

Second Thoughts

The Newsletter of Second Unitarian Church of Omaha

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October 2003

Sunday Worship - 10:30 a.m.

First Hour - 9:15 a.m.

Children's Religious Education - 10:30 a.m.

October 5

First hour: "Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age—Alone and Together" (Preface through Chapter 2) Facilitated by either Heather Lipsey or Jodi Jones

Worship: "Yom Kippur - Atonement and Salvation"
Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

October 12

First Hour: "Open Mic" hosted by Jim Daniels

Worship: "Growth, Change, and Ambiguity or "The Autumn of Our Discontent"" Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

October 19

First Hour: "Together, Inc." Shelly Kiel, Executive Director of Together, Inc.

Worship: "How to Practice"
Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

October 26

First Hour: Islamic Outreach - Presentation on Ramadan, the Muslim holy month

Worship: "Religious Liberty and the Bush Administration" Edd Doerr, President of the American Humanist Association and Americans for Religious Liberty, is a prolific writer and speaker on separation of church and state. He joins us from his home UU church in Bethesda, Md.

November 2

First Hour: (see Oct 5 above - will cover chapter 3 & 4)

Worship: "Shared Ministry Sunday" Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

Information on First Hour programming can be found on Page 4 of this newsletter.

Josh's Journal

This month, on October 12, Second Unitarian Church and I will celebrate my installation as your "new" settled minister. It has been a busier than usual beginning to the Church year with the wonderful re-covenanting workshop that Rev. Charlotte Shivers led, the many meetings and arrangements of the Installation Committee, and now the Installation itself. Over the last couple of months we have been working very hard on understanding the role of the minister, and the kind of ministry Second Unitarian Church wants and needs to provide.

Some of the key elements of all installation services are when there is a charge to the minister and a charge to the congregation. The minister is told all of the responsibilities that are required of him or her, and encouraged to find the vision and spiritual nourishment to lead. The charge to the congregation usually has similar sorts of exhortations. Recently, this got me thinking. There has been a lot of denominational ink spilled over ministers. Who they are, what we expect of them, and how they are doing. But what of the laity? Only in recent years has there been an interest in re-energizing the role of the laity in an intentional way. On Sunday November 2, we at Second Unitarian Church will contribute to this re-energizing effort with "Shared Ministry Sunday."

So often the work of the Church seems like just that; work. Most of us did not come to our religious community in search of more things to do and more ways to keep us busy. We come to Church for spiritual renewal, to find community, to share our values with our kids, and work for a more just world. I believe that these two imperatives, the need to be religiously fed and yet

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pay the electric bill, are not incompatible. The work of the Church can be done in a way that is fulfilling and satisfying. This month our committee will be going through a process of self-reflection and articulation of their vision and spiritual gifts. On November 2, they will share these stories and passions with everyone in the congregation. Please plan to come to hear what these incredibly dedicated folks have to say, and possibly join them yourself. Amen. Blessed Be.

May You Be Blessed Always,
Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

Planks and Slivers

By Clyde Anderson, Board President

There will be a very special celebration at our church this fall – the installation of Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder as the settled minister at Second Unitarian Church on Sunday, October 12 at 5:00 p.m. Details appear elsewhere in this newsletter. All members and friends are invited to attend. Ronni Kahn is chairing the Installation Committee, a group of dedicated volunteers who are working with other church committees to make this celebration a memorable event.

The Board held its annual retreat August 23 on the deck overlooking JoAnne and Darrel Draper's re-landscaped back yard including a magnificent pond with waterfall. We developed our Board Goals for 2003-2004, which were presented at the Committee on Committees meeting Sept. 6 and will be published in a later issue of the newsletter.

Being a small congregation, Second Unitarian is generally not able to provide assistance to strangers who come to the church seeking help. Instead, they are referred to Together, Inc., of Metropolitan Omaha, which provides various types of assistance for those in need: food, housing, transportation, clothing, medical prescriptions, etc. In recent years the Social Justice Committee has donated \$50 of its Operating Budget to Together, Inc. This year the Committee felt it would be more appropriate to have a special collection for Together, Inc. Thank you for your generosity.

On Sunday, October 19, Shelli Keil of Together,

Inc. will be the guest speaker at First Hour. Those who wish to support Together, Inc., are requested to place their donations in the offering collection or in the basket provided at the coffee counter. Please make checks payable to Second Unitarian Church with Together, Inc., written on the memo line.

In my column last month I mentioned that some members don't want their contact information published in the newsletter and/or the church web site. After considerable discussion, the following policy will be considered by the Board at its meeting October 1: When articles are submitted for publication in the church newsletter that contain contact information (phone number, street address, email address), it is the author's responsibility to get the owners' permission to publish this information. The newsletter posted on the web site will generally be the same as that printed and distributed by mail. This policy also extends to members and staff submitting material to the Webmaster for posting on the church web site. I hope this policy adequately addresses your concerns about privacy. If you have any suggestions or concerns about this policy, please communicate them to me or to the Board at our October 1 meeting.

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

By Karen Snyder, RE Chair

I want to express my sincere appreciation to the following people for their help in making the 4th annual RE Family Picnic a success: Tammy Hunter, event co-chair; DRE Rose Joshi for all her work with the classroom orientation; all the RE teachers who welcomed their new charges and participated in the games; Rev. Josh for leading an intense game of "Rev. Josh Says"; Scott Redd for fascinating all with his homing pigeons; Barb Roth for providing her parachute; teen helpers Lauren Hunter, Kate Hunter, Walter Seaman, Walter's friend Sean, Bailey Snyder and Logan Snyder for assisting with the games; Denny Burnside and Bill MacMillian for their music; and last but not least the 50+ children and adults who participated in the fun-filled event. Thanks again to one and all!

RE Announcements

UNICEF Sunday is Oct. 26

UNICEF is the leading advocate for children's rights, active in 158 countries and territories around the world. This organization strives to ensure health, education, equality, and protection to all children.

October 26 will not only be a day when children explore the importance of UNICEF, but also a day when the whole congregation can participate. The RE Committee is planning a multicultural celebration. Please bring an international dish to the Sunday, October 27, coffee hour. You may also dress in attire from a different culture or bring an artifact from another country to share and decorate our table.



“Late Summer Evening”

by Rose Joshi, DRE

My kids and I had a perfect evening recently - walking in the woods, golden sunlight back-lighting the oak trees, cicadas and crickets signing their last song of the season, dry grass crunching beneath our feet and rustling in the gentle breeze. We hiked along, observing grass seeds, baby trees, and the moon. We played several variations of hide-and-seek, our panting dogs consistently giving my hiding places away. I felt content and happy with my pack of kids and dogs running around me. I felt connected to them, to nature, to myself. That was needed! Only moments before we left the house I was hunched over my lap top, checking emails, updating schedules, looking up this and that on the internet, etc. etc. I very easily fall into the trap of “just doing”, scurrying from one thing to the next until it's bedtime. The computer insistently beckons me. Even when I'm sitting on the floor in one of my kids' rooms, when I'm supposed to be engaged in imaginative play, sometimes I have to resist the urge to do something “productive”, like say, pick up the multitude of Lego pieces spread from wall to wall. And there is always something in my house crying for cleaning. Yes, these things need to be done, but not constantly! I am grateful for the times when I make it a priority to stop *doing*, and focus on *being* with my kids, like on that blessed late summer evening. Time spent giving them my full attention, giving them all of myself, is never wasted.

Reader Responses

By Rose Joshi, DRE

Thank you to everyone who contributed! Last month's question: Do you have any traditions centered around the start of school that you'd like to share, either from your childhood, or that you do for children in your life?

To celebrate Julia starting first grade, she and I went out to the garden and harvested some rhubarb the night before her first day of school. When she came home the next day bubbling with excitement about her new school, a slice of homemade strawberry/rhubarb pie was waiting for her. Monica Swihart

We take the kids' picture in the same place each year on the first day of school. Holly Batchelder

As for rituals, we have a "preparing to go back to school ritual" to help us remember what we need to do to get back into the routine of the school year. The week before school starts, we sit down and make a list of all of the things we need to do to get out of the house (i.e. make our beds, brush our hair, grab our backpacks, etc..) Then we go through magazines and clip pictures for each item and make a collage of our "step-by-step morning". We put it out in the hallway and, the first few weeks of school, everybody refers to the collage to make sure they know what to do next so we won't be late.

We also have a family night ritual in which we gather in the living room after dinner, light a candle, and talk about what new thing we learned during the week. Each child gets to show off the school work they brought home (to the requisite "ooohs" and "aahhs", of course) and we each pick a goal that we want to work on in the coming week. It's a nice way to reconnect after the craziness of the week. Louisa Foster

My mother would take a picture of me standing on our lawn each year on the first day of school, with my school in the background. Josh Snyder

I thought of a tradition we do at the beginning of every school year besides taking pictures the first day of school. It is getting a folder for each of the kids and labeling it with their name and grade level. I then put favorite papers and pictures in it throughout the year. The kids end up with a folder for every year filled with school work and memories. Roxanne Redd

On the night before their first day of school, Meera, Nathan, and I made cookies. Actually, we made the cookie dough, and had fun eating 2/3rds of it. We'll probably make this a standing tradition! Rose Joshi

New question for this month: How do other households rouse their sleeping children out of bed on those early school mornings? I modified a practice started by my sister's husband: he puts “We Will Rock You” by Queen on the stereo and turns the volume up to 9.5. Instead of shaking the house, I've tried playing some nice meditation music, relaxing and peaceful, but still loud enough to drag everyone in the household out of slumber. It seems to be working, but on some days, I may have to resort to Queen! So what about you? (Reminder: this isn't just for parents – share memories from your childhood or traditions of other families in your life.) Just send me a quick note at joshirous@yahoo.com!

First Hours for September

October 5: "Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age—Alone and Together" (Preface through Chapter 2) Facilitated by either Heather Lipsey or Jodi Jones. Review preface through chapter 2--"A Way of Walking and Acting" and "A Human Being, No More or Less." Reading is helpful but not required. (If a book is desired, it can be ordered online at www.uua.org/bookstore.)

October 12: "Open Mic" Jim Daniels will host an "Open Mic" for anyone wanting to share their poetry, prose, singing or other arts.

October 19: Together, Inc.
The church office often gets calls from people who are having difficulty meeting their basic needs of food and housing. Some are Omaha residents and some are just passing through. Because we don't have the resources to meet these needs or screen to determine the truly needy, we usually refer people to Together, Inc. Shelly Kiel, Executive Director of Together, Inc., will be here to tell us about their programs and how they address the many needs. There will be a free will offering after the church service which will be our contribution to Together, Inc., this year.

October 26: Islamic Outreach -A speaker from Islamic Speakers Bureau of Nebraska (ISBN) will do a presentation on Ramadan, the Muslim holy month. Come learn about this important holiday and why it is important to Islam. ISBN is a group that gives presentations to other organizations on topics related to Islam.

Offerings from the Minister

Newcomer Session. Yes, the monthly newcomer sessions have begun once again! Our meeting this month will be on October 12 and continuing on every second Sunday of the month. This is a good way to learn more about Unitarian Universalism, Second Unitarian Church, to ask questions, and how to become a member. The sessions begin at 12:00 p.m. after coffee hour in the minister's office. No reservations are needed, and the Membership Committee provides childcare and lunch. Call Rev.

Snyder for more information.

Meditation. The Meditation Group will be meeting TWO Thursdays a month. We will meet twice this month, first on October 9 and again on October 23 at 7:00 p.m. in the back of the sanctuary. In addition to our half hour of meditation practice, we also have a discussion of our spiritual practice, and share ideas and insights on a whole host of spiritual topics. Everyone is welcome regardless of experience or meditation practice, and newcomers are especially welcome! This is an excellent way to begin a spiritual practice or nurture a fledgling one. Feel free to bring your own cushion and/or mat if you like.

Second Unitarian Twenties and Thirties (2UT2). The Twenties and Thirties group is a social group for all young adults of the Second Unitarian community. We will our regular monthly meetings on every third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. This month we will be meeting on October 16. At our monthly meetings we share snacks and have a time to get to know each other, and plan social events for the coming months, so bring ideas. If you are interested but cannot make the meeting, please call Rev. Josh at 697-3873.

Library

The Macyl Boruff Library has some new items you might want to check out. They are:

Dakota, A Spiritual Geography by Kathleen Norris

New Men, Deeper Hungers by Tom Owen Towle

Unitarian Perspectives in Contemporary Religious Thought by George D. Chrystides

Martin Niemoller by James Bentley

Trading Democracy, a video by Bil Moyers

Funding the Dream, a video by Rev. Terry Sweetser

The Lexus and the Olive Tree, a cassette tape by Thomas Friedman

Building Your Own Theology

Rev. Josh will be teaching *Building Your Own Theology* again this October and November. *Building Your Own Theology* is a class designed to help participants develop and articulate their own understanding of what it is they believe. The eight-week sessions are woven together to culminate in writing a personal statement of belief called a "Credo." This is a very powerful and transforming experience. The classes begin on Monday, October 6, and will occur every Monday from 7-9 p.m. for eight weeks. If you have never been a part of BYOT now is the time to sign up! Contact Rev. Josh at 697-3873.



Reverend Snyder's Installation

All members and friends of Second Unitarian Church of Omaha are invited to attend the Installation Ceremony of Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder as the settled minister. The ceremony will begin at 5:00 p.m. in the sanctuary of Second Unitarian Church. A reception of wine, cheese and hors d'oeuvres will follow. Anyone interested in baking cookies for the reception, please contact Ronni Kahn. Please let Alison Maheux know if you need childcare.

We will be having a special offering during the installation service for the Living Tradition Fund at the UUA. This fund is for ministerial students, retired ministers, and minister in emergency need. Please make checks out to the UUA with 'Living Tradition Fund' in the memo line.

Memorial Service for Marjorie Hill

A memorial service will be held for Alice Blackstone's sister, Marjorie Hill, on Thursday, October 16, at 4:00 p.m., at our church for friends and members who wish to attend.

Shared Ministry Sunday

Are you looking to get more out of church than just some extra tasks and responsibilities? Do you want to get involved at Second Unitarian, but don't know how? Are you looking for opportunities to share your talents and gifts? Then be sure to come to church on Sunday, November 2! Shared Ministry Sunday is a special event during our normal coffee hour in which various groups and committees at the church will be talking about not only what they do, but also about how their work is spiritually enriching and makes a real contribution to Unitarian Universalism. This is an especially rich opportunity for new friends and members to learn more about these unique opportunities to do the ministry we all share. If your committee would like to participate in Shared Ministry Sunday, please contact Rev. Josh as soon as possible.

Lay Leader Training October 26, 12 Noon in the Sanctuary

Lay Leaders are those who create the familiar framework of our 10:30 Sunday Service on those occasions when we have guest speakers in the pulpit. If you would enjoy helping to welcome our guest speakers, assisting them by reading opening and closing words, creating ritual space by lighting the chalice and assisting those who come forward to express joys and concerns, guiding the offering and perhaps a meditation, Lay Leadership is the right place for you! The Music and Worship Committee, together with Rev. Josh, will conduct a Lay Leader training session after church on October 26.

We encourage those who have never acted as Lay Leaders to attend, as well as Lay Leaders who have not attended a training in the past two years.

Please RSVP to Linda Trone if you plan to join us so that we can have materials prepared for you.

Women's Group

The 2UU Women's group plans to meet on October 14 at 7:00 p.m. Mary Bamesberger will lead the group and her topic is "Times of Not Knowing--- Being Open to the Questions."

Serving Our Community
Monthly Report of the Social Justice Committee
By Vicki Pratt and Vicki Grunwald

Goal One: Vibrant City Infrastructure

Omaha Together One Community (OTOC):

This is OTOC's 10th year of organized people power in Omaha. Many types of changes are underway: negotiations have started for improved office space in a central, easy-to-access location; there are new hires in the office staff and organizers; and the vision is evolving into research and understanding of issues. Potential research topics include education, metro area growth, worker job and benefit changes such as health care, immigrant issues, and taxation. After research and understanding, key issues will be selected for actions. A planning session will be conducted as a retreat for OTOC congregation leaders on Wednesday, October 8, from 9:30 am to 2:00 p.m. St. Pius X at 69th and Blondo.

The kick-off for the year is the Fall Assembly on Sunday, October 26, from 3:00 pm to 4:30 p.m. at Benson High School, 5120 Maple Street. Everyone is urged to attend and witness this grassroots community organizing event.

In addition to dues paid by institutions, OTOC relies on contributions from individuals. During the 2002 fundraising campaign Second Unitarian members and friends generously donated \$900. Our goal this year is \$1,000. A letter, budget information, and donation form have been sent to your home address. Please consider a contribution for 2003.

Paint-A-Thon: We received this thank-you letter from the homeowners of this year's house: "Dear Friends, I would like to thank all the Second Church volunteers who joined the Brush Up Nebraska Paint-A-Thon team at our house. The house really looks beautiful now, thanks to your efforts. I want the Second Church volunteers to know we are grateful for their help and hard work. Thanks to you all."

Goal Two: Respect for Diversity

Welcoming Congregation: While many in the

congregation support becoming welcoming, some of us may have concerns about the Welcoming Congregation process. Why are we doing it? How will the congregation change once we affirm our welcoming status? Voicing concerns or ideas about this process is part of becoming welcoming. If **anyone** has any questions, please feel free to bring any issues to anybody on the WC Committee. To further this committee's understanding of your views, we will be conducting a short survey in October.

Stop the Hate Vigil: The Social Justice and Membership Committees will host a booth at the Stop the Hate Vigil on Thursday, October 2. The vigil, sponsored by the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission and the Omaha Hate Crimes Project, will be held at the Peter Kiewit Conference Center, 1313 Farnam, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Victims of hate crimes are singled out and attacked because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, or disability status. These crimes are meant to send a message to a whole group of people that they are neither safe nor welcome in a particular community. The purpose of the vigil is to send a message that hate crimes will not be tolerated in Nebraska. Please stop by our booth and help us promote Second Unitarian as a safe and welcoming haven for everyone. Events for the evening include speakers, music, and other entertainment as well as a candlelight vigil.

Goal Three: Responsible Consumption/Flourishing Environment

Planning for Action: Several people have talked to us about recycling and other environmental issues. Mary Bamesberger is convening a meeting to gather ideas for the types of projects and actions that are of most interest to our congregation.

Unitarian Universalists take pride in their tradition of social activism and community outreach. We keep that tradition alive at Second Unitarian. You are invited to attend our next meeting, after service on October 12. Everyone is welcome to learn more about progress on current goals, bring up any concern, make us aware of a social justice issue, or participate in any activity.

Membership

By Alison Maheux

This year will be an exciting year for the membership committee. We will be brainstorming, evaluating, and implementing ways to bring new visitors and new members to our church. One of the most important tasks we have as our church grows is how to get the new members involved with the congregation, and how to make the congregation aware of new members.

If this sounds like something you'd be interested in helping with, you are welcome to come and share your ideas at any of our meetings. We meet the first Sunday of every month at noon, downstairs in the RE classroom. We will also be holding a brainstorming retreat this fall, if you are interested in attending please feel free to contact me via email

KIOS FUND DRIVE

By Richard Koelling

It's time again to remind you of the annual KIOS fund drive, which takes place in September and October. First and Second Unitarian together contribute to KIOS, and in return, we get frequent mentions on air throughout the day. It's a good form of advertising the church, because of the frequent 'spots,' and because each 'spot' mentions one of the seven principles. It's a reminder of what we stand for, and public radio is probably the favorite broadcast medium for Unitarians.

Also, the Radio Talking Book Service, which broadcasts 24 hours per day for the blind and disabled throughout Nebraska, uses KIOS's broadcast facilities. Without that service, it's questionable whether many of these homebound and unsighted people would ever find out what's in the newspapers and magazines or hear - - for free - - short stories, poetry, etc., which are aired daily over the RTBS. Additionally, RTBS has a service called 'Listening Link,' which reads textbooks for the blind and/or learning disabled. It's all connected indirectly with KIOS, so your contributions serve not only 2 UU's purposes, but perform a needed service for people who really need it.

You can make your checks out directly to KIOS and give them to the treasurer, or make them out to 2 UU specifying that they're for the KIOS fund drive. If you have any further questions about this, ask Richard Koelling. He'll be more than happy to expound, maybe at length if you don't watch it.

Habitat Sampler- On November 6, 2004, Omaha Habitat for Humanity will be auctioning quilts to support the *Women Build Project*. Each spring a core group of very talented women and dozens of female volunteers work alongside a future homeowner to construct a Habitat house. The "Habitat Sampler" quilt auction will be the primary source of funding for this annual build. We are looking for groups and individuals willing to create quilts, wall hangings, afghans and receiving blankets. We invite you to help us to eradicate

poverty housing by contributing your time and talent to this event. **Questions? Call Jeanne Smay**

Town Hall Meeting - Long Range Plan

There will be a Town Hall Meeting on Sunday October 19 at 12 p.m. in the sanctuary. This meeting will be an update of the work of the Long Range Planning Committee based upon the response of the many conversations the committee has sponsored. Please plan to stay after the coffee hour to listen and discuss the future plans of Second Unitarian Church. Your opinion is important!

Church Directory Updates

We are eager to publish a new church directory in October. For those of you who are listed in last year's directory, please double check that your information is current. For those of you who may be new to the church, please let us know the following information:

Name/Partner's Name
(Membership Date, if you have one)
Street Address
City, State and Zip Code
Home Phone
Email Address
Children Names and their date of birth
You may also include work phone and cell phone

Last day to submit changes to the church office will be October 5, 2003. Thank you!

Caring Committee

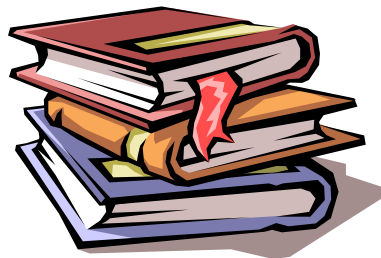
By Mo McAndrews

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Book Sale



It's almost time for the Macyl Boruff Library book sale. If you have any books you want to get rid of and share, please bring them to the church. They can be put near the library. The sale will be held Sept. 28, Oct. 5, and maybe Oct. 19. There should be some interesting books to browse through, so be sure to visit our book sale.