

Second Thoughts

The Newsletter of Second Unitarian Church of Omaha

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September 2002

Sunday Worship - 10:30 a.m.

First Hour - 9:15 a.m.

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

September 1

First Hour: Reflections on September 11,
Heather Lipsey

Worship: Water Communion Rev. Dr.
Joshua Snyder

September 8

First Hour: UU Theology, Rev. Dr. Joshua
Snyder

Worship: "All our stories, all our fears: The
edges of tolerance" Anita Jeck

September 15

First Hour: Omaha Together One
Community House Meeting, Vicki Pratt

Worship: "Restoring Faith; Remembering
September 11" Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

September 22

First Hour: "Pakitsan & the Middle East"
Al Harrison

Worship: "Visions for Religious
Education" Tricia Genereux and Barb Roth

September 29

First Hour: Welcoming Congregation
Workshop

Worship: "Atheists in the Name of God; or
Can You Say the "G" Word in a Unitarian
Universalist Church?" Rev. Dr. Joshua
Snyder

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

Josh's Journal

It is good to be back! It seems like so long ago that we celebrated the congregational vote to extend the call. Since then I have been to Quebec City, representing this congregation in the General Assembly of the UUA. General Assembly was a great experience, especially the city of Quebec. It is by far the best GA site I have been to in the over half dozen GAs I have attended.

I visited family in Michigan, where Sharon and I had a shower with my side of the family. Later, my parents, siblings and I all went to New Orleans for one of our annual family vacations. It is a wonderful city, with some great food and music, but late July is not necessarily the most pleasant month to be there. After New Orleans, a city that is actually below sea level, I traveled to Carbondale, Colorado, 9000 feet above! I was minister-in-residence at the Laforet UU Camp. I led some meditation sessions and two short worship services. I also had the opportunity to take a course on Insight Meditation from a teacher at the Buddhist Naropa Institute.

It has been a busy couple of months! As soon as I returned from my adventures I began to pack up and move to another part of the city. But it is good to be back in Omaha, in my own office, among all of you. After running all over the continent, I have come to greatly appreciate the familiarity, and peacefulness of home. We have another wonderful and exciting year ahead of us. I look forward to all of the work we have before us.

May You Always Be Blessed,

Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

Planks and Slivers

by Marcia Forbes, Board President

Attendance at church services has been very good this summer and there've been a lot of new faces. And we welcome back Linda Trone, a former member, who has returned to us from California. We extend a warm welcome to all of you to Second Unitarian Church.

The youth groups, YRUU and YAC, have been meeting jointly at First Unitarian Church under the leadership of Cheryl Wallace, the RE Director of First Unitarian Church. Beginning in January, these groups of twenty to thirty young Unitarians will be meeting on Wednesdays from 7 to 8:30 at Second Unitarian. We are delighted with this opportunity to welcome these young people to our church. The idea of combining these two groups has worked very well and provides a larger group of young people with whom our youth can explore Unitarian Universalism.

The Unitarian Universalist Association encourages member churches to become Welcoming Congregations and provides a curriculum for those who choose to explore this. Second Unitarian Church has formed a committee, with Vicki Grunwald as chair, and is initiating this process. The committee will have a Town Hall meeting on Sunday, September 22 at noon. At the August 1st board meeting, the members present: Marcia Forbes, Clyde Anderson, JoAnne Draper, Steve Brown and Craig Piquette, gave Vicki and her committee a vote of support. The Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly in 1989 voted overwhelmingly to initiate this program to educate its members about bisexual, gay and lesbian people. Hope to see you there.

The board has passed a new Standing Rule that anyone who has signed the Membership Book and then resigned because they moved or for other reasons, may rejoin the congregation by writing a letter to the Board Secretary, JoAnne Draper, asking to be reinstated as a church member. The sixty day waiting period for voting will hold true for reinstated members who join this way.

Work on the Articles of Incorporation, By Laws

and Standing Rules continues. Steve Brown will work with Kathy Bell to present documents that are in agreement at the September board meeting. After the board approves these changes, the revised documents will be available for the congregation. A Congregational Meeting will then be called where church members can vote on the amended documents.

A District Leadership Conference will be held in Lincoln on September 13 and 14. This was traditionally for Board Chairs and Board Chair Elects (our Vice President) but this year this has been expanded to include Membership Chairs and Treasurers. I will be attending and Clyde Anderson (board Vice President), Matt and Chris Jorgensen (Membership Chairs) and Tom Rundquist (Treasurer) are trying to arrange their schedules so that they can attend too.

The church Committee on Committees will meet on September 21 at the church. This is a time for sharing and problem-solving and for leadership suggestions and techniques. It is available for all committee chairs, board members, staff members, choir director and our treasurer. These meetings have traditionally been well attended by over 30 people. In a church with a membership of about 116, I think this underlines why this church radiates excitement and enthusiasm and committees function so well to accomplish so many varied tasks and responsibilities.

The New Sign is UP!

As we entered the parking lot at church on Sunday, August 18, there was a new sign in place. It lists Josh as our minister and restates the message that was on the old sign with a one word change. Can you spot it? The clue is "all."

Thank yous to Richard Koelling who prepared, painted and hung the sign and to Marianne Chisholm who helped block out the lettering.

Religious Education

by Barb Roth

I am really looking forward to another year as your director of religious education. I have greatly appreciated the chance to get to know so many of you through our religious education program.

This year, I am excited to try something new on the preschool through kindergarten level. Children in this section will be exploring together with a Montessori approach to religious education. Teachers will set up different theme-based stations throughout the room for children to explore, touch, and create. For example, if the theme for the day was learning about the chalice as a symbol of Unitarian Universalism, the children might have a station set up to create their own chalices from clay, another station might be set up with felt pieces and a table for imitating and dramatizing the children's worship time, and yet another station might be a snack station with cookies in the shape of a chalice and frostings to decorate them. It should be a lot of fun for children and teachers! In the process, teachers will work toward helping to make the child feel secure, build friendships, and develop a positive attitude toward church.

Many of the curricula this year will be centered around discovering what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. The children will not only read about the famous Unitarian Universalists of our heritage, but also gain much from the perspectives of our own members through special classroom interviews.

I feel this year will offer a great balance to the curricula of last year, which was centered on the Judeo-Christian heritage and other world religions.

As I look forward to the new church year, I can't help but think about why I became a member of the Second Unitarian Church. I was so impressed with the feeling of community and caring. "Family" is the term that seems to fit best and our children benefit most by it. Children need to feel they are a respected part of the church community. They will learn most about what it is to be UU by what they encounter during their religious education classes and by their interactions with the church

community as a whole. Taking the time to answer a child's question and offering a friendly smile will undoubtedly contribute to his/her formulation of what it means to be UU. We are truly a welcoming church. I am thankful to be a part of it. Let's have a great year!

Teen Helper Orientation Planned For September 15

If you are in grades 7-12 and interested in helping out in the younger religious education classes, plan on attending a short orientation on Sunday Sept. 15th from 11:45-12:15 directly following RE classes.

Second Unitarian Religious Education

Sunday, September 8, will be the first day of Religious Education classes for children preschool age through 6th grade. If you haven't already registered your child, please talk with Barb Roth. The first day is especially fun for the children as they learn about the up-coming year, make needed items for the year, and get introduced to their teachers. Please have children arrive by 10:25 a.m.

The Second Annual Games Night Is Here!!!

Get in on the fun of the **2nd Annual Games Night** at Second Unitarian Church, Saturday September 14 from 6:30 - 10:00 p.m. Join a team to play **Taboo**, or have the craziest definition for **Balderdash**. Be in on the newest **Dominoes** craze or impersonate a famous person in **Cranium!** Bring your favorite game and a snack to share; the Fellowship Committee will have tables ready with a few games and we'll provide soft drinks. Child care will be provided (reservations accepted up until September 7). This will be a fun time to spend with your 2U friends. **Don't miss a single minute!** Call Denise MacMillan if you have any questions or want to make a child care reservation.



First Hours for September

September 1: Reflections on September 11: Come to share your perspective on how our lives have changed. Heather Lipsey leads.

September 8: This Fall Rev. Josh Snyder will begin a new First Hour series on Unitarian Universalist Theology. This beginning session will address the burning question "What is UU Theology?" A good place to start! Please plan to join us.

September 15: Omaha Together One Community House Meeting, Vicki Pratt, Come share your stories about how you are impacted by any of the issues described in the Social Justice article in this newsletter. Participate in the democratic process and let your voice be heard.

September 22: Pakistan and the Middle East with Al Harrison

September 29: Welcoming Congregation Workshop - Introductions and Expectations - This workshop outlines the educational goals of Welcoming Congregation, explores definitions relating to GLBTs (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender) and answers 20 common questions about homosexuality. Vicki Grunwald leads.

Choir News

by Mark Dickmeyer, Choir Director

Welcome back to another exciting year of fun and fellowship! For many of us, music facilitates our spiritual quest and provides a means for personal enrichment as we flow through the river of life. We cordially invite anyone interested in joining us on this musical journey to attend rehearsals at noon each Sunday. Our rehearsals will begin on September 8 with our first performance on September 29. We have some wonderful new music planned for this year with more guest instrumentalists and joint choir/congregation singing also. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to call me I look forward to seeing all of the "old" familiar faces and welcoming some new ones too! As the song goes, I'll "See You In September!"

Committee on Committees Meeting Saturday, Sept. 21 8:30 AM - Noon

Attention committee chairs: You are invited to attend our first Committee on Committees meeting for the new church year on Saturday, September 21, at church. In addition to exchanging information about what your committee has planned, we will offer some training plus feedback from the Board of Trustees Retreat August 24 and the Prairie Star District Leadership Training September 13-14.

A continental breakfast will be served at 8:30 a.m. and the meeting will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. We anticipate adjourning at noon. For more information, please call Clyde Anderson at

Caring Committee

by Monica Swihart

The summer has flown by and it feels refreshing to dive into more structured routines and get reconnected with our church community. In that spirit, the Caring Committee will be starting up our regularly scheduled monthly meetings on the fourth Thursday of the month. We would love to recruit some new members. Please contact us if you are interested. Thanks!

Serving Our Community
Monthly Report of the Social Justice Committee
by Vicki Pratt and Vicki Grunwald, Co-Chairs

Omaha Together One Community (OTOC):

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the upcoming House Meetings and let your voice be heard on the issues now confronting Omaha and surrounding areas: funding and open hours for Omaha libraries; youth programs; labor market/wages and impact on families; metro area development; and police/community relations. Democracy is not a spectator sport; it requires grassroots dialogue, research, and collaborative action with public officials. A House Meeting is a facilitated 1 to 1 ½ hour discussion. Participants will be asked for their input on these issues plus any other topic they are concerned about. Notes from each meeting are then combined with feedback obtained during the 500 meetings in Omaha during September and early October.

Thanks to the hosts from our congregation:

Al and Gail Harrison: September 12, Thursday, 7:00 p.m.

First Hour: September 15, Sunday, 9:15 a.m.

Charles Scudder: September 18, Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.

Kathy Bell: September 25, Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.

Betty Segell: September 27, Friday, 7:00 p.m.

Bill Hay and Louisa Foster: October 9, Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.

Sign-ups will be available during coffee hours after service, or contact Vicki Pratt or vlpratt@aol.com.

Mark your calendars for the next Delegates Congress – Sunday, September 8, at 3:00 at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish hall, 23rd and O Streets. The Fall Accountability Session is Sunday, October 20, at 2:30 at the TAC auditorium, 30th and Cuming.

The Social Justice Committee has participated in Omaha Together One Community's internal fundraising campaigns since 1997. This year's campaign for OTOC brought support of \$779 from 18 individual church members.

On behalf of OTOC and members of the Social

Justice committee I would like to thank all contributors for their enduring support of our participation in faith-based research and organizing, which promotes a public culture and strong democratic community.

Welcoming Congregation (WC): The fourth Sunday of the month is set for the Welcoming Congregation. Since this workshop series involves fourteen sessions, we will also have some additional first hour timeslots throughout the year. Got questions? Bring them to the Town Hall meeting on September 22 from 12 p.m. until 1 p.m. The Welcoming Congregation sub-committee will be answering questions related to the program. Please contact Suzanne Baker for childcare arrangements. We look forward to the opportunity to answer your questions.

Living Better III Lincoln Unitarian Church is presenting its third annual Welcoming Congregation conference on October 26, 2002 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Participants can choose four workshops from a whole list of topics. The cost is \$20. If you would like further information or would like to assist in planning and organization, contact Tom McClain, conference chair . A flyer will be posted on our bulletin board.

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 (with soup or quick lunch) on Sunday, September 8, immediately following choir rehearsal. 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.

Attention all Young Adults

On September 20-22, there will be a Prairie Star District Young Adult Conference at First Unitarian Society in Minneapolis. This is your chance to meet friends new and old, attend fantastic workshops, and experience creative worship services. Young adults are defined as those 18-35ish. For a registration form or for more information, please contact Ben Stallings

Offerings from the Minister

Men's Group. The Second Unitarian Men's group will begin its meetings once again. We meet downstairs in the RE office at 7:00 p.m. and are open to all men of the Second Unitarian community. This group is a good way to get to know other men at the Church and deepen ourselves spiritually as we relate to each other as brothers. This year we will be working with Rev. Tom Owen-Towle's book *New Men, Deeper Hungers*. We will begin meeting the second Thursday monthly, September 12.

Newcomer Session. The Newcomer Sessions will resume on September 8 at noon and continue on the second Sunday of the month throughout the year. This is a good way to learn more about Unitarian Universalism, Second Unitarian Church, 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 begin meeting on Thursday, September 26, 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. Feel free to bring your own cushion and/or mat if you like.

Circle Suppers

by Denny Burnside, Fellowship Committee

One of the most popular activities our church members and friends have enjoyed over the years is our Circle Suppers. We arrange five rounds of small-group potluck dinners in people's homes between September and May. We try to put a completely different set of participants in each dinner, so you will be able to explore new friendships and new and exciting group dynamics each time!

The target weekends for the 2002-3 church year are September 20 or 21, November 15 or 16, January

10 or 11, March 14 or 15, and May 16 or 17 (although these dates are flexible). I have put a sign-up sheet in the back of the church. You are not automatically enrolled if you participated last year. You can also sign up by calling me

with your name; address; e-mail; phone number; number in your party; your ability to host and a number range of participants you can accommodate; and any dietary requirements you may have (e.g., vegetarian).

Usually the first assignments are made on short notice because many participants don't sign up until September. I'll try to distribute assignments via e-mail as much as possible this year to save paper and time. Participants will get detailed explanations when they sign up. You can call me if you have any questions.

Finance Committee

by Steve Powell, Chair

The finance committee has the mission of "stewardship" of church resources. This means we're trying to manage our church-community's financial operations in a way that helps us to achieve our purpose and prepare for future needs. Our meetings are open to all church members and we'd like to have additional members on the committee. Please see Steve Powell, Richard Koelling, Barry Segell, or Al Harrison if you'd like to participate in our financial activities.

At our last meeting, the treasurer, Tom Rundquist, gave us a wrap-up on church income and expenses for the 12 months that ended June 30. We can all take pride in the fact that we met all of our obligations for the year. A small percentage of pledges weren't received, so that part of our budget fell short. Generous cash contributions from the weekly collections made up most of the shortfall. Some facilities improvement money had to be used to fund our operating expenses.

We'd like to continue to upgrade facilities and have enough to operate, too. This will only be possible with the continued generosity and commitment of all of us, and hopefully, new members and friends in the year ahead. We make the church available to groups to rent as a source of income for our operations. If you know of any groups looking for a rental space, please let us know. We're always open

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School has begun!