

THE FLAME

First Unitarian Church of Omaha's Monthly Newsletter

September 2014



Your Ministry Team Leaders approve a new approach to Sunday Hospitality!

You recognize Sunday hospitality when you see it. Someone smiles and hands you an Order of Service when you enter the sanctuary. Someone has made coffee and put out the cookies in the common room after the service. There is a visitors desk in the sanctuary foyer and there are people talking to newcomers and helping them get settled. Most of us have done one or more of these hospitality tasks in the past.

In the past, we have approached each hospitality task individually, seeking one volunteer make coffee, other volunteers to be greeters, and so forth. Each person acted alone.

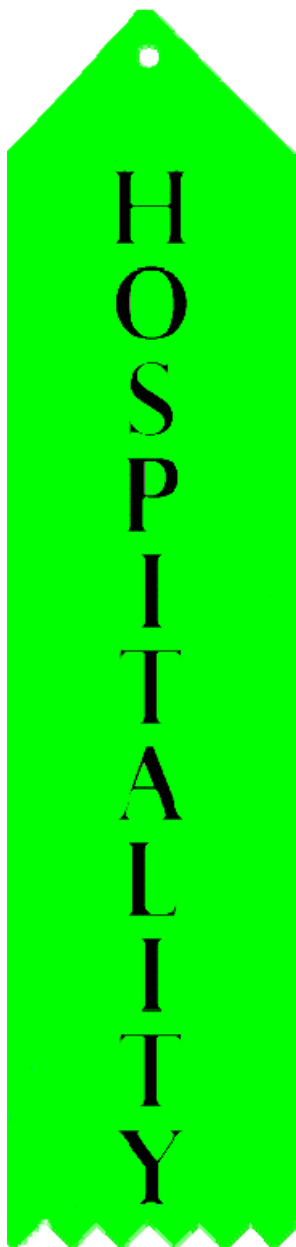
About a year ago, we learned that many UU congregations have adopted a new approach to handling these tasks. Instead of treating each task as a separate duty, these congregations bundled all of the Sunday tasks and created teams that work together a few Sundays each year to provide for their fellow congregants.

Over the last six months we have conducted significant trials to see if Hospitality Teams make the work easier. It does. But more importantly teams make Sunday hospitality **MORE FUN!**

Please read on for more information.

Special Edition-Hospitality Teams

Please Help First Unitarian Adopt a New Hospitality Model



**Get your
ribbon
on!**

Hospitality Team Goals

The goals of Hospitality Teams are to provide opportunities for each congregation member to:

- Help serve the congregation and support the church services.
- Belong to a team that works together on a regular basis and take a turn in its leadership.
- Learn the work that is required to bring our services together, share the knowledge with other team members, and help improve the process.
- Become an integral part of welcoming all newcomers to our church.

Our Previous practice was to treat each aspect of supporting our church service as individual tasks. The tasks that will be first addressed by Hospitality Teams are:

1. Greeters, who distribute the orders of service and receive the offering.
2. Ambassadors, who welcome new visitors and help them get settled.
3. Coffee hour hosts, who set up, serve, and clean up after our social time.

The benefits of Hospitality Teams compared to our current practice are:

- Teams will be regularly scheduled in advance so team members can plan ahead.
- Teams will have more members than duties so the load will be lighter and substitution will be done within the team.
- Over time, all team members will be trained on all tasks so training and back up will be done within the team and occur continuously.
- We will have many more individuals who can contribute ideas and expertise to improve our processes.
- Hospitality Teams are FUN!



Special Edition-Hospitality Teams

Please Help First Unitarian Adopt a New Hospitality Model

Sign Up for a Team Today!

Use the [church website](http://www.firstuomaha.org) (engage) Call, email, or facebook: the church office, Bill Ross, Kim Callaghan, or the team leader .
 Visit our table at coffee hour hospitality@firstuomaha.org

Hospitality Teams and Participants

	Odd Numbered Months (Jan, Mar, May, July, Sept, Nov)				
Month	Team 1 Team 2 Team 3 Team 4				Any Month Team 5
Team	First Sunday	Second Sunday	Third Sunday	Fourth Sunday	Fifth Sunday
Sunday	Fireballs				W/W
Leader(s)	Bill Ross	Louise Jeffrey	Brian Callaghan Kim Callaghan	Janet West Ron Withem	Sandy Host
Team	1 Jackie Anderegg	Amy Barlow	Barb Ross	Douglas Lee-Regier	Ben Wallace
	2 Lois Norris	Kate Godfrey	Jim Daniels	Rae Barry	Krystal Davis
	3 Shawne Coonfare	Bruce Godfrey	Kim Dunovan	Pam Kirby	Wendi Jensen
	4 Nellie Chenoweth	Terrilynn Brewer	Jerre Tritsch	Joe Schaaf	Troy Jensen
	5 Tony Host	Shelton Hendricks	Donna Neff	Lori Janis-Hefeli	Dee Otte
	6 Sandy Host	Abby Cape	Walt Jesteadt	Kate Wiig	Jaime Alexander
	7 Lynnette Ryder	Kathi Oliver	Marcia Leise	Abby Borgmann	Linda Parker
	8 Jack Heidel		Cy Leise	Lana Hammel	
	9 Payton Pearson		Lisa & Will Calhoun	Linda Hess	
	10		Larry Goeser	Jessica Nguyen	
	11		Claude Matthews		
	12		Eddith Buis		

	Even Numbered Months (Febr, April, June, Aug, Oct, Dec)				
Month	New Team 5 New Team 6 New Team 7 New Team 8				
Team	First Sunday	Second Sunday	Third Sunday	Fourth Sunday	
Sunday	Your Name Here				
Leader(s)	Your Name Here			Kay Lynn Goldner	
Team	1			Dave Olson	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; font-family: cursive;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Ask</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">one of these team members if Hospitality Teams are fun!</p> </div>
	2			Tom Seguin	
	3			Caitlin Seguin	
	4			Frank McKee	
	5			Christina Noriega	
	6			Kay McMeen	
	7			Bob McMeen	
	8			Matt Dewell	
	9				
	10				
	11				
	12				

Gather your friends and form your own team!

Special Edition-Hospitality Teams

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Serving Each Other

In April, Rev. Rivas presented a sermon titled *In Praise of Work*. He pointed out how the hospital workers and volunteers that he had recently encountered helped his family cope with the reality of his mother's final illness. He also spoke of the dignity and satisfaction that comes from doing our work well and serving a mission.

In his August sermon titled *Dreams and Reality*, Rev. Rivas included Hospitality Teams as an example of the sort of engagement that will strengthen our congregation.

When we work together, we get to know each other better. When we serve each other, we make a difference in our church and the larger community.

What is a Hospitality Team?

A Hospitality Team is a group of about 12 people who are responsible for hosting one Sunday every other month (6 Sundays per year). The team will handle coffee hour, greeting, taking up the offering, and welcoming visitors. We didn't invent the Hospitality Team concept. Church members learned about it at a Prairie Star District conference and brought the idea back to the Ministry Team for consideration.



From Our Minister

No one doubts that our great music program contributes to making our church community what it is. Nor does anyone doubt the contribution of our comprehensive religious education program. Sermons are important too. But the essence of community is a sense of belonging, and that's what hospitality teams help to create.

By volunteering once every two months, you welcome visitors, you meet and interact with current members, you become an expert on church programs...or you work behind the scenes to create a welcoming coffee hour. We recognize that this level of volunteering will not fit into everyone's schedule; nonetheless, we ask you to consider it. It will be a gift to the community as well as a gift to yourself.

Looking forward to a dynamic new church year,

Frank

How did we evaluate Hospitality Teams here at First Unitarian?

Your Ministry Team Leaders authorized a trial run. A volunteer team hosted one Sunday Service in February, March, and April. This helped us document the hosting responsibilities and train individuals on each responsibility. The main idea behind Hospitality Teams is that everyone learns every job and works as a team to make sure that our congregants and visitors are welcomed warmly and served effectively. To be sure that the plan was sound, we then recruited 5 teams for a summer trial. Each team served one Sunday per month. These teams will continue to serve in odd numbered months going forward.

Special Edition-Hospitality Teams

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How many people need to volunteer to make Hospitality Teams work?

About 108! That is 9 teams with 12 people each. That's a scary number, but we were able to recruit almost 50 volunteers for our summer trial. We are quite hopeful that most of these volunteers will be willing to continue to serve on their existing team or move to other teams. This will certainly be the largest recruiting effort in recent memory and your help is crucial.



How soon does this start?

Right away! Our existing 5 teams will handle hospitality for September. We need to form and train 4 new teams to start in October. **Please volunteer!**

What is the basic expectation for our congregants?

Hospitality Teams will work for us if everyone who is able volunteers for a team. It is a fair and relatively easy way to share our Sunday hospitality tasks. If you are a church member or regular attendee of our Sunday services, please volunteer. In the process, you will meet more people, feel good about doing your fair share, and help our church be the best we can be on Sundays.

Some people will not be able to volunteer because of physical limitations, schedule conflicts, or other reasons.

How often will my Hospitality Team serve?

Each team will serve 6 times per year...once every two months. Here is how it works:

- 4 of our existing teams will serve 1 Sunday during each of the odd numbered months (September, November, etc.).
- Our 5th existing team will serve each time that there is a 5th Sunday in a month (generally 4 times per year).
- The 4 new teams that we are forming will each serve 1 Sunday in the even numbered months (October, December, etc.).

Because of the way this is structured, each team will always know far in advance when their team is scheduled to serve.

Who is the Hospitality Team Coordinator?

Kim Callaghan has agreed to take on this important role. She will be the conduit between the individuals and teams that create our Sunday services and the Hospitality Teams that serve on any given Sunday.

Kim will also make sure that the Hospitality Teams have the supplies (coffee, etc.) and information that they need. She will make sure that the documentation is kept up to date and that any new duties or procedures are coordinated as needed.



Special Edition-Hospitality Teams

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How much time does serving on a Hospitality Team add to a Sunday?

Less than an hour is a pretty good guess, and it only happens 6 times per year. Some people come in early to set up and some people stay a bit late for clean up. *Because everyone works together, nobody has to spend lots of extra time.*

What basic tasks do members of a Hospitality Team perform today?

- Greeting congregants and visitors when they enter the church.
- Taking up the offering.
- Preparing coffee and refreshments.
- Answering questions and giving directions.
- Tidying up after each service.
- Visiting with newcomers and helping them feel at home.
- Other special tasks that will come up from time to time.

All of the tasks are documented and introductory training is offered. Team members rotate through the tasks so everyone can do every task.

What if I have a conflict for a day that my Hospitality Team is serving?

Each team will have about 12 members which is approximately twice the minimum number of people required to handle our normal two services. That should provide a good cushion to tide each team through vacations and other conflicts. Through the summer trial, we haven't run into any significant problems.

What if I have other church duties on Sundays?

If you sing, teach an RE class, operate sound or a camera, serve as a worship associate, or are preaching the sermon, you are already engaged in the Sunday service and we thank you very much for that. **But remember, serving on a Hospitality Team is Fun!** Some of you will want to be on a team anyway and we should have enough on each team to accommodate periodic absences.



Can my children help with hospitality teams?

Yes. Depending on age they may need your supervision but all family members are welcome. Our Religious Education team also has plans to take a significant role in the Hospitality Teams that serve on the first Sunday of each month.

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What does a Hospitality Team leader do?

Mainly they do team coordination. Team leaders receive information about what is planned for the services from the Hospitality Team coordinator and share it with their team members. The leader will check to see who will be able to attend on Sunday and schedule who will perform each of the various roles.

The tasks are rotated until everyone has a chance to become familiar with each one. New team members are trained.

We need 3 more team leaders.

Current team leaders are: Brian & Kim Callaghan, Kay Lynn Goldner, Sandy Host, Louise Jeffrey, Bill Ross, and Janet West. Ask them how they like the job.

What if I don't usually come to Church?

Well...we miss you! Why don't you join a Hospitality Team and attend at least 6 times a year. You'll see some old friends and get acquainted with new people on your team.

What if I'm attending fairly regularly but am not a formal church member?

Jump right in and join a Hospitality Team. It's fun and you'll meet new people!

Ask a team leader how Hospitality Teams work in practice to be sure that they really are fun!

Should my significant other and I both serve on the same team?

That's entirely up to you. If you like working together, by all means join the same team. On the other hand, you will get to know twice as many people if you sign up for different teams. Some partners have signed up for different teams so that time off for vacations and other absences don't have quite as much impact on any one team.

Can I start and stop serving on a Hospitality Team as my life ebbs and flows? Or can I change teams as my schedule changes?

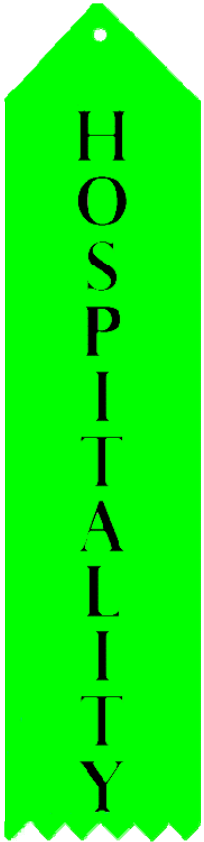
Absolutely! Life happens to all of us and we expect that there will be some modest movement to and from teams all the time.

Can friends get together and form their own team?

Yes! But you need to hurry because (at the time of this writing) there are only 3 empty teams left. The summer trial teams are continuing and the Choir has already snagged the fourth Sunday team for the even numbered months. Of course, any team of less than 12 will be willing to accept individual volunteers to fill out the group.



Special Edition-Hospitality Teams



Get your ribbon on!



Join a Hospitality Team today!

This Special Edition of The Flame was prepared by the Hospitality Team Group which is responsible for any errors or omissions.

The Flame is published monthly by, for and about members and friends of First Unitarian Church of Omaha.

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