

Second Thoughts

The Newsletter of Second Unitarian Church of Omaha

3012 South 119th Street
Omaha, NE 68144
Office: (402) 334-0537
Minister: (402) 697-3873

E-Mail: secuuch@radiks.net

Web Page:
www.secondunitarianomaha.org

June 2002

Sunday Worship - 10:30 a.m.

First Hour - 9:15 a.m.

Children's Summer Programming - 10:30 a.m.

June 2

First Hour: "Thoreau discussion" Betty Segell

Family Worship: "Stumbling Toward Utopia" Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

June 9

First Hour: "Buddhism" Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

Worship: "Nickel and Dime" Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

June 16

First Hour: TBA

Worship: "What is Ministry? Part 2" Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

June 23

First Hour: TBA

Worship: "Poetic Readings" Alice Blackstone and Lorraine Duggin

June 30

First Hour: "Melel Xojobal" Mary Bamesberger

Worship: TBA Rev. Joel High

Details about First Hour programming are listed on page 3 of this newsletter.

Josh's Journal

As the Church year winds to a close it is good to reflect on all that has happened here at Second Unitarian in past and all that we are planning to do in the future. In many ways it feels like we as an institution are on the brink of something very special.

In his book *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, Shunryu Suzuki says that being a beginner or new at something is very close to having the mind of a Zen Master. In the mind of the beginner there are few preconceptions and assumptions about the way things should be. They are open to all possibilities. Whereas the expert has already had these assumptions set in place.

This month the congregation will vote to extend a call to me to be the settled minister of Second Unitarian Church. In the fall, we will then begin another long-range plan. In one sense I am not a beginner, and neither is the congregation. We have been together for two years now and know each other relatively well. And yet in a deeper sense we are beginning a new journey. There has never been a long-range plan done at Second Unitarian Church while there has also been a minister. The future is open to many possibilities. May we have the mind of the beginner that it is able to absorb them all.

May You Always Be Blessed,

Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

**MY FINAL PLANKS & SLIVERS
(or..... She who laughs last, laughs best!)**

The mission of the Second Unitarian Church is to provide an inclusive, nurturing religious community that promotes the search for truth, a spiritual grounding in life and a challenge to act.

This is a time of reflection. My journey started back last summer at Midwest Leadership School in Beloit, Wisconsin with Denny Burnside and Cheryl Wallace who also leads our Youth. What a year for the Caring Committee, always there in those very special times in our lives. I am grateful for Alice Blackstone carrying this message and seeing how this role has expanded with Jill Archer and her committee. What would we have done without our wonderful Minister and his pastoral care? The Music and Worship Committee has been blessed with the musical talents of an incredible choir directed by Mark Dickmeyer as well as special musical performances. Bravo! We even had a Bread and Apple Communion. Rev. Snyder, Adult RE and Membership combined forces for new programs; the Newcomer Session, Meditation Group, Ethics Class, Men's Group and the Women's Group had a Retreat, "Celebrating Our Spiritual Foremothers." We are fortunate to have a new DRE this past year, Barb Roth, gifted in many ways. She put together a notebook for RE teachers and kicked off the year with a workshop. The kids participated in Unicef and there is a News Page for UU Kids & families. The Fellowship Committee had their first "Sing for Your Supper" which Darrel & I hope will be an annual event. What talent and such a delightful evening. Many of our church activities would not of been the same without Suzanne Baker's work in providing childcare. The foundations this program were laid by Laura Shennum. Our very active Social Justice Committee is highly involved with OTOC and developed a process for approving, adopting and communicating about projects.

The work of the Buildings and Grounds Committee is all around from Al Harrison replacing the roof shingles and gutters, to Craig Piquette's modifications in the sanctuary, and of course the chairs, what a difference they make! Then journey down to the bathrooms and see a work in progress. Our congregation has been involved at a denominational level. We hosted the Prairie Star District President's Meeting; 9 of our people attended the "Healthy Congregations Workshop;" Rev. Snyder has been involved at a District level and 4 people attended the PSD Annual Meeting. If you want to check out the happenings of our church, see our website, www.secondunitarianomaha.org through Don

Shennum's vision with follow through by the technology committee.

We have 13 new, delightful members joining our Church Community, welcome. Much thanks to the Membership Committee for their efforts. This all contributed to an outstanding pledge drive headed by Richard Koelling. We gratefully received \$2,150 more in pledges since the Town Hall Meeting. So as of May 5 our total is now \$91,716 which is 94.4% of our goal. There are now 71 pledges by a total of 106 individuals, 101.4% of our goal. That means averages of \$865 per person, and \$1292 per pledge unit. A key number to remember is, we increased our pledges over last year by 16.3%! Much thanks to our fine Treasurer, Tom Rundquist, for all his work at keeping those books and all the reports.

Highlights from the Board this past year is the implementation of a well done financial audit. Norma Hansen, Kathy Bell and Tricia Genereux pulled together our governing documents into one Leadership Notebook. The Calling Committee, headed by Heather Lipsey, has had small group meetings, Rev. Charlotte Shivers came and spoke to our congregation and they are now gearing up for June 9, the day we vote on calling Rev. Snyder. The Long Range Planning Committee, headed by Cheri Cody, will then take the information gleaned from the meetings and move forward.

At the latest Board meeting, the Board approved the ongoing use of the church name during the annual Brush Up Nebraska Paint-a-thon and a fundraising application from Social Justice Committee to ask for donations to Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty. Richard Koelling has offered to replace the hanging sign just off the parking lot, much thanks again. We also approved Richard's request to use of the church name as a sponsor in the Hospice House Massage-a-thon. Kathy reported that the Youth Adult Committee (YAC) plans on scheduling a portion of the Youth Group meetings at Second Unitarian next year. The Memorial Fund Task Force has met and are discussing the establishment of an endowment fund. The Board reviewed the proposed Church Service Cancellation Policy that Josh provided at the last meeting.

We spent a large part of the meeting discussing and preparing for the Annual Meeting on May 19. I so apologize to Richard Koelling as I did not acknowledge his membership on the Nomination Committee. So to set the record straight, this critical committee consists

The Board approved the membership termination letter prepared by Kathy Bell in compliance with our by-laws. The future Board secretary will mail it out after the end of the fiscal year. Ruthann reported that she has sold a total of 48 Hy Vee coupon books and suggested selling them once a month in the future. The Board voted to extend this through December 31. Marcia reported that Beyt Shalom has requested additional use of the church for children's services and religious education classes. She will have further discussions with them. Marcia Forbes as the next President will schedule the next Board meeting.

I want to thank all those who attended our Townhall Meeting on May 5. What a good turnout! It is refreshing that people are interested in the fiscal health of our Church Community. I overviewed the proposed budget, Norma presented the UUA's guidelines for ministers' compensation in conjunction with Josh's salary package. Josh reviewed the UUA guidelines for office administrators and DREs. I so appreciated the very good comments, questions and suggestions. It is your money and your spiritual home.

It was a privilege to serve with this talented, wise and energetic board. In honor of them and our congregation I would like to close by sharing a quote from Starhawk. "Community. Somewhere there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us when we falter. A circle of healing. A circle of friends. Someplace where we can be free." May it be so, for all of us.

Respectfully submitted,
JoAnne Draper, President, Board of Trustees,
Kathy Bell, Marcia Forbes, Norma Hansen,
Ruthann Irby, Heather Lipsey

Offerings From the Minister
by Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

Newcomer Session. We will have the last

Newcomer Session of the Year on June 16. Do note that this is the third Sunday rather than the second Sunday because of the congregational meeting. We will meet at 12:00 p.m. in the minister's office adjacent to the sanctuary. All visitors and newcomers are welcome to attend this session to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and Second Unitarian Church. Childcare provided.

Ethics Class. We will have our final Ethics class of the year on Monday June 3 at 7:00 p.m. in the First Hour area. This month's topic will be values and how they relate to ethical thinking. New participants are always welcome, so please join us!

Men's Group. The Men's Group will have its final meeting of the year on Wednesday June 12 at 7:00 p.m. in the RE Office. This group is open to all men of the Second Unitarian Community.

First Hour Discussions
9:15 a.m. Sunday Mornings

June 2: "Thoreau discussion" This final discussion in a series will be led by Betty Segell.

June 9: This final installment of the Buddhism class will deal with a recent movement within Buddhism known as "Engaged Buddhism." Engaged Buddhism is a form of Buddhist social action that crosses all Buddhist traditions and all Buddhist cultures. This has become a particularly attractive form of Buddhism for religious liberals, due to the influence of the Social Gospel movement in this country, and the liberation movements abroad. Please come and learn more!

June 16: TBA

June 23: TBA

June 30: Peace and community development for indigenous people in the region of San Cristobal, Chiapas, Mexico. Specifically, we will focus on an educational program, Melel Xojobal, which works with displaced families to help their children gain the skills necessary to enter Spanish school. Led by Mary Bamesberger

Religious Education

by Barb Roth, DRE

Ah, how I love summer. I love being outside. I love being hot. I love the smell of grass clippings and chlorine. I love having sweat pour down my face, and the sound of gravel crunching under my feet while I run. Summer is just a great time for all of us to be kids again. And what better time for kids to learn about nature. Climbing trees, camping outside, catching fire flies, hiking a trail, skipping stones across the water, collecting shells and rocks, reading a book on a hammock, running through sprinklers and studying ant trails are just a few ways kids can appreciate nature.

However, is it more probable that our children will be engaged in one of the following: television, computers, Nintendo, Super Nintendo, Super Duper Nintendo 10,000 (ok, I made that one up)? I'm not saying all of it is bad, I'm just saddened to see a child in front of a television when there is so much more to do!

“We must remember that all television is educational. It teaches values and behavior. Children are manipulated from the time they can sit in front of a television. The average child is exposed to 400 ads a day, which will add up to more than four million ads in a lifetime. Children are taught to be consumers and sold products-junk foods, over-priced clothes and useless toys...Children learn these things from ads: that they are the most important person in the universe, that impulses should not be denied, that pain should not be tolerated and that the cure for any kind of pain is a product. That television...teaches values as clearly as any church.”

-Mary Pipher, *The Shelter of Each Other*
Rebuilding our Families

I had a child in my day care who acted very much like the two-year-old he was, however, much more violently. He seemed very angry and often used kicking and “playing guns” to solve his conflicts. His parents couldn't understand his behavior, yet I often heard them talk to “Jeremy” about being good so he could watch “The Simpsons” or play Nintendo. This was a two-year-old. And his parents were so proud of how many “fighters” their little two-year old could shoot down. Can I place blame? I couldn't help it.

Let's get back to having fun in the summer sun: riding bikes, swinging, digging in dirt, building sand castles,

swimming, camping out in the backyard, playing hide and seek and red-light green-light until dark. What do you have planned for your children this summer? What would it be like to unplug the television for a week, month, few months? What new hobbies might your children take up to replace the “talking box?” Wouldn't it be fun to find out? I can't wait to try it on my own kids, who, by the way, would have the television plugged into their ears and hauled in their wagon, if they could. Ah, yes, how I'm going to love this summer.

Teachers and Helpers still needed for Religious Education classes

We are still in need of people to volunteer for the Nursery (once every month). Also, we need teachers in the 3rd and 4th grade class. Their theme this Fall will be to learn about our Unitarian Universalist heritage. We also need helpers/assistants in the 1st and 2nd grade class. A helper/assistant does no actual planning or preparation for the class, but is there to assist the teacher in any way he/she can. If attendance is small, however, the assistant would be welcome to attend service instead.

Summer RE Programming

by Anita Jeck

Beginning in June, Second Unitarian Church will again offer “*Summertime Chalice Stories*” for children preschool age through grade two on Sunday mornings. These informal classes will be led by paid teens each week, with a volunteer adults taking turns bringing snacks, taking care of infants, and providing general supervision. The format starts with circle time & chalice lighting (paper flames) for the quality brought forth in the “Chalice Story,” followed by the story and a related activity, and snack. There will be no “Family Sundays” during the summer.

To avoid any supervision issues, we are asking that all children grade three and older attend the services upstairs during the summer. Their own Order of Service/Activity Book will be provided each week with a section on “*Getting to Know UU's*” to help them become acquainted with some famous Unitarian Universalists.

If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer, please contact Tammy Hunter or Anita Jeck.

Serving Our Community
Monthly Report of the Social Justice Committee
by Clyde Anderson

Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC) – Are you concerned about how democracy is at risk because of globalization, the increasing disparity between the wealthy and the poor, and the political domination by wealthy individuals and corporations? This summer Social Justice will offer UUJEC's Economic Justice Curriculum in six sessions. The series will commence on Sunday, July 21, at 9:15 a.m. (the First Hour time slot), and the sixth session will conclude Aug. 26. If you are interested in participating in these study sessions, please contact Clyde Anderson

Paint-A-Thon August 16 and 17: We have combined with First Unitarian to form the Unitarian Universalist Churches of Omaha team. Our house will probably be assigned in early July. In addition to people willing to scrape, caulk, and paint, we also welcome donations of food or moral support. We will need refreshments throughout the day on Friday, August 17, and until we finish on Saturday, August 18. If you're not already signed up, you can volunteer to help by calling Vicki Pratt at 334-0678 or vlpratt@aol.com. Workers get a free T-shirt with the team's name, great for wearing to UU activities!

Omaha Together One Community – Being a small congregation, it's difficult for our committee to take on major social justice projects that will impact our community. By working with OTOC, a broad-based organization of over 45 institutions, we can advocate our Unitarian Universalist tradition of promoting human rights and social justice in Omaha. For example, through OTOC we have helped meatpacking plant workers win the right to organize to demand safer working conditions and a living wage, provided our youth with educational after-school and summer activities, and supported expanded services in our city libraries. Each summer OTOC member congregations solicit donations from their members to help support OTOC. Letters requesting contributions will be mailed this month. Last year the campaign raised \$782, and our goal this year is

\$900.

Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty (NADP) – On Mothers' Day, May 12, Social Justice conducted a special collection for NADP. Donations totaled \$56. Thank you for your generosity.

Unitarian Universalists take pride in their tradition of social activism and community outreach. We keep that tradition alive at Second Unitarian. Because of the congregational meeting scheduled for June 9, there will be no Social Justice meeting in June. You are invited to attend our next meeting on Sunday, July 14, at 12:00 p.m. If you have concerns about the topics being addressed by our Committee or other social justice issues, attend our meeting and share them with us.

Library Committee
by Alice Blackstone

The Journey Recalled - A Memior of Marjorie Francis Hill - As told to Thel Spencer

Since Marjorie Hill is my only sister, I may be prejudiced in thinking the above book is particularly interesting and beautiful.

In it, she describes her growing up years in Omaha - streets, neighbors, schools she attended and how at age 15 she discovered and joined the First Unitarian Church and found it helpful for her continuing spiritual journey.

She tells about her scholarship to the Kansas City Art Institute where she studied with teacher, Thomas Hart Benton, worked for Hallmark Card Company, and later during World War II in a bomber factory and was active in the All Souls Unitarian Church where the Rev. Lester Mondale was a half brother to former presidential candidate, Walter Mondale.

The book, a hardback has many pictures of her family, copies of watercolors she has painted, poetry she has written, and a copy of Raborilla, a story she wrote to describe the community of rabbits and gorillas who live at my house.

Please check your home for books you have borrowed and forgotten to return so they can be

Membership Committee
Chris and Matt Jorgensen,
Membership Committee co-chairs

Caring Committee
by Monica Swihart

Membership has joined forces with the Growth task force, incorporating the group into the committee. Over the coming year, Membership will seek to be a catalyst for growth within the church by preparing the congregation for carrying our Unitarian Universalist message to the Omaha community. Thanks to Sue Aschinger for her leadership of the task force over the past several years.

Membership meetings are held the first Sunday of each month at noon. Anyone interested is welcome to attend. If you have any questions about Membership activities, please call Chris or Matt Jorgensen at 965-9878.

April Financial Update
by Tom Rundquist, Treasurer

The income budget for this fiscal year is going to be difficult to meet due to reduced pledge income, reduced rental income, and a shortfall in fundraiser income. Committees need to be very conservative in their spending to compensate for these declines.

Note to new pledgers: Money designated to apply to an individual's 2002-2003 pledge will not be included in budget operations until the new fiscal year - July 1, 2002 thru June 30, 2003. If you wish to contribute to this year's operations your contribution will be recorded in the fiscal year 2001-2002.

On April 29, 2002, the Operating Fund bank balance was -\$1,350.01 and the Building Fund bank balance was 3,656.00. Total Money Market Reserves (Memorials & Special Funds) shows a balance of \$12,010.94. The Dodge Fund balance was \$14,978.52.

The fiscal year thru April 29, 2002, shows the Operating Pledge income is over budget by \$1,550.29 (includes pre-paid pledges for 2002-2003 of \$1325.00) and Building Fund income is under budget by \$1,853.27. Total income is \$1,159.30 under budget. Total expenses were under budget by \$9,493.80. Net Income is \$8,334.50 over budget.

Clyde Anderson -
Denny Burnside -
Darrel & JoAnne Draper -
Sherri and Kip Folsom -
Mo McAndrews -
Vicki Pratt -
Monica Swihart & Jim DeCoster

Richard Koelling) has also offered to help transport members to doctor's appointments and daytime church events.

We hope everyone has a healthy and happy summer.

Office Hours

Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder; Monday and Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday, 12:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturday, by appointment.

Tricia Genereux; Monday through Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

June 9 Congregational Meeting to Call the Minister

by Heather Lipsey

Over the last four months the Call Committee has worked with the congregation to plan a process and discuss very important questions regarding our decision to call Rev. Joshua Snyder to be our ongoing minister. On April 7, Rev. Charlotte Shivvers preached a sermon about this important process and during the month of April, most of our members participated in small group meetings to share our perspectives of the past two years of the Extension Ministry program and future aspirations for our religious community. A summary report of these meetings was compiled and mailed to all members of the congregation.

On Sunday, June 9, we will complete this process with a vote on **“Do you want Rev. Joshua Snyder as our minister?”** All Second Unitarian members who have signed the membership book prior to April 9, 2002 and have a recorded financial contribution to the Church in the past 12 months will be eligible to vote. Members who know in advance that they will not be able to attend the meeting may obtain an absentee ballot from Heather Lipsey, Call Committee Chairperson.

As we prepare for this important vote, Rev. Shivvers suggested that we each answer these questions: “Do I like the minister and his theological, educational, psychological and ethical credentials? Is he grounded; can he share from the depths of his life his own search for truth and the hard truths of everyday life? Does he lead us by the way he lives his life and by the issues he brings before us? Do you trust him; trust his integrity, trust him to be present with you during difficult and vulnerable times, trust the whole workings of the church with him? Is he strong enough to his own sense of truth and strong enough for the demands of ministry, to be the ‘non-anxious presence in relation to all the parts?’ How does he do with failure; can he laugh at himself and his imperfections?”

Rev. Shivvers challenged each of us to then ask those questions back to ourselves: “Can you support the life in him that makes him likeable?

Can you accompany him in the struggle for justice? Can you be of respect and trust yourself by committing to the well being of the congregation? Can you be strong enough to be a grown-up congregant? Can you fail with grace too? And be wise enough to minister to the minister? You see there is a way in which you call a minister, you must call yourselves.”

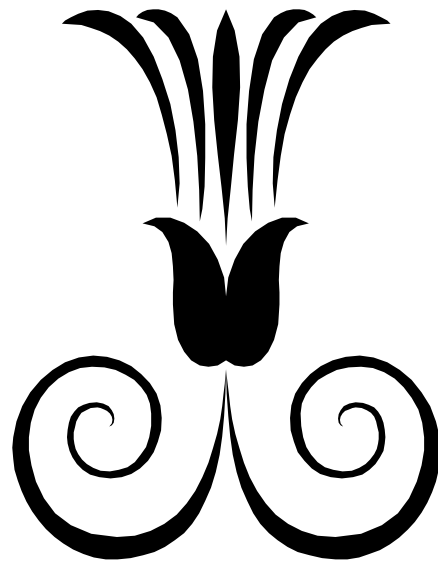
Ultimately when you cast your vote on June 9, the call committee hopes you will focus on what is best for the congregation as a whole. We ask all members to vote and know that for Rev. Snyder to consider accepting our call, he would expect **at least 90% of the voting congregation to answer “YES.”** Thank you for participating in this important process.

The Call Committee: Heather Lipsey, Cheri Cody, Anita Jeck, Craig Piquette, Steve Brown, Jim DeCoster, and Bill MacMillan

Book Club

by Gwen Eurich

Book club members will meet Tuesday, June 25, to discuss *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* by Jung Chang. The discussion will take place at the home of Alice Blackstone at 7:30 p.m. We welcome guests and others interested in joining!





Summer is Here!

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