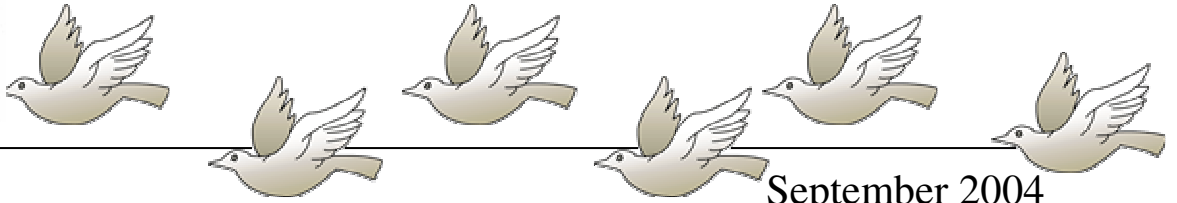




Second Thoughts

The Newsletter of Second Unitarian Church of Omaha

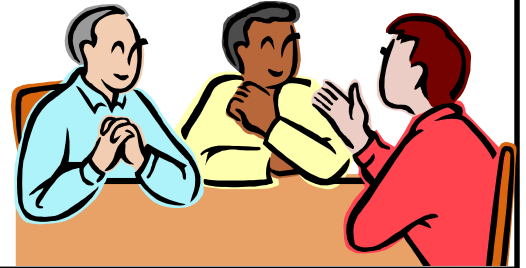


September 2004

Covenant Groups

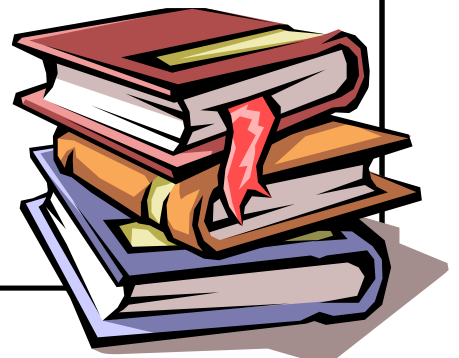
There is a new and exciting program that is catching on in Unitarian Universalist congregations across the country: Small Group Ministries or Covenant Groups. These fall Covenant Groups are coming to Second Unitarian Church! These are spiritually oriented small groups of 8-10 people that meet monthly to share with one another and explore a spiritual topic. There will be an organizational kick off event on **Saturday September 18th** at 10 AM to 12 PM in the First Hour area. This event is open to all members and friends who are interested in participating in this exciting new program.

We will introduce the idea of Covenant Groups and talk about how they work. If you are interested in participating but cannot attend the meeting, contact Rev. Josh



Books! Books! Books!

Here is an opportunity to get rid of the books you no longer want, GUILT FREE!! The Library Committee is holding its annual book sale at the end of September and the beginning of October. Here is an excuse to get rid of all those old books! If you have donations, please put them in the bin under the library shelves or, if you have too many, just put them in the back of the church under the coat rack. If you have any questions, contact Melissa Konecky.



Information on First Hour & Sunday programming can be found within.

Second Unitarian Church of Omaha
3012 South 119th Street
Omaha, NE 68144
Office: (402) 334-0537

Email: info@secondunitarianomaha.org
Web site: www.secondunitarianomaha.org

Sunday Worship - 10:30 a.m.
First Hour - 9:15 a.m.
Children's Religious Education - 10:30 a.m.

Staff

Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder, Minister

Minister's hours:

Mon, Wed 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Tues, Thurs 12:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Rose Joshi, Director of Religious Education

Rose's office hours Aug-May:

Mon, Fri 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
Tues, Wed 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Sun 9:30 a.m.-12:30 pm

Isis Prentice, Office Administrator
(402) 334-0537
secuuch@radiks.net

Office hours:

Mon - Wed 10:00 am-3:00 pm
Thurs 9:00am-Noon
Fri TBA

Board of Trustees

President: Bill MacMillan

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Sara Seaman
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Josh's Journal

Ah, the beginning of another Church year! It is good to be back for another year at Second Unitarian Church serving as your minister. Can you believe that this is the fifth year of my ministry here? It feels like I just started.

This summer I spent time with my family in Michigan getting reacquainted with my new niece and celebrating my cousin's graduation. But one of the highlights of the summer was when Sharon, myself, and my parents went to Northern Michigan for a week. We saw lighthouses in Ludington, Mackinaw and Charlevoix. We also ate fresh Michigan cherries, which I had not had in a number of years. One of the interesting features of Northwestern Michigan is the number of wineries that have popped up in a place called the Leelanau Peninsula. Who would have thought that such good wine can come from Michigan of all places! But if you can grow cherries I guess you can grow grapes too. My family and I bought quite a few bottles, but only two made there way back to Nebraska.

By far the highlight of the summer was my birthday, which we spent on Mackinaw Island in Lake Huron, and St. Ignace in the Upper Peninsula. Mackinaw Island is a beautiful place that is a throw back to olden' times. It is the only state park in the country that disallows cars; all transportation is done by bicycle and horse drawn carriage. It was a lot of fun, and the fudge was fantastic.

All and all, it was a fun and relaxing vacation. I am looking forward again to Water Communion the first Sunday in September. I will be sharing water from Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, and the Grand Traverse Bay with you. Hope you all can be there.

May You Be Blessed Always,

Rev. Josh Snyder



Second Thoughts is published monthly. Items for publication may be submitted to the church office or sent to the church email address:

info@secondunitarianomaha.org

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month

Religious Education

“Simple Living”

by Rose Joshi, DRE

I am currently reading a book called “Living Simply with Children”, by Marie Sherlock, and I’d like to share some of the ideas it presents. Living simply refers to the practice called voluntary simplicity, in which people make a conscious effort to buy less, waste less, and do less. The many advantages of this type of life style include: more monetary resources available for *experiences* rather than *things*; a sustainable life style, and therefore a healthier planet; a more peaceful, centered life; more time to spend connecting with loved ones; more time to follow dreams.

Simple living with kids doesn’t seem possible. With Mom’s and Dad’s jobs, day care, school, soccer practice, dance lessons, music lessons, games, recitals, PTA meetings, church meetings, housework and lawn care, how is there time for anyone to really spend time just *being* together? We want our kids to reach their potential, to have opportunities to develop their talents, and Mom and Dad need to find fulfillment, too. Where does “down-time” fit in the picture, that free time necessary for the three “i”s: inspiration, imagination, and innovation?

We also don’t want our children to feel deprived – but if it wasn’t for ubiquitous advertising and seeing what their peers have, would they really feel deprived? Kids have an innate love for simple things. I’ve seen toddlers spend more time with the wrapping paper, bows, and box than their actual birthday present. My kids’ latest Transformer action figures will collect dust under their beds while they spend endless hours building things with the same basic Legos they’ve had for years. And a big cardboard box still has endless possibilities for fun. But corporate America wants us to spend, and seductive marketing techniques work their dark magic. I confess, I have succumbed to the guilt that if I didn’t get this ‘enhances critical-thinking’ thing, my kids wouldn’t be as smart as they could be, and it would be my fault!

Our country is the top consumer of resources in the world. It has been estimated that FOUR planet Earths would be required to sustain

our voracious appetites, if everyone in the world consumed like Americans. The rate of consumption of a typical American family with one child is equivalent to that of an Indian family with 25 children. And family members of many households only meet each other in passing, as everyone goes about living their equally busy lives. Voluntary simplicity is an effort to change the way we consume and the way we spend our time.

It’s not all doom and gloom. There are many things that we can do to combat the materialism, consumerism, and do-ism predominant in our country. And those ideas will be featured in future issues of the newsletter! Stay tuned...

If simple living appeals to you, you can check out the following websites:



www.simpleliving.org
www.seedsofsimplicity.org
www.futurenet.org
www.newdream.org

RE CALENDAR

Sep. 5 Intergenerational Water Communion – all upstairs

Sep. 11 RE Church Family Picnic 5:00 – 8:30. Come witness the unveiling of our new Workshops Rotation model, and participate in a fun trial run!

Sep. 12 FAMILY SUNDAY and First Day of RE Classes

- *Chalice Children* (3 yrs - K) “Celebrating Me and My World” curriculum begins

- *Gr. 1-2, 3-4, 5-6*

Judaism Workshops (Sep. 12, 19, 26)

Judaism Closure w/ DRE on Oct. 3

STUDENT REGISTRATION

If you haven’t already registered your child for the 2004-2005 RE year, you can do so now with the form on the back of the Kid’s Corner in this newsletter. Just fill it out and return with your check to Rose Joshi, or place in the DRE folder in the church office.

NEW NURSERY LOCATION

Good news! Our littlest UUs (2 yrs. and under) and their caregivers will now have more space to crawl

and toddle about. The new nursery room is on the west side of the downstairs area.

THANK YOU FOR DONATIONS

Dan Roth designed and built the stage downstairs for our Drama Workshop. Thank you Dan! Come check it out, and feel free to express any creative acting urges! And many others have donated materials or money for the RE effort. Thank you for your generosity.

THANK YOU RE COMMITTEE

Last month, the members of the RE Committee donated their time, muscle power, and cleaning supplies, not to mention some sweat, blood, and tears when getting our RE space ready for a new year and new structure. Thank you everyone!



ASEC Information

September 26th

First Hour - "Writing for Spiritual Growth" - facilitated by David Martin and Lauren Hunter. Journal writing is a tool many people use to increase spiritual awareness. Anyone can do it. Join David and Lauren at Starbucks (122nd & West Center) for a cup of coffee and an opportunity to write yourself to a new level of awareness!

The Adult Spiritual Education Committee will be sponsoring a class on Ethics this Fall. Ronni Kahn will facilitate an 8-session workshop entitled, "*Ethics: An Exploration in Personal Morality.*" This curriculum, part of the UUA's *Building Your Own Theology* Series, offers participants an opportunity to consider the real-life moral and ethical implications of their UU beliefs through a series of readings and exercises. The sessions will be held at Second Unitarian on 8 successive Wednesdays from 7:00-8:30 p.m., beginning September 22. There will be a fee of \$16 to cover the cost of each participant's book. Please contact Tammy Hunter

to register and to request childcare.

Words from Reverend Josh

Newcomer Session

Yes the monthly newcomer sessions are in full swing once again! Our meeting this month will be on **September 12th** 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. *Please note: these sessions are also open to all current members of the Church who would like to meet all the new faces you see on Sunday morning!* The sessions begin at 12 PM after coffee hour in the minister's office. No reservations are needed, and the Membership Committee provides childcare and lunch. This will be the last meeting of the year until the fall. Call Rev. Snyder for more information.

Meditation

The Meditation Group will be meeting only once this month. We will be in the sanctuary on **September 23th at 7 PM** for our regular meditation practice. Next month we will resume our twice a month schedule on the first and third Thursdays of the month. 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 tradition, and newcomers are especially welcomed! 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.

Hello from the Administrator

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Isis Prentice and I am the new Office Administrator. I recently graduated from Bellevue University with a BA in Graphic Design. I play Doumbek, freelance graphic design projects, and dabble in the realm of Spiritual Movement. I look forward to meeting and working with you.

Finance Committee

by Craig Piquette

Fellowship of the Green

Among the books on the summer reading list for our family was the Lord of the Rings trilogy. As you know, the tale is wound around a journey to destroy the One Ring. Frodo volunteers to be the ring-bearer but a fellowship is formed to help him carry out his duties. Finance Committee has been entrusted with ensuring the financial stability of our church and the fellowship of our committee is committed to that goal. Each member has a role to play and each brings his or her own strengths to the job. Although the task may seem to be dreadfully dull and too much responsibility to bear, by working together the load is shared and the fellowship invigorates our work.

Our task for the coming year is to begin planning for a successful pledge drive, one that will probably include funds to cover the cost of expansion of our current space. We will initiate planning for a major fundraiser that will help bring in outside funds and raise the profile of Second Unitarian Church in Omaha. We will also begin our endowment fund and solicit planned gifts to help it appreciate. If you like to watch things grow, join us. Our fellowship is forming now; come be a part of something great. Finance Committee meeting will be held September 2nd at 7:00 PM.

Social Justice Committee

by Rachel Yamamoto, Chair

Prairie Star District Social Justice Workshop

I am proud to announce that we have been asked to host the fall Prairie Star District Social Justice Workshop on October 2, 2004. Representatives from Unitarian Universalist churches all over the district will be gathering in our church to talk about issues of social justice and community action. The theme of this workshop is "Our Search for Common Values and Common Work". I am looking forward to spending a day discussing the common good, developing interfaith social justice projects, and networking.

As part of the honor of hosting, we have been given the opportunity to spend an hour talking about Second Unitarian's "Social Justice Vision

and Strategic Steps". This will give us the chance to talk about the work that we have been doing to contribute to the local, regional, and global community as we strive for justice. We have had a busy and productive year, and I look forward to telling everyone about it at the workshop. From Green Sanctuary to Welcoming Congregation to Omaha Together One Community, we have had a positive impact on our neighbors that we should be proud of.

If anyone is interested in attending the workshop or volunteering to help with registration or lunch, please contact me directly. You will not regret a day spent renewing your energy for social justice and networking with like-minded activists from the area.

Green Sanctuary

One focus of the Green Sanctuary Committee will be to encourage energy conservation and reduce carbon dioxide emissions. We will monitor thermostat settings and electric, gas, and water usage at the church. An easy way to conserve energy at your home is to move the thermostat setting *down 3 degrees in the winter and up 3 degrees in the summer*. If this seems like an uncomfortable jump, ease into it a degree every few days.

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 on **September 12, 2004**, following service. Everyone is welcome to learn more about progress on common goals, bring up any concerns, make us aware of a social justice issue, or participate in any activity.

More Words from Reverend Josh

Second Unitarian Twenties and Thirties (2UT2).

Are you in your twenties or thirties? Then you are cordially invited to participate in the Second Unitarian Twenties and Thirties group. This is a group of young adults that plans social events to get to know each other and create community. Our monthly outings are the third Saturday of the month at the AMC Theater near the Oakview Mall at 2 PM. This month we will get together on *Saturday September 18th*. After the

the Starbucks at 122nd street to talk and plan other events for the month. The group is open to everyone in their twenties and thirties, so bring your friends. If you have questions or want to be on our e-mail list, contact Rev. Josh

Musical Notes

by Mark Dickmeyer

Dear Friends in Music,

Well, here I sit on the airplane on my way back to Omaha from the 22nd Annual UUMN (Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network) Conference in Washington D.C. and I'm filled with an overwhelming sense of joy and sorrow—joy for having had one of the most meaningful experiences of my adult life, and sorrow that it's all over and I'm leaving the warmth, fellowship and community of some of the most caring, compassionate and dedicated people I have ever met! The conference had 257 attendees from 40 states and Canada. Sheila Brown from Lincoln Unitarian and myself proudly represented Nebraska (and yes, I think we're still the only SECOND Unitarian Church in the country!) People were very surprised that we even had Unitarian churches here! I commonly described us as a little oasis of liberal thought in the middle of the great Sahara desert of conservatism—a beacon of hope that even here, in the Sahara, the water of the Unitarian spirit flows enthusiastically from our churches. Again and again, people can't believe that with a congregation of only 135 members, we have a choir of 18-20 dedicated members. The churches of 200+ members feel fortunate to have that many members in their choir! Most of the 100-200 member churches have choirs of 8-12 people.

The conference included a worship service each day, many different workshops on a wide range of topics to choose from, recitals, choral reading sessions of new Unitarian and other music, and lots and lots of brainstorming and fellowship with some of the best musicians in the United States today! (Oh yes, and each day also included a HUGE breakfast buffet and a nice long soak in the hot tub at the Marriott hotel!!) It's difficult for me to put

into words how the conference has affected me—how it has expanded my life and touched my soul. It is an overwhelming feeling to be in a huge Unitarian church filled with 250 people who all have the same purpose and commitment to Unitarian Universalism—and to MUSIC! The feeling of warmth generated by us as a whole was incredible. Every person you pass in the hallways, sit next to at lunch, work with in workshops, chat with in the set-up music store, (and yes, soak with in the hot tub!) emits the same friendly smile. The single most important theme that resounded through the entire five days was that music is in many ways the most powerful tool we have in expressing ourselves and in reaffirming our faith in people and in the spirit of life (but we still need you Josh!)

I am bringing back with me lots of new ideas to use with both the choir and the congregation and I'm anxious to do more research into things we discussed such as sound vibrations and toning and their effect on us both physically and mentally. The choir will be happy to know I've got new warm-up, rehearsal, and performance techniques that will both challenge you and expand our choir rehearsals to TWO hours (just kidding!) And so as I sit here on the plane, I reflect back on lots of tears shed, lots of laughter shared, and lots of new friendships that I will cherish forever. Words simply can't express my appreciation to you, the Members of the congregation, and to the Music and Worship Committee for paying for my registration and encouraging me to attend this incredible conference. In so doing, you have allowed me to experience in a very real way the overwhelming power of Unitarian Universalism.

In Peace and Fellowship,
Mark



Denominational Affairs Committee

UU and You

by Judy Maniscalco

“Do not attach yourself to any particular creed exclusively, so that you may disbelieve all the rest; otherwise you will lose much good, nay, you will fail to recognize the real truth of the matter: God, the omnipresent and omnipotent, is not confined to any one creed, for he says, ‘Wheresoever ye turn, there is the face of Allah.’”

This directive comes from a 12th century Muslim mystic and philosopher, Ibn al-Arabi. Despite the formal language, the philosophy expressed is very familiar to Unitarian Universalists.

In a recent issue of “Quest,” the monthly newsletter of the UUA Church of the Larger Fellowship, William Sinkford, UUA President, defines religious liberalism in similar terms. “Like religious people everywhere, we strive to know and name the holy in our lives. . . . But we know that the holy has many names: Spirit of Life, God, Allah and many, many more.” Sinkford says, “We value the individual spiritual journey. We celebrate and draw on the wisdom of all the world’s great faith traditions. To be a religious liberal is to know that there is not just one way to be religious.”

This spirit of religious pluralism is one aspect of what Sinkford calls “our own Good News,” our hopeful, life-affirming vision that we offer as an alternative to the strident voice of the fundamentalist Religious Right. The fact that liberal religious communities such as ours exist “is a beacon of hope in our hurting, and increasingly violent, world,” he says.

In our individual spiritual journeys, we each find the holy in our own way. We draw from all the religious, spiritual and philosophical traditions available to us—humanism, paganism, atheism, agnosticism, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, etc. We accept and respect one another and our differences. Alike and different, we are all Unitarian Universalists. That’s something to be proud of and share.

If you’re interested in helping spread “our own Good News,” we invite you to join the Denominational Affairs Committee. We will be meeting in September. Watch for announcement of the date.



BANNER CONTEST!

The Denominational Affairs Committee thinks it's time to update our church banner that is used in banner parades at conferences. We know there is much artistic talent in the congregation and thought a contest would be fun. You are encouraged to submit a drawing for a new banner. The drawing should be on an 8½ x 11 size sheet of paper, preferably in color. The actual banner size will be 51" long by 32" wide with a 3" casing at the top for the pole. Please submit your design by October 31. You can put it in the Denominational Affairs' box in the administrative office or give to one of the committee members: Judy Maniscalco, Nancy Amsler, Gene Kopecky, Bill Woodhams or Cheri Cody. The committee will choose the new banner design from the entries. Prize is yet to be determined!!

Book Club

by Gwen Eurich

Book club members are reading *Tears of the Giraffe* by Alexander McCall Smith for discussion on Tuesday, September 28. Please join us at the Maplecrest Manor at 7:30 p.m.





Trea\$urer's Gems

INCOME:

Budgeted pledge income is \$113,696 for this fiscal year, so we need to be averaging \$9,475 per month.

Here is monthly actual year to date:

July: \$6,407 (68%)

Compared to last year only \$3,839 came in during July. Great job!

As of July 30th we have received \$1,275 in last year pledge commitments. There is still \$614 more that should come in. Offering is also down for the month, taking in \$198 of \$250 budgeted. Much thanks for the generosity of the people who prepaid their pledges, \$7,600. This is critical for the church to cash flow during these summer months.

Dodge & Boggs Fund had interest earnings for July of \$35.78 & \$1.70 respectively. We have 9 people signed up for Electronic pledge payment (ACH). This equates to \$985/month and the program started in July.

EXPENSES:

The annual UUA denominational dues are \$6,200 spread out over 10 payments. I have sent off the first payment. OTOC dues for the congregation were paid out of the Social Justice budget. This is the first year for this to be part of our operating budget.

OVERALL:

For the month of July we ended up with more money coming in, than going out by \$9.16. So yes, does every penny count, you bet!

This is JoAnne "Cash Register" Draper saying "Ka-ching!"



Circle Suppers

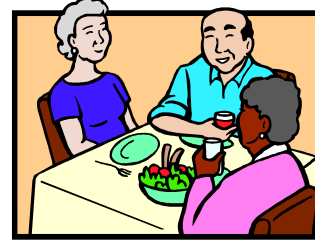
By Denny Burnside, Fellowship Committee

One of the most popular activities our church members and friends have enjoyed over the years is *Circle Suppers*. Starting in September and then every couple of months through spring, we'll arrange rounds of small-group potluck dinners in people's homes. 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! You can sign up any time and need not be a host to participate.

I have put a sign-up sheet in the back of the church. You are not automatically enrolled if you participated last year. You are not committing to participating in all four suppers, but let me know which ones you can't make. 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).

September 17 or 18, 24 or 25 is the first target date range so write that down now. 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 to save paper and time. Participants will get detailed explanations when they sign up. Call or e-mail Denny if you have any questions.



Shared Ministry Sunday

Coming Soon! "Shared Ministry Sunday" 2: **Sunday November 7** immediately following the worship service. Come hear about the exciting ministry possibilities at Second Unitarian Church and how you can get involved. All members and friends are welcome.

Sunday Worship and First Hour Information

September 2004

First Hour

Worship

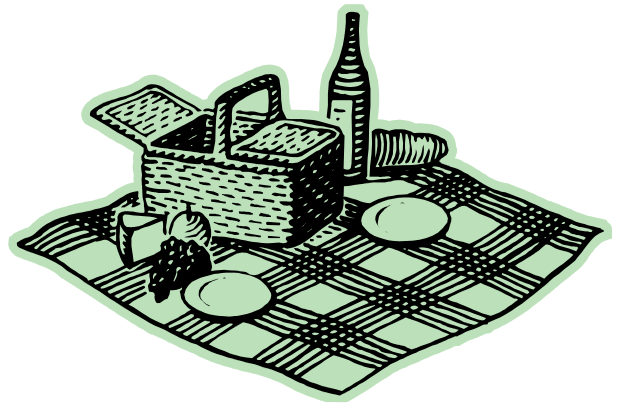
S E P T 5	<i>"World Religions"</i> with Russ Alberts	<i>"Water Communion"</i> with Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder
S E P T 1 2	<i>"Know the Bible"</i> with Milton Forbes	<i>"Rosh Hashanah; The Jewish New Year"</i> with Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder
S E P T 1 9	<i>"Social Justice Committee"</i> TBA	<i>"Spirituality, Rationality and Holy Curiosity"</i> Anita Jeck
S E P T 2 6	<i>"Writing for Spiritual Growth"</i> with David Martin and Lauren Hunter	<i>"Covenant Groups; UUs and the Spiritual Revolution"</i> with Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder
O C T 3	<i>"World Religions"</i> with Russ Alberts	<i>"Gay Rights and Gay Marriage"</i> with Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

Second Unitarian Church
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(402) 334-0537

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5th Annual RE
CHURCH FAMILY PICNIC
Saturday, September 11, 2004
5:00-8:30pm



All Members and Friends of Second Unitarian are invited to join the Religious Education Committee in kicking off the new church year with a potluck dinner; games; music by Denny, Bill and friends; and an exciting trial run of the NEW RE Workshop Rotation!!

Bring a picnic blanket or chair, drinks and a side dish or dessert to share.

Main dishes will be provided by RE committee members.

Questions: Karen Snyder