stewardship Campaign is the weekend of March 1st thru the 3rd and will run throughout the month of March! This year our theme is the joy and magic of Mary Poppins! The campaign will start with a family viewing and sing along of Mary Poppins in the Common Room on Friday, March 1st during CommUUnity Night. Kickoff weekend will finish with Sunday Service on March 3rd. The Stewardship Drive will end on Sunday, March 31st with an all-church brunch in the Common Room followed by a Kite Festival in Turner Park.

We are all living through an exciting and challenging time of transition for our congregation. Rev. Michelle is leading us through this change and helping us to manifest our dreams and our potential for the future of our congregation. This year we are celebrating 150 years together as a congregation, with 100 years in our current Midtown location. Do you realize how special that is? The vast majority of UU congregations these days are located in the suburbs. An inner city location in a building as historic as ours is very rare, especially in the Midwest region. In order to maintain or increase our programs as well as our beautiful building, please consider giving generously this year so we can all continue to enjoy what this wonderful church provides us. As always, we hope to place the emphasis on fun and fellowship for our Stewardship Campaign and have it result in your generous financial support of our church.

Finance Matters

By Walt Jesteadt, Treasurer

This is the time of year when we put together a budget for the next church year, which begins on May 1st. We start now because we need to agree on the goal for our annual stewardship campaign. Based on input from team leaders and our recent experience, the Board has adopted a preliminary budget for the coming year of \$352,600 and a stewardship goal of \$270,000. That is a budget increase of 3.7% and an increase of less than 2% from last year's stewardship goal of \$265,000. Pledge contributions represent 77% of the income for the budget.

It might appear that if everyone increases their pledge by 2%, everything will be fine. That unfortunately is not the case. We are continuing to rely on money from Dick Holland's bequest to wean ourselves from reliance on his overly large pledge. Every year, we decrease the pledge contribution from the bequest by \$5,000. The rest of us have to make up that \$5,000 difference. It would take a 4.3% increase in other pledge income to do that or a 15% increase to avoid use of his bequest money altogether. And, of course, Dick's pledge is not the only one we will be missing. Several significant contributors to our last stewardship campaign will unfortunately not be contributing to this one. It is harder to estimate that difference, but we will need increases of 5% to 10% from those who can afford it in order to reach the stewardship goal.




Let's Go Make a Kite!

These tissue collage kites will be
used to decorate the sanctuary in March.

Feb. 24

After church
in the common room



Bring an apron or art
T-shirt for little ones.

Kites will be
taken home
in April.

Please RSVP to Jan at DRE@firstuuomaha.org
-- we have a limited number of kites.

Preparing for the Ministerial Search

Dear Beautiful Congregants,

As you all know we are in a time of transition at First UU and are beginning the process of searching for our Settled Minister. In order to do so, your Board is tasked with naming a **Search Committee** made up of you, the congregants. And the search (for the Search Committee) is ON!

Slow down there, partner. Catch me up a bit.

Sure! Here's a quick overview from the *UUA Transitions Office Settlement Handbook*:

https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/settlement_handbook.pdf:

- Phase 1: Concluding a Ministry Well comes out of the very real and lived experience that any and all previous ministries affect the next ministry. Congregants and ministers often blur ministries into a single narrative and base their next ministry on this narrative, often expecting it to be the same or, conversely, assuming it will have no effect on their next ministry. Neither assumption is true.
- Phase 2: Education and Preparation for Search focuses on intentionality, being mindful of the process of moving the entire congregation toward search with deliberation and care, knowing who can and should assist you in the process, and knowing how to select a search committee wisely, fund the research, and connect with your transitions coach.
- Phase 3: Building the Structure to Search includes congregations' search committee roles, process, and organization. **The work of the Search Committee is to gather information, materials, and insights on the congregation to present an authentic picture for ministers.**
- Phase 4: Opening Up for the Search is about the search committee presenting itself publicly to ministers, ministers expressing interest in congregations, what each should do once that happens, and what a congregation should know as this goes on.
- Phase 5: Discernment/Mutual Selection is about the process of moving from many options to a final option for both ministers and congregations. This process moves from the initial release of ministers' names to congregations to interviews to pre-candidating weekends to the final discernment process.
- Phase 6: Finalizing the Offer is about what happens when you have a mutual yes and are moving toward a candidating week. This includes contract negotiations, background checks, and announcing the candidate.
- Phase 7: Entering into a New Ministry is about what happens during candidating week and beyond.

We are currently in Phase 2: Education and Preparation for Search. The sentence that is bolded in Phase 3 is the quick and dirty definition of the **Search Committee**.

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

Phase 2, you say? Tell me more...

Yes. Recently your Board participated in a workshop with our transitions coach, the Rev. Oscar Lewis Sinclair of the Unitarian Church of Lincoln. (It's super cool that our transitions coach is super close!) In that workshop we talked about the role of the board, the role of the Search Committee, and a general timeline of when stuff will be happening. As you can see above in Phase 2, the board is going to be mindful and proceed with intentionality when choosing a Search Committee. *Handout 4: Guidelines for Congregations with Regard to Ministerial Search Committees* goes into great detail about the types of folks a congregation wants on their search committee. We encourage you to read it. (Handout 4 is on the next page of this newsletter.)

Are you saying the *Board* is going to choose the Search Committee?

Not exactly. Your board is going to *facilitate the naming of* the Search Committee. What does that mean? It means, that we are going to work hard to hear from every. single. member. of this congregation. We want to hear from YOU who YOU think “would have your trust in working on our common behalf on our Search Committee.” That’s why we’re starting now, early in 2019 to get things moving as it is a time-intensive process. *Handout 6: Example Process for Choosing a Search Committee* is the process the board is going to follow. “The process is time intensive. It does seem to produce good results and a high degree of respect and trust for both the new search committee and the board.” Step 1 in this process is to *call every single household*.

And that’s why we’re writing to you today. To let you know where we are in our ministerial transition and about the process of coming up with a Search Committee. ***So be on the lookout for a phone call from one of us and be thinking about the questions to consider that are listed in Handout 6 (see page 11 in this newsletter).*** And please note: If the caller reaches voice-mail or an answering device, a message with those questions will be left and you are invited to call back with your response. No follow-up calls will be made; if you want to weigh in, you have the opportunity to do so by phoning back.

Wait! I have so many questions about the Search Committee! What does it entail? What if I want to be on it? Will someone help the committee through the process? How is the Search Committee supposed to know what to do!?

All great questions, all with appropriate answers that will come with time. We don’t want to overwhelm you just yet. For now, we just ask that you focus on the bulleted questions in Handout 6 and think about who you would want on your Search Committee. Training, coaching, timelines, and duties will all come in the future. But first things first, search for the Search Committee.

Feel free to reach out to your Board (board@firstuuomaha.org) if you have specific questions. Otherwise, we look forward to chatting with each and every member!

Til then, take care,
Your First Unitarian Church Board of Trustees

Please go to the next page for more information about the Search Process. Handout 4 is on page 10 and Handout 6 is on page 11 of this newsletter.

Preparing for the Ministerial Search (continued)

Handout 4: Guidelines for Congregations with Regard to Ministerial Search Committees

For the Board and Search Committee

The kind of person to seek:

- One who has an overall perspective and commitment to the nature, purpose and activities of the Church. Contrary to what might be expected, we do not recommend that Search Committees be made up of representatives of special interests with the Church. This tends to create unnecessary conflict and to have people looking for "one issue" candidates. So instead of looking for "representatives," we recommend looking for "senators."
- One who is committed to UU pluralism in every area: theology, life styles, social concern, age, etc.
- One who is patiently able to work for consensus rather than insisting upon majority rule or minority tyranny.
- One with time to be thoroughly and continually involved. Members of the Committee may well devote a minimum of 20 hours monthly for ten months or so, to say nothing of the added time involved when the pre-candidating interviews get underway. Searching for a minister must be a top priority for members of the Search Committee.
- One without rigid requirements regarding ministerial profile including gender, marital status, age, etc.
- One who constantly remembers the needs of the Congregation, who will not permit the Search Committee to become an autonomous, independent (and finally irresponsible) entity.
- One with a history of UU involvement. This does not necessarily mean long-term involvement, but it does mean that people new to our religious community ought not be asked to serve. It takes time for people to accept and embrace our diversity.
- One who very evidently has the confidence of the Congregation.
- One who can respect the confidentiality of the process, but who, nonetheless, is eager to keep the Congregation informed regarding the progress that is being made.
- One of irenic, cooperative disposition: not disputatious.

The kind of person to avoid:

- One with limited and high-intensity interests; one who defines the Church in narrow, exclusive terms.
- One with rigid, authoritarian ideas coupled with little respect for differences, e.g. the militant Humanist, the intolerant Christian, the rabid Peacenik, the gadfly.
- One who readily accedes to any request, but who is unable, either by temperament or time limitations, to follow through.
- One who feels that "we know best," thus urging the Search Committee to ignore the expressed needs of the Congregation.
- One who has a genius for stroking the cat from tail to head just to see the sparks fly.
- One who is actively disliked by many people in the Congregation. Gadflies have their places, but not on Search Committees.

Handouts 4 & 6 from "Preparing for Ministerial Search Workshop" led by Rev. Oscar Lewis Sinclair of the UUA, Jan 11 2019

Preparing for the Ministerial Search (continued)

Handout 6: Example Process for Choosing a Search Committee

The process is time intensive. It does seem to produce good results and a high degree of respect and trust for both the new search committee and the board.

1. The board and perhaps the Nominating Committee divide up all the households in the congregation and place a call to every single household. Set a date for completing calls.
2. Each household should be told that it is critical to have input from everyone in the congregation in order to put together an effective Ministerial Search Committee. Questions to consider when selecting Search Committee members are:
 - Who can represent the whole congregation well (which would include looking out for the needs of children) and not just a piece or “faction” of the church? Who would have “no axe to grind” and who can serve the entire congregation?
 - Who in the congregation works well with others?
 - Who knows the history and culture of the church, whether older or newer to the congregation, and is grounded in our faith tradition?
 - Who can speak to a potential minister about our congregation on its best and worst days, about its strengths and weaknesses?
 - **After thinking about these questions, who in the congregation would have your trust in working on our common behalf on the Search Committee?**

The board/nominating committee member should take down the names of the person listed for the last question.

[Note: If the caller gets voicemail or an answering device, a message with those questions will be left and the member will be invited to call back with their response. No follow-up calls need be made; if you want to weigh in, you have the opportunity to do so by phoning back.]

3. Someone else on the board, a good data manager, collects all the suggested names from the callers and makes a spread sheet, noting how many times every person suggested has been named. (The whole board need not see all this data.)
4. The data manager reports to the board the top 12-14 names. *(It’s best to do the list where there is a natural break in the numbers. For example, the top 13 people got mentioned more than 20 times. Person number 14 on the list was mentioned 16 times. The next three were mentioned 14 times. The natural break of after person number 13.)*
5. Board members call this short list to see if these people are interested in running and agree to give up any other leadership position they hold if chosen for the Search Committee.
6. A written ballot is prepared. The names are listed alphabetically. The voting happens at a congregational meeting.
7. Written statements from all candidates stating why they want to be on the committee should be posted along with pictures, if possible.
8. The vote happens. At the end of the meeting the board or nominating committee meets in executive session and counts ballots. The top 4 are elected. The board then appoints 3 others from the names on the ballot. *(The appointments are important. This improves the odds of diversity on the search committee and not just the seven elders dearly loved by the congregation. The broader the demographic the better, especially in regards to age, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, areas of participation in the congregation.)*
9. The board/nominating committee announces the Search Committee, never telling anyone who was elected and who was appointed (including to the Search Committee.)
10. The next Sunday the Search Committee should be introduced with some fanfare. There might even be a small commissioning moment in the service and/or taking of some vows to serve the congregation.

Follow all steps carefully and thoroughly. Such measure will produce the best results. To date, congregations that have followed this process with deliberateness and integrity have reported having a search committee that is respected, trusted, and representative by and to the congregation. This process comes from UU interim minister, Rev. David Keyes.

Hope in Action

Our church believes in community, and that is what Hope in Action, a sub-team of the Caring Team, is all about. Any one of us might need assistance, and we want to make it easier for you to ask for support and easier for you to offer support when others are in need.

WHO IS SERVED?

Church members, friends, regular attendees and their spouses are eligible for assistance from Hope in Action.

WHO CAN HELP?

Everyone! Hope in Action is an opportunity for everyone in our church community to support each other by sharing knowledge, skills and resources.

Hope in Action will use church communications, including the enews, to let our church community know when help is needed to respond to a request for support. And we will report back to the church community about how we were able to respond. All communication will be done in a manner that maintains the degree of confidentiality requested by the person seeking assistance.

WHAT SUPPORT CAN BE EXPECTED?

Hope in Action is there when people are dealing with a medical problem, need transportation or help around the house, can use assistance with referrals to social service agencies or just need someone to talk to about the ups and downs of life. Our response will vary depending on the type of support that is needed in our church community and what resources we have available.

Although Hope in Action is not able to respond to emergencies, short-term financial assistance may be available for lodging, food, clothing, medication, transportation and utilities. Financial disbursements are not made directly to the person making the request for assistance.

HOW TO ASK FOR SUPPORT

Requests for assistance must be made directly by the person needing help. Hope in Action does not respond to any anonymous or third-party requests for assistance.

Here are the ways you can ask for support from Hope in Action. You may send an email to hopeinaction@firstuuomaha.org or use the Hope in Action link on the church website. Or, you may simply complete a Caring Card, located in the church pews and place it in the offering plate.

WHO DECIDES WHAT SUPPORT WILL BE OFFERED?

Hope in Action will use a team approach, so at least three members of Hope in Action must participate in determining the nature of the response.

CHANGE FOR CHANGE

Each week generous people put change in the collection plate. This change goes to the Sunday School kids who decide what to do with the money. In the past they have helped Community Meals and International Bridges for Justice. The kids are now donating this change to the **Neighborhood Ministry Team**, which purchases bus tickets and food cards and gives out blessing bags to people who come to the church door from our area. Your change makes a difference! Thank you for your generosity!

SHARE THE PLATE

Each month one-half of the loose currency collected in the offering plate is donated to a local cause that advances important principles of Unitarianism. Our Share the Plate recipient for February is **OTOC (Omaha Together One Community)**. OTOC is a local interfaith organization of which First Unitarian is a member. We encourage you to learn more about OTOC by visiting their website www.otoc.org.

Poster Making Event

This event that would have happened in January had been postponed because the Women's March has been moved from January 20 to Sunday, March 10. The new date to make posters for the Women's March is **Saturday, March 9, 11am to 2pm in the Common Room**. Questions? Email Peg at sjconnect@firstuuomaha.org

Church Parking Information

Parking is directly west of the church in the surface parking lot or on the street. We want to save the surface lot for those who need to park closer. You may park in the Midtown Crossing Parking Garage to the west of the church lot. The entrance to the parking garage is on Farnam Street. Have your ticket validated downstairs in the Common Room. Please have your ticket validated for free parking—with validation you receive **FREE PARKING** for the **ENTIRE** day. Questions? Email the church office at admin@firstuuomaha.org. See more info at our website here: www.firstuuomaha.org/directions

Team Leaders: Next Meeting to Happen in April

Our next Teams Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 6 at 9am in the Common Room. We are moving to the morning for our meeting—we used to meet Saturday afternoons, but found that time didn't work for many people. We will provide bagels, coffee and juice. If you have an item for the agenda, please email MTC@firstuuomaha.org

Ways You Can Get Involved

YES Meal Prep: Volunteers and Donations

Friday, Feb. 15 at 9am in the kitchen. We'll serve spaghetti and meat sauce, tossed salad, bread and dessert. This month we will collect toilet paper for the YES House. If you are interested in helping or donating, contact Kim please at kjcallaghan@hotmail.com. Every month Kim and her team prepare a meal for Youth Emergency Services (YES). See this website for more info: www.yesomaha.org. Note: Our January 18th meal prep was canceled due to weather. We will serve a meal on Friday, Feb. 1 to make up this date. Please contact Kim if you want to help!

Help Wanted: Worship Associates

Do you enjoy Sunday morning? Do you see Denise up front and think, gee her jokes are getting old.... (so does she!). The Worship Arts Team is looking for new members. Full training and appreciation are offered. We help keep the pulpit filled when Rev. Michelle takes a day off, we keep things moving in the summer time. Come help us out! Please contact Denise if you are interested in joining us at denise.allain@yahoo.com.

Omaha Together One Community (OTOC) Environmental Sustainability Action Team

Concerned about the environment? Concerned about climate change? Looking for a way to influence policy makers? Then, come to the next meeting of OTOC's Environmental Sustainability Action Team. The goal of this team is to take better care of our environment thru advocacy. We believe that our voices are stronger by joining together with like-minded members of OTOC. If you want to begin your advocacy journey, then please join us at our next meeting on Thursday, February 7th at 7pm at First United Methodist Church, 7020 Cass Street, Room 111. Subsequent meetings are always on the first Thursday of each month at the same location and time (7pm at First United Methodist Church). Please email Laurie Gift at tothegifts@cox.net with questions or for more information.

February Heart & Hand Auction Events with Open Seats

Shoo away the winter blues, by attending February auction events! The following February events offered at the Heart & Hand Auction last October have a few unfilled "seats" available for purchase. Email auction@firstuomaha.org to sign-up, and get details online at the auction website ([click here](#)). If you don't want to pay, then we won't ask questions. Just contact auction@firstuomaha.org so we can coordinate with your host. We're looking for a crowd for both dance events and both events provide babysitting with RSVP. Dinners require tickets to be purchased in advance.

Saturday, Feb. 2 at 7pm at Jennifer Larsen & Joe Sisson's House. Cost: \$15/person. Details: Cool Brew and Warm Wine Gathering Kick back and enjoy a convivial evening of good conversations, light music, heavy hors d'oeuvres, and drinks to brighten those winter blahs!

Saturday, Feb. 9 at 7pm in the Common Room. Cost: \$7/person. Details: An Evening of English Country Dance with Peg Pidgeon. Bring a date, a friend, or yourself! We will learn three to four different English Country Dances and laugh the night away.

Saturday, Feb 16 at 5:30pm at Jody & Greg Petrow's House. Cost: \$15/person. Details: Vegan Dinner. We have just a few tickets remaining that must be purchased well in advance for planning purposes. Kid-friendly, but will require an extra ticket. Look online for details or email the auction team.

Thursday, Feb 21 at 7pm in the Common Room. Cost: \$35/person. Details: The Bourdain Dinner Bring a dish to share with ten friends and a story of how that dish connects to a memory from your culture or upbringing. The center entrée and beverages provided by hosts Joe & Lori Schaaf. Come embark on a cultural, personal, and passion-filled journey over tastes, stories, and drinks we will share together. Eight tickets left.

Friday, Feb 22 at 7pm in the Common Room. Cost: \$10/person. Details: Let's Dance! Come see the Common Room transformed into an 80s prom night with Joe and Lori Schaaf's amazing decorations. From the 80s through today we will Safety Dance while we Shoop and Get Jiggy Wit it and scream Yeah!

Saturday, Feb 23 at 4pm in the Common Room. Cost: \$10/family. Details: Multi-Generational Origami Session Relax and chat while creating origami art. We will provide paper, instructions and our passion for the hobby. Any skill level is welcome!

A Note About Religious Education

By Jan Wilson, Director of Religious Education

Spring has not happened, but I promise that it will. Our Easter Carnival was relegated to the Common Room last year due to low temperatures. Hopefully, the sun will shine and we will hunt for pastel plastic eggs in the grass on the East Lawn, as they say at the White House. **The date of our Carnival is Sunday, April 21st.**

Besides hunting for candy-filled eggs, we will have home-made carnival games at stations for all the Easter revelers. We have one side for nursery children, and one side for older ones. This gives the littlest ones a chance at the eggs. Parents generally cheer them on and have a celebratory day with other families.

If joining the activities sounds good to you, we would appreciate help setting up the stations, hiding eggs, etc. Let me know if this is on your Easter bucket list. I will gladly put you to work. Email me at dre@firstuuomaha.org.

Thanks to all our wonderful RE volunteers for sharing in our program. It is such a joy to work (play) with you.

Sarah Joslyn Society

By Deb Duggan, SJS Leader

Acting on her own excellent idea, Dixie Lemon, church member, established the Sarah Joslyn Society in 2004 to encourage, enable and thank those who wish to leave a bequest to the church. Her gentle prods, witty articles and pithy sayings ("You'll never miss the money") have helped the membership grow from 32 original members to more than 75 who have named the church in their estate planning. Membership in this Society requires no on-going effort on your part. There are no dues, no tasks, no committees nor office holders. After your first commitment, you're a member for life, and you get to attend a special gathering, usually in mid-October, and bask in the warmth that comes from having done something important to help ensure the financial security of the church. Come join us! Contact Deb at 402-553-5477 for more information. Thank you!

Inclement Weather Cancellations

In the event of bad weather and we have to cancel the service, the church office will email everyone on our enews list, update the church webpage, and post on the church Facebook page. The church will also alert the local news stations about the cancellation.



An Important Message from The Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee needs YOUR help! This is YOUR chance to suggest future leaders for our congregation and recognize those who have done things that are award-worthy!

Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal.

Who do you see as a leader?

The following positions need to be filled for 2019-2020:

President-Elect, Capital Trust, two members for the Board of Trustees and two members for the Nominating Committee.

Please Note: Deadline for nominations and recommendations for these leadership roles is **March 1**. Similarly, the First Unitarian Awards deadline has been changed to **April 1**.

Do you know a nominee for these categories: Unitarian of the Year, Youth of the Year, Young Adult of the Year, Religious Education, Heritage, Keeping the Faith, Social Justice and an Unsung Unitarian?

Make your nominations and submit them to the Nominating Committee. All recommendations submitted by **April 1st** will be considered.

Go here on the church website to make your nomination online:

www.firstuomaha.org/nominating

or fill out the insert in Sunday's order of service or email nominations@firstuomaha.org.

You can also fill out the Nominations Form on the following page (page 16) in this newsletter and mail it to the church with attention to The Nominating Committee or leave the form in the Nominating Committee's mailbox at church.

We appreciate and encourage your participation!

Sincerely,
The Nominating Committee

(Alan Vovolka - convener, Royal Carleton, Kate Godfrey, Kathi Oliver, Carol Ramsey, Marie Sedlacek, and Ben Wallace)

Leadership & Annual Awards Form 2019 (see page 15 for more information about this form)

Who would you nominate for President-Elect? _____

Who would you nominate for Board of Trustees? (Two needed this year)

Who would you nominate for Nominating Committee? (Two needed this year)

Who would you nominate for the Capital Trust? (One needed this year) _____

Who would you nominate for the Right Relations Committee? (Two needed this year)

Unsung UU Award affirms those UUs whose actions inspire, support, and express Unitarian Universalism but have not been previously recognized. The award is given to a person or group whose lifetime activities have made a significant contribution to the cause of Unitarian Universalism. Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

Keeping the Faith Award was established to recognize people who live by UU principles. It is presented to persons who have worked to keep Unitarian Universalism alive in their community and who touch the lives of congregation and community members in a positive way. Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

Social Justice Award pays tribute to those who witness to the ideals of social justice and responsibility so important to our UU heritage.

Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

Religious Education Award to honor an individual or individuals who have made a significant contribution to religious education.

Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

The Heritage Award to recognize an individual or group who have made a significant contribution to preserving, understanding, and celebrating our Unitarian Universalist history.

Suggested Recipient : _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

The Young Adult of the Year Award to recognize an individual (18-35 years old) who has played a vibrant and critical part of our community.

Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

The Youth of the Year Award to recognize an individual (ages 13-17) who has contributed to our church and community.

Suggested Recipient(s): _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

Additionally, at the annual meeting each year, a member of our church receives our **Unitarian of the Year Award** to recognize an individual or individuals who have made a difference in our Congregation over the past year.

Suggested Recipient: _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

Regional Assembly 2019

The MidAmerica Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association includes nearly 200 UU congregations in parts or all of these states: Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Kentucky, Ohio, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska.

Dates: April 5-7, 2019

Place: St. Louis, Missouri

The theme is “Intersectionalities”—how we live, work, and relate, as well as share, withhold, and leverage power in our world. Presentations and workshops will explore identities we encounter and embody, the challenges of social inequality, and tools and skills we need in order to work more effectively with one another, as well as the general “nuts and bolts” of congregational life, such as leadership, stewardship, membership, and religious education. Our Keynote Presenter will be UUA President, Susan Frederick-Gray. Join us to explore, share, and worship with fellow Unitarian Universalists.

For more information, go here: www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly.

General Assembly 2019

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process.

Dates: June 19-23, 2019

Place: Spokane, WA

Overview: The Power of We—

In a time of great challenge and heartbreak in our world, what does our faith demand from us? At this year's General Assembly we will explore the power, possibility, purpose, struggle and joy of finding the path forward together as Unitarian Universalists. Join us as we work for collective liberation inside and outside our faith.

Learn more about GA, here: www.uua.org/ga.

Midwest Leadership School

Dates: July 14-20, 2019

Place: Luther College—Decorah, IA

Part of the Unitarian Universalist Association's nationwide network of leadership schools, Midwest Leadership School is a week-long intensive program in leadership and group dynamics. Led by lay and ordained staff with a deep understanding of UU congregations, MWLS develops both youth and adults into congregational leaders, provides leadership tools and skills, and deepens Unitarian Universalist identity. This is an extremely intense week of workshops, discussions, intimate small groups, worship preparation, personal theological exploration and growth.

Learn more here: www.mwls.org

Interim Minister

Rev. Michelle LaGrave
minister@firstuuomaha.org

Director of Religious Education

Jan Wilson
dre@firstuuomaha.org

Membership Coordinator

Carrie Helmberger
coordinator@firstuuomaha.org

Church Administrator

Catharine Dixon
admin@firstuuomaha.org

Sanctuary Singers Director

William Miller
choirdirector@firstuuomaha.org

Organist

Pat Will

Sanctuary Singers Accompanist

J. Gawf

EMR Director

Stan Harper

Minister Emeriti

Ronald Knapp
 Frank Rivas

Nursery Coordinator

Andrea Laudi
childcare@firstuuomaha.org

Custodian

Bobby Medrano

THE FLAME

Deadlines are the 15th of each month.
 Word limit: 200. Send submissions to
admin@firstuuomaha.org.

Editor/Designer: Cat Dixon

Proofers:

Barb Henney, Scott Kemper,
 Lois Norris, Debbie Hunsberger

Flame Mailing Team:

Debbie Hunsberger, Lois Norris,
 Linda Hruska, Kim Callaghan

Meet Our Leaders

Board Members

Maria Wallace (President), Joe Schaaf (President-Elect), Catherine Plumlee (Secretary), Sharon Piehler, Floyd Prine, Carol Ramsey, Tom Seguin, Donna Tubach Davis
 Email: board@firstuuomaha.org

Trustees of the Capital Trust

Ellen Shurson (2019), Daniel Byrd (2020), Bob Hess (2021)

Ministry Team Council

Dave Richardson, Joe Schaaf, Katie Zimmer, Rev. Michelle LaGrave
 Email: mtc@firstuuomaha.org

Nominating Committee

Royal Carleton, Kate Godfrey, Kathi Oliver, Carol Ramsey, Marie Sedlacek, Ben Wallace

Right Relations Committee

Della Byum, Carol Cronin, Nadine Keith, Mark Loscutt, Tom Seguin (board liaison)

Transition Team

Kathy Alexander, Skip Ciulla, Carol Cronin, Kay Lynn Goldner, John Hruska, Klyde Warren

Ministry Teams and Team Leaders

AHA—Sheri Conner
 Archives—Linda Parker
 Baby Welcoming Team—Becca Hatcher, Katrina Schmidt, & Sara Switzer
 Black Lives Matter—Rene Harper
 Caring—Louise Jeffrey
 Chalice Guild—Kay Lynn Goldner
 CUUPS—Steve Switzer
 Early Morning Risers—Mary Kay Peters & Sarah Copeland
 Fellowship Team—Nadine Keith & Nellie Chenoweth
 Finance Team—Walt Jesteadt
 Garden—Sharon Conlon
 Governance—Kim Dunovan
 Fundraising Team—Donna Neff & Katrina Schmidt
 Hope in Action—Kim Dunovan
 Hospitality Teams—Carolyn McNamara
 House and Grounds Team—open
 Listening Circles—Katrina Schmidt
 Membership Team—Mike McAtee
 Midtown Helping Hands—open
 Office Team—Carolyn McNamara
 Omaha Together One Community—Laurie Gift
 Partner Church Team—open
 Recycling Coordinators—Dave & Evy Rosser
 Right Relations—Nadine Keith
 Social Justice Coordinator—Peg Pidgeon
 Soul Matters—Michael McAtee
 Stewardship Team—Mary Kay Peters & Peg Pidgeon
 Wayside Pulpit—Kim Dunovan
 Women's Alliance—Catherine Plumlee
 Worship Arts Team—Denise Allain
 Young Adult Group—Taylor & Jessica Eman
 YRUU—Jessica & Taylor Eman & Tom Seguin

First Unitarian Church of Omaha

www.firstuuomaha.org

402-345-3039

Church Events

CommUUnity Night

Friday, Feb. 1 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Social Justice Fair

Sunday, Feb. 3 during Coffee Hour. See pages 2 & 4 for details.

Young Adult Discussion Group

Sunday, Feb. 3 at 11:45am in the Merritt Lounge. See page 4.

Pathways to Membership (Last session)

Feb. 3 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Classroom.

CUUPS Event: Imbolc

Sunday, Feb 3 at 6:15pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Feb. 4 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

Breaking Bread for Believers

Tuesday, Feb. 5 at 6:30pm in the Whitney Young Classroom. See page 4 for details.

Compassionate Communication Group

Tuesdays, Feb. 5 & Feb. 19 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 4.

3F Book Bonanza Group

Friday, Feb. 8 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 4.

Compassionate Communication Workshop (RSVP Required)

Saturday, Feb. 9 at 9am in the Common Room. See page 4.

POPS (Parents of Preschoolers)

Saturday, Feb. 9 at 5:45pm at Second Unitarian Church, 3012 S 119th St, Omaha (offsite). See page 4.

H&H Event: An Evening of English Country Dance

Saturday, Feb. 9 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 13.

Baby Shower for Sara Switzer

Sunday, Feb. 10 at noon in the Common Room. See page 4.

Women's Alliance

Monday, Feb. 11 at 6:15pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

Board Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 12 at 6pm in the Common Room.

The Flame Newsletter Deadline

February 15th at noon.

Young Adult Game Night

Friday, Feb. 15 at 6pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

Leadership Talk Back

Sunday, Feb. 17 at 11:30am in the Common Room. See page 5.

People's Film Festival

Monday, Feb. 18 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

Women's Religious Studies Covenant Group

Thursday, Feb. 21 at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

H&H Event: The Bourdain Dinner

Thursday, Feb 21 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 13.

H&H Event: Let's Dance!

Friday, Feb 22 at 7pm in the Common Room. See page 13.

H&H Event: Origami Session

Saturday, Feb 23 at 4pm in the Common Room. See page 13.

First Steps Class

Sunday, Feb. 24 at 11:45am in the Whitney Young Room. See page 5.

Let's Go Make a Kite

Sunday, Feb. 24 during Coffee Hour. See page 7.

Book Club

Monday, Feb. 25 at 7pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

Taoism Discussion Group

Tuesday, Feb. 26 at 6:30pm in the Common Room. See page 5.

Recurring...

Bridge Group

Meets the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month. See page 5.

Parent's Choice Listening Circle

Meets the 2nd Sunday of the month.

AHA Listening Circle

Meets the 3rd Sunday of the month. See page 5.

YRUU (Youth Group) Meetings

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Common Room.

Choir Rehearsals

Wednesdays at 7pm in the Sanctuary.

Women's Religious Studies Group

Meets most Thursdays at 1pm in the Merritt Lounge. See page 5.

Dharma Chautauqua

Every Thursday, 6pm to 7:30pm in the Whitney Young Classroom. See page 5.

Soul Matters Small Groups

Various meeting dates. See here:

www.firstuuomaha.org/soulmatters

Future Events...

CommUUnity Night: Stewardship Event

Friday, March 1 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. See page 6.

Poster-Making Event

Saturday, March 9, 11am to 2pm in the Common Room. See page 12.

Stewardship Brunch

Sunday, March 31 during Coffee Hour. See page 6.

Memorial Concert for Church Member, Sid Wilson

Sunday, April 7 at 2pm in the Sanctuary. More details will be shared next month.

Social Media & First U

Find our public Facebook page here:

www.facebook.com/firstuuomaha/

Find us on Twitter here:

[@FirstUUOmaha](https://twitter.com/FirstUUOmaha)

Be sure to like the church and follow us!

The Nominating Committee needs YOUR help! This is YOUR chance to suggest future leaders for our congregation and recognize those who have done things that are award-worthy!

Who do you see as a leader?

See pages 15 &16 in this newsletter to learn more and to nominate people for awards and positions in church leadership.

The Nominating Committee thanks you for your help!

**First Unitarian Church of Omaha
3114 Harney St.
Omaha, NE 68131**

www.firstuuomaha.org