

## Witness

*The life of a congregation is a rich community tapestry of people, programs, ministries, and worship. We lift up the patterns of this tapestry at Unity Church with the threads of monthly themes woven through our worship and programming. These themes deepen our understanding of our own faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community.*

*“The greatest thing a human soul ever does in the world is to see something and tell what [they] saw in a plain way. ... To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion all in one.”*

—John Ruskin

To witness is no small thing. Opening our senses and our hearts to the world around us, and to name what we notice and what we believe it means, depends on all our human faculties — of observation, understanding, compassion, and language. No wonder we consider it the work of poets and painters, of prophets and preachers, of judges and justice seekers. But witnessing is not just the special work of a few. It is the everyday invitation to each of us as friends and companions, as neighbors and citizens, to attend to one another with our hearts and senses wide open. We are all called to the witness stand of this day, to notice and name what we’ve seen — and to let it change us and guide us.

In the 19th century, before video and its ubiquitous sharing, citizens sometimes traveled to a warfront to watch. At Bull Run, the first battle of the U.S. Civil War, a large gathering of spectators traveled seven hours by carriage from Washington to watch what was expected to be a short and decisive skirmish. As we now know, it was so much more than that, sending the spectators home in horror and haste as witnesses to a fierce and bloody battle wounding or killing 5,000 soldiers and beginning a long war that would kill over a half million more.

Today, we have no distance to travel as witnesses to the world’s battlefronts. The horrors of the war in Ukraine play repeatedly in our homes and our hands as we watch on television

and cell phone the destruction and suffering unfolding. Even closer are the battles being fought in our own communities and lives. As Adrienne Rich wrote 25 years ago, now “there is no demilitarized zone, no line dividing war from peace.” The violence of our times is right here, wherever here is. We are all witnesses, whether we want to be or not.

The question here is, *What does our faith ask of us as witnesses? What will we do with what we have seen?*

In general, we are asked not to turn away — in our attention and our heart. Though, at times, this means we must pause our watching (sometimes turning off the news), to keep our hearts open. Our faith invites us to be compassionately changed by what we observe, and to let what we learn call us into more compassionate living and action.

But there’s more. Our faith calls our attention not only to what we have noticed, but also to what we might miss. To the periphery of our senses. To what lies between or beyond our expectations and assumptions. To the often invisible connections between us, between your story and mine. To the story behind the story.

The human brain mostly notices what is expected. What we observe through our senses travels through the brain on neuropathways and the paths more frequently traveled light up more easily. We are quicker to see or hear what we are accustomed to seeing or hearing. It’s sobering to consider what this means, given a steady news diet of warfare and violence, of polarization and discord. But the good news is, our brains are designed to change. Neuroplasticity means at any age

we can open new neuropathways or widen old ones, allowing our brains to notice what we might have missed before: The possibilities for peace. The compassionate response. The connection between all beings.

This is the power of the Easter story, revisited this month: the stone rolled away, revealing not only an empty tomb but a whole new story rising from it. A dramatically different possibility than any of the witnesses on that day had expected — and what follows, in the story and the millennia since then, is all about how they were changed by it and gave witness to their change.

*How have you been changed by what you’ve witnessed? What possibilities — for peace, for compassion, for love and beauty — are already present in the periphery of your awareness? And how might you widen the paths, in your mind and your heart, toward these, both real and possible? When called to give witness today, what will you say?*

By Karen Hering on behalf of this month’s theme team:  
Andrea La Sonde Anastos,  
Ahmed Anzaldúa, Drew Danielson,  
KP Hong, Kathy Hurt, and Laura Park.

### Witness Theme Resources

For further reflection on this theme, a variety of resources are listed in this month’s Chalice Circle packet available at [www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html) and by request from [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org).

# INTERIM REFLECTIONS / THE WHEEL OF LIFE



## Interim Reflections

The notion of sight in all its manifestations, sight as literal and metaphorical, being able to see and being blind as spiritual gifts or flaws, shows up frequently in many spiritual traditions. We apparently need time and help and growth in order to see clearly and rightly, so much so that we are given spiritual practices and sacred texts that intend to remove our blinders, lift scales from our eyes, open our vision to see rightly, to see all that is around us and in us.

Our April worship theme of “witness” lifts up a particular kind of seeing that is crucial for spiritual growth and justice work. It carries a dual meaning of both watching something unfold, being present at some significant event, and also taking from that event a message to be shared with others. I witness, as I see something; I bear witness when I tell you what I saw.

While we already had the capacity to witness, to see what was going on around us with our physical sight, the prevalence of smartphones has extended our witnessing capacity as the phone records and shares what is being witnessed. Courageous people are choosing not to flee and not to ignore, but to witness, record, and through their phones bear witness to injustices unfolding, often with profound consequences coming from their witnessing.

How much do you see what is happening around you, and how much are you not seeing? How does your spiritual practice enhance your capacity for witnessing, for seeing, and for bearing witness, for sharing with others what you have seen? Are you a faithful witness — and if not, how might you grow in sight in order to witness more?

In faith, hope, and love,  
Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt

## The Wheel of Life

*In Memoriam*

**Bob Doffing**

June 25, 1943 – March 7, 2022

## Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for Sunday worship, contact Martha Tilton at 651-228-1456 x105 or [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org).



The Unity Library-Bookstall Team Invites You to

# Cafe Unity

## Poetry & Music Salon

### Friday, April 22, 2022

### 7:00 p.m.

Live and in-person in the Parish Hall (free & open to all)  
or  
View on Zoom—register here: <https://bit.ly/CafeUnity22>

# SUNDAY SERVICES / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

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Join us in-person at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. for Sunday services and religious education for children and youth.

## April 3: Being Here, Now

Livestream at 9:00 a.m.: <https://youtu.be/nzIVdxjwlpq>  
Practicing the spiritual teaching to “be here now” invites us to discover the true power of presence, which opens our hearts to both the losses and the gifts carried within each moment. When we can be present to one another’s sorrows and joys, fears and hopes, we are weaving a strong and beautiful tapestry of community and belonging. Rev. Karen Hering and music director Ahmed Anzaldúa explore the warp and weft of this tapestry in a service that will commission Unity’s new Congregation Care Team and include music from the Unity Singers.

## April 10: Being Wrong

Livestream at 9:00 a.m.: <https://youtu.be/rXIGSMIFwX8>  
Eyewitness accounts of events are known to have questionable accuracy, given that none of us is entirely objective and that especially, witnessing a significant event, we are likely to overemphasize some elements and miss other elements entirely. The Palm Sunday story is an example of how crowds believed they were witnessing one thing, only to decide a few days later that they had gotten it all wrong. Or had they? Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt, worship associate Ray Wiedmeyer, and music director Ahmed Anzaldúa explore the many facets of spiritual witness, and how we know when we are seeing what is actually before us.

## April 17: The Only Thing That Happens

Livestream at 9:00 a.m.: <https://youtu.be/f966nEwt3l4>  
When have you witnessed something that changed you forever? The story of how witnessing can be frightening, and transformative, is a primary theme of Easter narratives. But we witness all sorts of events, so what is it about an event, or how we witness the event, that makes it transformative? Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt and music director Ahmed Anzaldúa, explore the ways seeing changes us (or not), with special music provided by Unity’s choirs.

## April 24: Coming of Age Sunday

Livestream at 9:00 a.m.: <https://youtu.be/AGnROldTRrk>  
What is it to come of age at a time when we touch the limits of our human condition, or find ourselves caught in countless hardships with their aching possibilities? What signals our strongest aspiration than braving the impossible? Coming of Age Sunday celebrates the signature year-long journey of our ninth grade youth, transitioning from the inherited faith of childhood to the adult journey of faith, and marked by youth sharing their statement of faith or credo. COA youth, mentors, and families will be present at the 11:00 a.m. service, while all services will include a collage of voices, with religious education staff and ministers leading in joyful celebration.

Sunday offering donations are gratefully accepted online at <https://bit.ly/sundayoffering>.

## April 3: Housing Justice Center

Using legal advocacy, impact litigation, policy analysis, research, and community education, Housing Justice Center works to encourage the preservation and production of affordable housing and the protection of the right of all people who need affordable places to call home. This collection will support HJC’s Renters Reclaim the Record project. This outreach offers no-cost legal assistance to renters who have been denied rental housing due inequitable screening processes, the consequences of which often span generations, widening racial housing disparities. Unity Church member Dayna Kennedy works with HJC.

## April 10: Ujamaa Place

Ujamaa Place is a direct service organization that stabilizes and transforms the lives of African American men, ages 18-30, by teaching them how to navigate inequality, poverty, and a criminal justice system built to perpetuate recidivism. Each man has an individual plan and works with trained coaches to achieve stable housing, increase educational opportunities, secure and retain employment, reconnect with family, and eliminate contact with the penal system. This collection will help underwrite the monthly training expenses for Ujamaa men.

## April 17: Mano a Mano International

Mano a Mano works to create partnerships with impoverished Bolivian communities to improve health and economic wellbeing by building medical clinics, schools, roads, and water reservoirs and providing medical and agricultural training. This collection will be used to support Mano a Mano’s medical surplus program which collects medical supplies that would otherwise be thrown into Minnesota landfills, organizes these supplies, and ships them to Bolivia. Scores of Unity Church friends volunteer with Mano a Mano. Please turn to page 11 to read about Mano a Mano’s work including service to the people of Ukraine.

## April 24: Balazs Scholar Program

This offering supports the Balazs Scholar Program that brings a minister from the Unitarian homeland of Transylvania to study in the U.S. at the Starr King School for the Ministry. This offering is rooted in the bonds between Unity Church and Unity’s partner church village in Homorodsztpetter.

Each week, seventy percent of our Sunday offering is given to a community non-profit and thirty percent supports the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church. If you would like to nominate an organization to receive the offering, please visit <https://www.unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html>.

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES / MST UPDATE

## Come Share with Us

Louise Livesay-Al, Chair, Board of Trustees



Policy Governance is the method of governance that Unity Church uses to guide and manage its work. There are a number of tasks that board members are charged with under Policy Governance, such as linking with our stakeholders, creating the Ends on a regular basis, setting policies in the form of limitations for our executive team so they know the outer boundaries of what they can't do to meet the Ends, and to monitor the church's progress in meeting its Ends.

So every spring, as part of that monitoring task, the board asks the members of Unity to participate in a congregational survey, which helps the board and the executive team know what is going well and where we may be falling short of our Ends. There is a lot of information that we gather from this annual survey that is used throughout the year to shape programming and ongoing ministry for the congregation in all the facets of church life.

In this year of transition, we have gone through so much together. We have said goodbye, welcomed an interim minister, continued to navigate our way through the pandemic finding ways to connect both virtually and safely in person, launched our search for a new minister, and tended to one another through many life moments, including the recent news about our beloved former ministers. We are a vital congregation.

So the board, through the congregational survey, wants to know how you are feeling about the life and work of the church. How you engage, what you gain and give, what you need, what you treasure and where you need or want to grow. The information that comes from this survey will be helpful for the executive team as they plan the next program year. A new minister will receive invaluable information as they embark on a journey with us. This survey is a way for us to measure whether we are keeping our commitments to each other around the Ends and all the work we do within, among and beyond Unity Church-Unitarian.

Watch church communications for information about how to participate and then please take the time to complete the survey. This is part of us bearing witness to the work of the church and to one another.

## Update from the Ministerial Search Team

**Lia Rivamonte, on behalf of the Ministerial Search Team:**

Avi Viswanathan, Betsy Hearn, Mary Barmore, Morgan France-Ramirez, Pauline Eichten, Marg Walker, Jake Rueter, and Dan Huelster

On March 7, 2021, Unity's Ministerial Search Team gathered together for the first time for a virtual retreat led by Rev. Jen Crow. And so it was that we were launched on this amazing "journey of search." It seems almost impossible that the nine of us have been engaged in this work for a little over a year. However, a quick glance back through the weeks and months we have been meeting to talk, listen, learn, discover, write, pray, read, and listen some more, is proof that, yes, it has been a journey — a long one at that. We have traveled over hills, through valleys, made a few wrong turns, and caught some beautiful scenery along the way. We covenanted together, developed and scheduled a congregational survey and listening sessions, held those listening sessions, worked with a facilitator to help us interpret the results, developed and wrote our Congregational Record, met with Alfonso of Team Dynamics for some pre-interview counsel, reviewed applications, developed interview questions, selected applicants for interviews, and conducted those interviews. And now it is March again, and we are in deep discernment. We expect to make an announcement in a few weeks.

Each time we meet and light the chalice, we are reminded that we have been called to do this work for all of us. We are grateful for your trust.

Read about the work of Unity's Ministerial Search Team online at <https://www.unityunitarian.org/ministerial-transition.html>.

## MidAmerica Regional Assembly 2022

MidAmerica Regional Assembly 2022 is now open for registration!

Saturday, April 30 • 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Details and registration: [uua.org/midamerica/ra/2022](https://uua.org/midamerica/ra/2022)



This year's keynote speaker is social justice educator, storyteller and speaker, CB Beal! This event includes worship, the annual business meeting, a keynote address, conversation, and fellowship.

## Renewal and Commitment: Outreach Ministry Teams Build Beloved Community, Part I

Erika Sanders, Beloved Community Staff Team

Unity's engagement with the wider community happens, in large part, thanks to the work of nine dedicated Community Outreach Ministry Teams ([bit.ly/uucomt](http://bit.ly/uucomt)). Each team has a distinct focus, such as environmental sustainability, racial justice, or affordable housing, and each team partners with one or more organizations in the community to engage in education and advocacy.

At the beginning of 2021, our teams began a process of reflection and renewal. To learn more about this, I interviewed Rev. Shay Mackay, Coordinator of Community Outreach Ministries at Unity Church.

**ES:** *Tell me how and why the Community Outreach Ministry Teams renewal process began.*

**SM:** In the past, each team reapplied every two years to ensure that the team's work remained relevant and connected to the congregation and its community partners. In this time of so much transition, as well as deepening antiracist multicultural work in the congregation, leaders decided to ask the teams to reapply and also to engage in a process of reflection. We hoped that the renewal process would expand the ways that team members experience and articulate how their activities connect to their spiritual growth. This renewal process began in early 2021, and I joined the effort in July 2021. We hope it will be completed by June of this year.

**ES:** *What types of reflection are part of the renewal process?*

**SM:** Each team engages in the process a little differently, based on their focus, but in general, they reflect on questions such as:

- How does our work grow from our members' faith journey?
- How does our work connect to Unity's values of striving to embody wonder, open-hearted engagement, and courageous action?



Unity's Act for the Earth Community Outreach Ministry Team

- What characteristics of the current moment challenge or clarify our vision?
- How do our partnerships and actions relate to Unity's commitment to advance justice, wholeness, and equity?
- What relationships and practices will make our work sustainable, while also creating caring and powerful community for those engaged in it and served by it?

Team members reflect on these questions in four group sessions, each focused on a different part of Unity's Ends ([bit.ly/uuEnds](http://bit.ly/uuEnds)). Team members also read, watch videos, journal, and meet in discussion groups. They work with the Double Helix Model of Faith Formation and Antiracist Multicultural Work ([bit.ly/uudoublehelix](http://bit.ly/uudoublehelix)) to develop practices that build connections between the spiritual foundation of their church home and the work they do as teams. We hope that this reflection helps grow their understanding of spiritual practice and the benefits of supporting each other.

**ES:** *What are the most joyous things that you've seen come out of the renewal process?*

**SM:** The process has generated a lot of wonderful dialogue within teams, and excitement for continuing to grow in this work. For instance, as a result of

working with the Double Helix Model, most team members have taken the Intercultural Development Inventory and are working on their individual Intercultural Development Plans.

Each team is looking more closely at its relations with community organizations. They're asking important questions about how those partnerships are or are not mutually beneficial, what each member wants from the relationship, and what team members' aspirations are for the partnerships. We all want these partnerships to be authentic relationships of mutuality, and to avoid anything that feels like "white saviorism." We also believe that these reflections and partnerships will help teams grow in their understanding of whiteness, of their own cultural framework. By interrogating our work we can transform how we engage with others, and it takes our understanding of how we are accountable to ourselves and to others in a much more nuanced, sophisticated direction.

Ultimately, I think that this process is making Unity's Ends more real and present in our day-to-day work. Being able to articulate who we are and why we do what we do is very powerful.

*Watch for Part II of "Renewal and Commitment," about how one team has been transformed by this process.*

# WELCOME NEWCOMERS / JOIN THE HERITAGE SOCIETY



## Welcome Words

**Laura Park, Director of Membership and Hospitality**

If you're new to Unity Church in the last two years, you'll want to note the return on April 13 of Wellspring Wednesday dinner and in-person programming (see pages 8-9). A wonderful way to

connect with other congregants, the Wellspring Wednesday experience includes dinner at 5:45 p.m., followed by a short chapel service, and then programming from 7:10 to 8:30 p.m. Come join us to learn, play, and practice together!

However you're connecting with Unity Church, we'd love to get to know you better. Stop by the Welcome Table in the main lobby before services or in the Parish Hall after services and tell us about yourself. I'm also available to answer your questions about congregational life and the pathways you might explore to know the church better and deepen your spiritual life. Contact me at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110. I look forward to meeting you!

## Pathway to Membership Classes

Explore a deeper connection to Unity Church and the commitments and opportunities of membership. Contact Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110 with questions or to participate.

**Finding Yourself at Unity • Sundays • 10:15-11:15 a.m. Gannett Room in-person and online at [bit.ly/fyuonline](https://bit.ly/fyuonline)**

Finding Yourself at Unity includes eight classes that you can attend in any order to better understand how Unity Church supports our faith journeys, our work to build Beloved Community, and our efforts to bless the world. April offerings:

April 3: Religious Education for Children, Youth, and Adults  
April 10: Pastoral Care  
April 17: Social Justice and Community Outreach  
April 24: Worship and the Liturgical Year

**Committing to Unity • Date TBD**

- *Develop personal practice to help you find and keep your balance.*
- *Develop the skills of intimacy that let you go deep quickly with strangers.*
- *Take the compassion that rises from doing the first two and use it to bless the world.*

This is how Unity Church talks about its expectations of membership. This session, for people ready to become members, explores the deeper meanings of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's need meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church.



## Join the Heritage Society

*Leave a Legacy for Future Generations at Unity Church*

**Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director**

Over the two past years of the pandemic, did you consider your plans for what legacy you'll leave behind? Perhaps you pondered your deepest values and refocused the expression of those values in your relationships with people and money.

Legacy giving is an intentional act that leaves a lasting legacy in your name and sustains the powerful work of this church for generations to come. A legacy gift is a designation from your estate to a charitable organization. Your "estate" is the sum of your assets, including property you own, insurance policies, retirement accounts, cash on hand, etc. Many of us have the resources to leave a legacy gift, regardless of the size of our estate.

By making a legacy gift to Unity Church, you can join over 200 others who have committed to supporting the church into the future. Legacy gifts have allowed us to grow our ministries, create innovative projects, strengthen our financial foundation, and live out our values in the larger world. Our annual Heritage Society Dinner on Friday evening, May 6, is the church's way of thanking those individuals who have made legacy gifts.

There are many gift possibilities. Each of these gifts allows flexibility, though some requirements apply, and you always retain the right to amend your estate plans.

- A charitable bequest in your last will and testament can be a specific amount or a percentage of what remains after providing for your heirs.
- A life insurance designation names Unity Church of St. Paul as owner or beneficiary of the policy.
- Retirement plan assets name the church as a beneficiary of an IRA, 401(k), 403(b), profit sharing or other retirement plan.
- Other types of legacy gifts include gift annuities, life-estate agreements and charitable remainder trusts.

If you have already made a legacy gift to Unity Church (but haven't told us!), if you are in the process of making a gift, or if you would like more information about legacy gift possibilities, please contact Barbara Hubbard, follow the link on our website, or pick up a legacy giving brochure. We have individuals on our Legacy Team who would be happy to advise you.

Join our Heritage Society!



# CONGREGATIONAL CARE



Dear Friends,

As we continue navigating this interim year together, with all its letting go and its making room for something new, I write to name the end date of my service as your associate minister of pastoral care. It will be June 30, a date that now seems far too soon but is a full year later than originally planned.

It has been 13 years since I arrived as a part-time, grant-funded literary minister, a role that I continued in a consulting capacity after the three-year grant ended. Then, three years ago, my role changed again with the transition in senior ministers. As Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs prepared for retirement, I rejoined the staff, taking on expanded ministerial responsibilities for two years – intended to cover one year before and one year after their departure. When Rob and Janne deferred their retirement due to the pandemic, my transitional role was also extended to cover an additional year of full-time ministry, a year that is now coming to a close.

The Executive Team is already working to choose a minister of pastoral care who will begin this summer, and I trust you will be in good hands. I also trust your own capacity for ministry “among.” You know how to care for each other, and that congregational care will continue, providing continuity and strength through every change in staffed leadership.

It has been an honor to be your minister, not only on the written page but in the richness of our shared congregational life – in pastoral care, the Chalice Circles and the Thresholds Group, the Community Outreach Ministry Teams, and Wellspring Wednesday programming, and more. The partnership I have experienced with you has been profound and beautiful. But my true call is to the literary ministry that stretches beyond this congregation, and I cannot serve both that ministry and the congregation’s needs. My new book, *Trusting Change*, will be published this summer (please join me for the book launch at Unity Church on Friday evening, June 17!). I need to step away from my congregational ministry with you in order to step back into the ministry of words and transformative stories and spiritual practice that has always been the work that I am called to do.

I will treasure my remaining months as your associate minister and hope to return in the future, again in a small consulting role, offering guided writing sessions and other small group ministries.

With deep gratitude, affection and love,

Karen

## To Request Congregational Care

Do you have a concern or joy you wish to have shared in Sunday worship? Would you like to request a call from the minister or a Care Associate? Can the Helping Hands program support you with meals, rides or other assistance? Please let us know. Use the form online at [unityunitarian.org/pastoral-care.html](http://unityunitarian.org/pastoral-care.html) or contact Rev. Karen Hering at [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456, x109.

## Support Groups

Contact Rev. Karen Hering ([karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org)) if you would like to participate in one of these support groups co-facilitated by the Associate Minister and a Care Associate. Groups may meet online or in person. Participants can come for a single session or return to the group as needed.

### Families Living with Mental Health Challenges

Support for those who have loved ones living with mental health challenges. Meets the first Saturday of the month at 9:30 a.m.

### Caregivers Group

For those supporting others as part-time or full-time caregivers of loved ones. Meets the third Thursday of the month at noon.

### Living With Grief Group

A supportive space for people navigating the many stages of grief and loss. Meets the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

## Helping Hands

The Helping Hands programs depend on church members to provide meals, rides, and other important practical assistance. Volunteers also bake and serve treats for memorial service receptions, and others knit comfort shawls that are given to people experiencing illness or loss. These programs will be recruiting additional volunteers this year, watch for more information or email Rev. Karen Hering at [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org) to indicate your interest.



# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAYS • DINNER RETURNS!

## Wellspring Wednesdays

Wellspring Wednesday gathers a multigenerational church community Wednesday evenings to nourish right and holy relationship among us and deepen our life of faith grounded in spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural work. The Wellspring Wednesday experience includes:

- Sharing meaningful time and, beginning April 13, nourishing food together.
- Brief multigenerational worship in the Ames chapel (returning April 13)
- Opportunities to play, learn, and practice with one another.

## Dinner and Chapel Service Return April 13

With the lifting of the church's mask requirement, April 13 marks the return of in-person dinners in the Parish Hall and our weekly chapel service in Ames Chapel. Here's what you can expect:

- 5:45 p.m.: Dinner prepared and served by our Food Ministry Teams. Menus are posted with the programming for each week. The cost for dinner is \$8/adults, \$4/child (ages 5-12), \$2/child (ages 2-4), and \$20/family. If you need financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner, please email Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org). If you plan to join us and need a special food preparation, please email [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org). Vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, dairy free options available. Salads can be served as a side or as your entree.
- 6:40 p.m.: Those gathered for dinner will be invited by song to Ames Chapel for our multigenerational chapel service.
- 7:05 p.m.: Our chapel service ends and it's time to head to programs.
- 7:10-8:30 p.m.: Weekly programs begin at 7:10 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. Childcare is available during this time and pre-registration is not required.

## Food Ministry Opportunities

Roll up your sleeves, slip on an apron, and join us in the kitchen for fun and fellowship. Email [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org) to sign up.

### Salad Making and Cookie Baking

Tuesdays, April 12–May 24 • 4:00-6:30 p.m.

- Chop salad ingredients, make fun toppings, taste test salad dressings, do a bit of baking.
- Why this opportunity rocks: free dinner! At the end of our time, we'll sit down and eat together.

### Wellspring Wednesday Afternoon

Wednesdays, April 13–May 25 • 4:00-5:30 p.m.

- Set the tables, ready the kitchen for serving, heat up our entrées.
- Who might like this opportunity: kids, families, and people with challenging workdays. This process is the same each time, and it is simple.

### Wellspring Wednesday Serve and Clean Up

Wednesdays, April 13–May 25 • 5:30-7:15 p.m.

- Serve food, talk with guests, clean-up
- What is fun about this option: you get to see the smiles and witness the energy of being in fellowship as a congregation!

April 6 • 7:00-8:30 PM

## Planning for What Comes After: Memorial Planning, Whole Body Donations, and Green Burial Options

Online

Register: <https://bit.ly/UCUGreenB>

As we make plans for the end-of-life, there are wills to consider, medical and financial executors to designate, and advance directives to communicate our wishes to family and medical personnel. Equally important are spiritual and ethical decisions around memorial services and final disposition of our physical bodies. What music or readings would we request in our memorial service and what do we hope will be named in the sharing of our life story, struggles and passions? What choices do we have in tending to our physical body after death that will create minimal ecological damage? What if I want to donate my body to science?

Rev. Karen Hering will offer guidance in naming your wishes for your own memorial service and three guest speakers, assembled by Unity's Act for the Earth Team, will discuss earth-friendly burial options: whole body donations, green cremation, green burial and options for final disposition.

Jean Buckley is a retired Environmental Health Educator who is passionate about reduce, reuse, recycle, even after death! She is a death educator and is active in the Land Conservation Natural Burial Project and a member of Minnesota Threshold Network.

Linnea Seidelmann of the University of Minnesota Medical School Anatomy Bequest Program is a donation coordinator working with individuals considering whole body donation and with next of kin after death has occurred. Linnea is encouraged about the trend toward death being mindfully planned.

Ursula Shutte, Advanced Funeral Planner with Bradshaw Funeral Homes, helps create intentional plans for final arrangements by providing options such as traditional services as well as more modern disposition methods.



# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAYS • CHAPEL SERVICE RETURNS!

April 13 • 7:00-8:30 PM

Dinner menu: enchilada bake, quinoa-lime-avocado salad, LeCookie!

## Introduction to the Indian Land Tenure Foundation

In-person in the Parish Hall and online via Zoom as a webinar. Register for the webinar here:

<https://bit.ly/UCULandTenure>

Join Unity's emerging Indigenous Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team in welcoming Cris



Stainbrook, president of the Indian Land Tenure Foundation (ILTF), for a presentation about the foundation's purpose and accomplishments over the 20 years of its existence. In efforts to reverse the effects of "Manifest Destiny," the ILTF helps Native American tribes across the U.S. to recover and control their rightful homelands. The ILTF supports and develops community-based projects that advance education, cultural awareness, economic opportunity, and legal reform. Come and learn about ILTF's efforts to protect the earth and preserve tribal land.

## A Spiritual Practice to Feed Your Soul: Lectio Divina

Online

Register: <https://bit.ly/Lectio21-22>

Following a centuries-old Benedictine spiritual practice of contemplative reading, meet online to share in Lectio Divina. In this invitation to receive the wisdom and gifts of poetry, each session engages the group in hearing a particular poem read aloud multiple times, listening for "what is found there." Rather than analyzing the poem, group members lift up what they heard and how the poem spoke to them. For those who love or are curious about poetry, this practice is a rich way to receive its gifts in a small group setting. Led by Shelley Butler. Drop-in attendance is welcome.

April 20 • 7:00-8:30 PM

Dinner menu: grilled cheese, tomato soup, dill and cucumber salad, dessert

## Antiracism Literacy Partners

Online

Register: <https://bit.ly/ALPap22>

What does it take to be racially literate and engaged in antiracism in a day-to-day way? Where do we find resources and support in our ongoing learning about systemic racism and the work of dismantling it? Whether you attended previous sessions or are just checking it out now, this program is an easy entry into finding antiracism books, podcasts, and videos, as well as discussion partners for talking about them. Come to choose a resource, sign up for a buddy or small group, and receive discussion guidelines. This program is part of Unity's Finding Our Next Right Action efforts.

## Open Page Writing Session With Eyes Wide Open: Writing about Witness

In-person in the Anderson Library; no registration required.



Beholding the world also means bearing witness to its sorrows and injustices. How do we listen with "eyes wide open," as the poet Sam Hamill says, learning what we need to know to find our way to peace and hope and justice? Led by Rev. Karen Hering.

## Board Game Night

In-person in the Center Room; no registration required.

Open to everyone; kids are welcome with their adult(s)! We'll have a variety of board games available for ages 10 and up that are easy to learn, or bring a favorite board game that you would like to play. Bring a board game for the younger set, too, if an adult comes with it to facilitate the game.

April 27 • 7:00-8:30 PM

Dinner menu: chili, baked potatoes, chopped salad, dessert

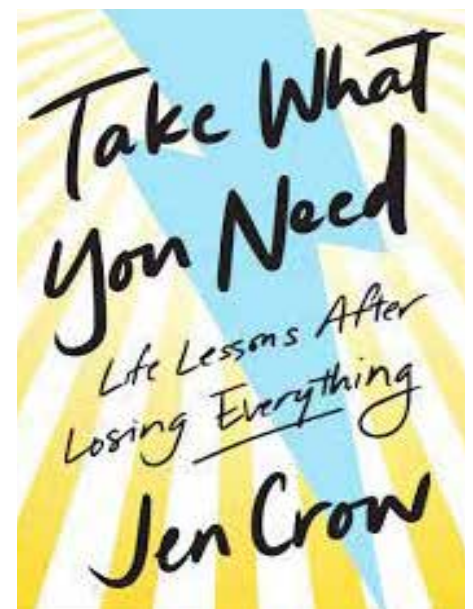
## Rev. Jen Crow Reading from *Take What You Need: Life Lessons After Losing Everything*

In-person in the Parish Hall and online via Zoom as a webinar. Register for the webinar here:

<https://bit.ly/UCUJenCrow>



*Take What You Need* is an extraordinary book about resilience and love — both a singular and a universal story. The Rev. Jen Crow is Senior Minister at First Universalist Church in Minneapolis and our UUA ministerial search/transition coach. Book signing to follow reading.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Voiding Votes in Minnesota?

### Oh, It's Happening.

#### Affordable Housing Outreach Ministry Team

As this newsletter goes to print, state Sen. Draheim is working SF 3414 through the legislature. He wants to prohibit rent stabilization in Minnesota and his bill is retroactive to November 1, 2021 — repealing more than 100,000 votes in the Twin Cities. It is a dangerous precedent to void verified votes in the U.S., regardless of how we may feel about rent stabilization.

Unity's Affordable Housing Team asks you to email your state Senator and tell them it is appalling, dangerous (whatever word fits for you) that Sen Draheim introduced this bill and was able to pass it out of the Senate Housing and Finance Committee. When voting rights are being suppressed around the U.S., how is it possible that our votes can be repealed and voided in Minnesota by a powerful few? This bill must be voided, not our votes. Questions? Contact Dayna Kennedy at [daynamelissa@icloud.com](mailto:daynamelissa@icloud.com).

## The Food Shelf Needs Your Help

Let's celebrate more people returning to services and meetings by showing our support for Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf. Please bring two or more items each time you come to church. During February we collected 120 pounds of food and there is still a great need for help in our neighborhood.



April suggested items include garbage bags, dish soap (24 oz. or less), dish pods, laundry soap/pods (32 oz. or less) and bleach (32 oz. or less). And, food items are always needed. Thank you!

## Gun Sense Outreach Ministry Team

*"Our weak gun laws have led to an epidemic of gun violence in the U.S."*

— John Marty, member of the Minnesota Senate, from the Star Tribune, February 23, 2022. Senator Marty is working legislatively, please let him know of your support.

Over four years ago, out of concern for gun violence, the Gun Sense Ministry Team formed at Unity Church. Please join us in searching out and working for change. Information, questions, a Zoom link for our meetings, and access to free gun locks is available by contacting Richard Birger at [rbirger@yahoo.com](mailto:rbirger@yahoo.com). Our next meeting is Tuesday, April 12, 4:30-5:30 p.m., on Zoom. Join us!

## Climate Justice Call for Action

### Act for the Earth Outreach Ministry Team

Join Unity's Act for the Earth Team (AFE) on two climate justice campaigns which need the immediate attention of the whole congregation!

#### 1. Pass three climate justice bills during the 2022 legislative session.

1. The Minnesota House Climate Action Caucus Budget Plan: This plan would spend one billion of the state's nine billion budget surplus on climate-related investments. <https://bit.ly/climatemn>
2. Climate investments in the Bonding Bill: The governor's bonding proposal includes \$940 million in projects to help prevent, adapt, and mitigate our changing climate. <https://bit.ly/mncapinvest>
3. Environmental Justice/Cumulative Impacts Bill: This bill addresses the cumulative impacts of pollution on BIPOC and low-income communities. <https://bit.ly/HF3146mn>

**ACTION:** Email your Senator and Representative on this easy MNIPL Advocacy Alert link: <https://bit.ly/MNIPLaction>

**ACTION:** Join AFE members in Zoom meetings with our legislators about these proposals: <https://bit.ly/afeactionsignup>.

#### 2. Halt the Huber Lumber Mill project in northern Minnesota until:

- Tribal treaty rights are fully protected
- Comprehensive Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is completed

On the heels of Line 3 comes another climate justice travesty — dramatically increased logging for an industrial mill producing an updated version of plywood. The project threatens to:

- Permanently harm tribal hunting, fishing and gathering rights, spiritual practices and tribal economies for five northern Minnesota tribes.
- Clear thousands of acres of intact forests each year that are needed more than ever to slow climate change.
- Subsidize an industrial plant which will become the 11th largest emitter of greenhouse gasses in Minnesota.

The project must be halted until full consultation with tribal nations ensures their treaty rights are confirmed and forests, air, water and health are protected for the Anishinabe and all of us.

**ACTION:** Sign the petition from AFE's partner Honor the Earth and demand an EIS for the proposed Huber Lumber Mill: <https://bit.ly/hubermillpetition>.

**Planning for What Comes After: Memorial Planning, Whole Body Donations and Green Burial Options**  
Wednesday, April 6, 7:00 p.m., see page 8 for details.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Connecting Cochabamba and Kyiv

Patricia Ohmans, Mano a Mano Outreach Ministry Team Member



Sorting supplies at the Mano a Mano warehouse: Denise Dejarlais, Segundo Velasquez, Ray Wiedmeyer, Mary Ann McLeod and Maria Caliendo.

Kyiv, Ukraine, and Cochabamba, Bolivia, are 7,500 miles apart, but they are linked through a tiny, mighty non-profit right here in St. Paul. In the next month, Mano a Mano International Partners will be shipping critical health supplies to both cities.

In Cochabamba, shipments of surplus walkers, wheelchairs, and school furniture help to equip the clinics and schools that Mano a Mano builds. In grim contrast, the bandages and other wound care supplies being collected for Ukraine will find a different use in Kyiv's urban battlegrounds. Funds donated by Unity Church members during this year's Easter services will support both types of shipments — and more.

Since 2004, when Mano a Mano was born at the kitchen table of longtime Unity Church members Segundo and Joan Velasquez, the organization has evolved steadily. For many years, Mano a Mano focused exclusively on Bolivia, Segundo's native country and the place where he and Joan met. Lately, that has changed, with shipments of surplus to Jordan, Cameroon, Honduras and now, Ukraine.

"These days we have the luxury of being able to share the surplus we collect from local hospitals with organizations serving countries all over the world," reports Segundo. "When we were asked to organize a pallet of wound care supplies for Ukraine, of course we said yes."

Through complex partnerships with sister entities in Bolivia, Mano a Mano has built a network of over 176 community health clinics as well as 66 schools with on-site housing for teachers. Mano a Mano has opened 1,400 miles of roads to connect remote villages with larger towns and services. Mano a Mano's water projects support food security and drinking water for 85,000 subsistence farmers in the high Andes, while the organization's Center for Ecological Agriculture in Cochabamba trains farmers in sustainable agricultural practices.

Many Unity Church members have traveled to Bolivia to observe the work of Mano a Mano's partner organizations first hand. On a typical trip, travelers tour clinics in poor urban *barrios* and remote rural areas, see roads that Mano a Mano has carved into mountainsides, and visit water reservoirs that help farm families increase their meager incomes. Visits to the Center for Ecological Agriculture are a highlight of most trips.

Unity's Community Outreach Ministry Team for Mano a Mano supports the work of the organization with handicraft sales, supply sorting days, and fundraising. The team hopes to sponsor a trip to Bolivia in later 2022. To learn more or to join the Mano a Mano Ministry Team, contact Ann Mabbott at [annsmabbott@gmail.com](mailto:annsmabbott@gmail.com).

## Save These Dates

*Moving Forward Together  
to End Systemic Racism*



### Pilgrimage from the State Capital to George Floyd Square

Saturday, May 21

Morning through afternoon

For additional information, visit  
[www.heywhitepeople.org](http://www.heywhitepeople.org).

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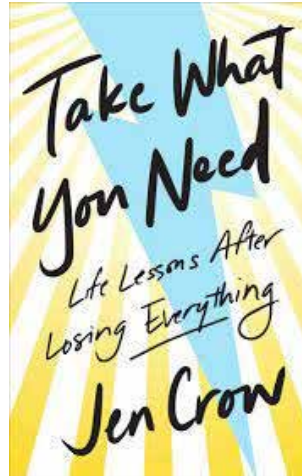
# LIBRARY-BOOKSTALL / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS



## Rev. Jen Crow's New Book and Café Unity Revised Edition

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

Many of us at Unity Church recognize Rev. Jen Crow from her warm smile and wisdom, from serving as Senior Minister at First Universalist in Minneapolis, serving as the first Hallman Intern, and now serving as Unity's UUA transitions coach through the ministerial search process. What you may not know is that she not only survived but thrived after one life challenge after another, including growing up with a mentally ill mother, achieving sobriety, and holding body, soul, and family together following a "morally neutral" house fire. Jen will be reading from her new book on Wednesday, April 27 — see page 9 for details.



### **Take What You Need: Life Lessons After Losing Everything**

is much more than just a remarkable memoir, though it is that, but it includes hard-won insight on resilience and moving through loss, companionship for our own losses, and gratitude for the transformative power of love. Jen's brave and candid story will make you laugh at times while breaking your heart at others, but as Jen says, if you can keep your heart open, "it can heal from the inside out." If you are low on hope, she says, "here — take my courage, borrow my faith, let in my love. I've been given so much I have plenty to spare;" you can feel her reaching out with a huge and open heart.

I'm telling you: read this book! You may not realize it, but like a long, loving hug, you need it; we all do.

### **Café Unity Revised Edition: Friday April 22, at 7:00 p.m.**

Two years ago, we held "Café Unity at Home." Last year was "Café Unity at Home (again)." This year, **we're back in the Parish Hall** but in the best of all possible worlds because if you can't make it in person, you can view it live on Zoom; thus, "Café Unity Revised Edition."

Café Unity is a showcase of Unity's musical and literary talent. To sign up to play music, sing, or read your original work, contact us here by April 20:

[library@unityunitarian.org](mailto:library@unityunitarian.org).

To join the in-person audience for a cavalcade of Unity's talented congregants, just come to the Parish Hall on Friday, April 22, at 7:00 p.m. (free, open to all). To view the live event online, register here: <https://bit.ly/CafeUnity22>.

### **New in The Justice Database: Unicorn Riot**

Unicorn Riot is a non-profit media organization of journalists that amplifies stories of social and environmental struggles. Find articles, videos, and live-streamed coverage of social justice actions and stories. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/JusticeData>.

## Fellowship Groups

For more conversation about getting connected, contact Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).

**Afterthoughts** offers time immediately following the 9:00 service to discuss the service.

**Caregivers Group** meets on the third Thursday of the month.

**Evergreen Quilters:** This quilting group meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month.

**Families Living with Mental Health Challenges** meets the first Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

**Five Animal Kung Fu** meets Saturdays, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

**Living With Grief Group** meets on the third Tuesday of the month.

**Men's Breakfast Group** meets monthly on the first Saturday for breakfast from 8:30-10:00 a.m.

**Men's Coffee Group** meets every other Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. for light-hearted conversation.

**Men's Conversation Group** meets Mondays, April 4 and 18, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Men's Retirement Circle:** Monday, April 11 and 25, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

**New Look at the Bible** meets the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

**Recovery from White Conditioning** meets Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

**Textile Arts Group** meets online the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc.

**Unity Book Club** meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. April 12 discussion: *Marcel's Letters* by Carolyn Porter

**Women In Retirement** meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

# SPIRITUAL PRACTICE / PARISH HALL ARTISTS

## Sangha Practice

At the heart of Buddhist practice is the commitment to awaken — to step into our doubts and predicaments and hear the roaring of life at the still point of a turning universe. Through weekly practice of meditation, we discover a clarity of mind attentive and accountable to each moment of life's flow, and touch the mystery of our original face. This group is open to anyone interested, no experience necessary, and instructions will be provided. Tuesdays, 4:30-6:00 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. Questions? Contact [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org).

## Centering Qigong

**Tuesday, April 19 • Noon-1:00 p.m. • Foote Room**

Register: <https://bit.ly/aprilqigong>

Feel the support of the earth beneath your feet! Find your center between heaven and earth with techniques and meditations that help us be comfortable in the present moment. This in-person class includes Tai Ji, Qigong, meditation and poetry. The practice is a safe and gentle form of exercise for people of all ages. No experience necessary. Wear comfortable shoes and loose clothing if possible. A free will offering will be taken for teacher Lisa Schlingerman.



## Lectio Divina

**Sunday, April 24 • 4:30 p.m. • Online**

Register: <https://bit.ly/LectioSun>

Following a centuries-old Benedictine spiritual practice of contemplative reading, meet online to share in Lectio Divina. In this invitation to receive the wisdom and gifts of poetry, each session engages the group in hearing a particular poem read aloud, listening for “what is found there.” Led by Lisa Wersal, this practice is a rich way to receive the gifts of poetry in a small group setting. Drop-in attendance is welcome. Information about Wednesday's Lectio practice is available on page 9.

## Mentoring at Unity

Would you welcome having a guide to congregational life at Unity Church? Request a mentor! Your mentor will meet with you at least once a month face-to-face and be available for ongoing questions and advice. You can decide together what connection would be most helpful. You might attend Sunday services together or meet to discuss Unitarian Universalism and your spiritual journeys, or attend a church event together, or find another way to connect. Each pair makes a commitment to work together for at least six months. If you have questions, or would like to request a mentor, please email Laura Park, Director of Membership and Hospitality, [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).

## It's a New Dawn and a New Day

### Evergreen Quilters April Exhibit and Sale

This year the Evergreen Quilters will not be having a silent auction. Instead, they will be selling their quilts and fabric art in the Parish Hall for fixed prices. These pieces can also be seen online. You will be able to purchase any piece you want by putting a sold sticker on the label hanging next to the quilt in the Parish Hall and filling in a purchase form, writing out a check, putting those in an envelope and placing it in the Art Team's mailbox in the copy room. The purchase forms and envelopes are available in the box hanging on the southwest wall of the Parish Hall.



All of the artists exhibiting in the Parish Hall during April are members of Evergreen Quilters, one of the church's social justice outreach groups. Evergreen Quilters initially formed as a fundraising arm of the Evergreen Committee that provided food and meals for the Jeremiah Transitional Housing Program. They have since expanded their efforts to include more non-profits. Evergreen has been doing this work for more than twenty years.

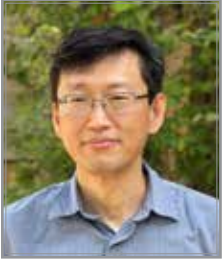
One hundred percent of the money raised by Evergreen Quilters goes to Project Home shelter for families, Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf, and the Jeremiah Program — a transitional housing program for young mothers and their children needing temporary housing, education and job training.

In addition to the quilts for sale during the month of April, Evergreen Quilters will offer smaller items for immediate purchase on Sunday, April 24. Later in the year a large quilt created by the quilters will be raffled off.

The quilters also work on several One More Redeemer baby/youth quilts for our Celebration of New Lives ceremonies and occasional quilts to honor members of the church community.

Evergreen Quilters welcomes all interested people to join the group which meets at Unity Church on the second Tuesday of each month, and at a senior living residence on the fourth Saturday of each month. Contact Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760 with questions and to confirm the date and time of the next meeting.

Come meet the artists at a reception on Friday evening, April 8, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall.



## Pitter-pattering Questions

[...like raindrops on the window, and little feet running through the house]

Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation

What if our skin is inextricably bound to the skin of the world? Our sense of personhood and construction of identity only as complete and coherent as our unbounded kinship with the earth, water, sky, plants, creatures, and geography itself as organizers and signifiers of identity. What then happens when land and indigenous bodies are misperceived and misappropriated by colonial powers as merely raw undeveloped resources? The trees, forests, arrangement of days and nights, and the delicate ordering of reality unseen and unwitnessed by a European mind detached from deep participation with the earth. What happens when such relations that bear witness to sacred links interconnecting indigenous identities with geography and animals are severed, commodified, and forgotten as living organizers of identity? What is it to be an Indian then?

*I shall tell you, said a young Iroquois, rising to his feet at a conference of native scholars... Once, just after graduating from college, he went fishing with his uncle [who] casually observed that, with that fancy degree and all, a young man must know who he is now. When the young nephew matter-of-factly replied that he was who his name said he was, the older man was not impressed. "Yeah. That's who you are, I guess." Pause. "Is that all?" Sensing he was being set up for something, the young man expertly traced*

*his parentage on both sides and then ran back through his clan. [But still sensing that his response was lacking, he angrily asked] "Well, who the hell am I?" The older man calmly replied, "I think you know but I will tell you. If you sit here, and look out right over there; look at that. The rocks: the way they are. The trees and the hills all around you. Right where you're on, it's water... You're just like that rock... You're the same as the water, this water... You are the ridge, this ridge. You were here in the beginning. You're as strong as they are... that's who you are. That's your mother, and that's you. Don't forget. (from *The Way of the Human Being*, Calvin Luther Martin)*

To forget how we as human creatures are bound to the earth and each other is the devastation effected with the age of discovery and colonialism. What was left from the disruption and fragmentation of deep identity was the constriction of identity to the corporeal body — of identity now carried mainly on bodies, and the human skin tasked to speak perversely in caricature — with the *white* body of the colonizer as the signified and signifying reality of dominant power. What alternatives could come from colonialism's aggressive desacralization of other worlds, its stunted moral vision and derogatory optic that failed to witness the integrity of the other and imagine otherwise? What other form of perception and witness was available to whiteness when it went beyond its own geography and identity?

Much more than an embodiment of strident conviction and belief, bearing witness never forgets itself as a form of moral reasoning, never done by forcibly constraining other moral agents as it strives after *truthfulness* than a claim to some *absolute truth*. Bearing witness chooses to work not from universals but from particulars, struggling toward larger truths realized only in mutuality and humility, and however counterintuitive, knowing that its integrity is entirely contingent upon its vulnerability. So when the world at this moment feels like a violent contest in which the most clamant voices or greatest might claim victory, and our children and youth search for generative signifiers of their identity, what will they see in the cloud of witnesses surrounding them? On what ground and geography of faith will their identities grow, extend into the world, and with creative authority, bear witness to sacred connections and alternative orderings of reality that yet remain unseen and unwitnessed? What else is the church if not that form of perception and witness made available to our children, for wonder, open-hearted engagement, and courageous action calling them and all of us to imagine otherwise?

*Sharing questions that pitter-patter across our sacred journeys...*

# MUSIC MINISTRY



## Music Notes

**Laura Potratz, Organist and Youth Music Coordinator**

My first and foremost Unity Church joy this year has been a launch of the newest generation of Unity's Youth Choir. As I write this, they are eagerly looking forward to presenting their music for the first time as an ensemble. Singers and instrumentalists in grades 6-9 have been meeting on Sunday mornings since September learning deeper breathing, silly sounds (that we all used to know how to make when we were a year old), and songs old and new, often with piano and other instruments. We are looking forward to Foote Sunday and, if all goes well enough in our convulsing world, to singing with South African visitors in early summer. New members are welcome at any time: just show up in the Ames Chapel at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday!

I also want to take few moments to write with my organist hat on. Though I have been Unity's organist for coming up on three years, I have led a parallel existence to most of the congregation: the hundreds of times I have walked into and out of the building it has been pandemically empty, and even when we are gathered for services in person, I am most often hidden away behind the bit of organ on the loft railing (called a Rückpositiv for the word nerds and music history geeks among us). As I've practiced on the organ and taught organ lessons during the week over these quiet last couple years, I've marked time by watching the Sanctuary walls and baseboards be repainted, carefully and painstakingly covering the many smudges and scrapes along the aisles, the ceiling stains removed on high scaffolding,

the floor concrete replaced while the organ sits wrapped in plastic, the carpet updated while sections of sticky adhesive lie open to be avoided, new technology hefted onto tables and screwed into beams, impossible light bulbs changed, and the room come to look sharper and cleaner than I would imagine it has since its last major remodel. The space is deeply familiar to me. Yet as the building has populated increasingly these last few months, people have stopped me on Sundays to get a good look at my unfamiliar staff name tag and sometimes ask me if I am the "new \_\_\_\_\_" (fill in the blank of any of a half-dozen former staff people, several of whom I know personally and/or professionally and all of whom I respect and admire). No, by the way, I am not; I am purely Laura, a human being just like you, not defined by the Unity Church institution.

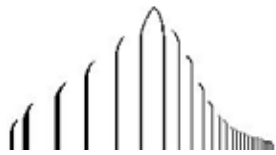
I have also become increasingly aware of people who love organ music, and people who hate it, some probably for the strong, even visceral association the organ has with certain religious environments, with which I fully sympathize. If I had known when I was twenty that I would spend a career struggling with religious stigma due to the instrument I trained on, would I have still completed organ degrees and diplomas? Probably not. This conundrum plagues me also as I finish my term on the local board of the American Guild of Organists where a recent national leadership conference online had me in break-out groups where a Christian worldview and the use of biblical authority were assumed. All because of the instrument I play? Really? It's a lot to unpack within myself, but I want to assert that, while the mere

sound of any organ might be a turn-off to some of you reading, the organ's world is expanding. Even if out of pure practicality much organ music continues to have ties to specifically-Christian use, it has become exponentially easier over the last ten years to find published organ scores by a wide variety of human beings. So listen for the Brazilian hymns, the Taiwanese melodies, the centuries-old convent music from what would come to be called Mexico, and the Nigerian folk tunes, because I'm grateful to have a place where I can delve into the next era of organ music and share it with you!

**Arthur Foote  
Music Sunday**

**May 1, 2022**

**9:00 and 11:00 a.m.  
Unity Church Sanctuary**



# UNITY CHURCH—UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
Business Entrance: 732 Holly Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-228-1456 • fax: 651-228-0927 • [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) • [unity@unityunitarian.org](mailto:unity@unityunitarian.org)

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## Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, April 2 • 8:30-10:00 a.m. • Parish Hall

Please join us for pancakes and fellowship to celebrate the reopening of food ministry at Unity Church. It is an all you can eat affair with fluffy pancakes and maple syrup, sausages, and hot coffee. Donations will be gratefully accepted to cover the cost of supplies. This breakfast is brought to you by the Men's Breakfast Team, led by Tom Zell.

# CHALICE CAMP

**Week 1: July 11-15**  
**Week 2: July 18-22**  
**Monday-Friday**  
**8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.**

Chalice Camp is a unique and fun experience for children and youth ages five and up! It offers an opportunity for children to build deeper connections with each other, Unity Church, Unitarian Universalism, and the larger community, all while enjoying the best parts of summer camp!

Details and registration at <https://bit.ly/chalicecamp>

## Join Unity's Heritage Society

*Leave a legacy for future generations.*

Details on page 6.

