

commUNITY

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UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

February 2009

Prayer

A reflection from Karen Hering, Assistant Literary Minister

Each month worship, religious education, community outreach ministry, covenant groups, and Wellspring Wednesday programs will offer opportunities to contemplate, consider, contend with and discuss an intergenerational curriculum based on monthly themes. Our hope is that this approach will bind us more closely together and inform our lives in positive ways. February's theme is... Prayer.

I was sitting in the back of the hospital chapel, tears rolling silently down my cheeks, when a woman entered behind me, passed to the front of the room and, facing eastward, unfolded her rug. She then folded her knees and her prayer tumbled out in words foreign to my ear but so familiar to my heart. When she had finished, she stood, folded her rug and passed by me again on her way out. Our eyes met and I said, "Thank you. Your prayer gave me strength."

We Unitarian Universalists take an open approach to prayer. We follow no prescribed practice, no certain dictates of when to pray or how, nor do we even agree about whether to name it as prayer. "There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground," the Sufi poet Rumi said many centuries ago, and we cite this quote often for the historical permission it grants. Sitting side by side on Sunday in the prayerful silence of our worship services, we seldom if ever kneel; but we do make room for hundreds of ways to pray with deep respect for the diverse beliefs and practices of our members and with deep awareness of the diverse reasons that call us to prayer.

Still, questions about prayer hover around our plentitude of practices. What does it mean to pray? And to whom are we praying? Is it prayer if it's delivered in an envelope that bears no address? Is it prayer if the message

has no words? Is it prayer if it's lifted up on the currents of our doubts and questions instead of being carried off by the sturdy messenger of belief?

If we listed all the forms that prayer can take – petitions and gratitude, praise and lamentation, confessions and indictments, wailing words and silent breath, bended knees and wakeful walking, a listening ear, an open heart, a quiet space, a widening circle – we would find no shortage of ways to pray.

"To pray you open your whole self," says the poet Joy Harjo, "to sky, to earth, to sun, to moon, to one whole voice that is you. And know there is more that you can't see, can't hear, can't know except in moments steadily growing, and in languages that aren't always sound but other circles of motion. Like eagle that Sunday morning over Salt River. Circles in blue sky, in wind, swept our hearts clean with sacred wings."

A common element of prayer, no matter how it is done, is humility and surrender, the presentation of our hearts to be swept clean. Opening our whole selves to "one whole voice that is you" and knowing too that there is more we cannot see or hear or know "except in moments steadily growing."

Prayer is not a rational proposition, and this can make it difficult in our age of reason. As the Unitarian theologian James Luther Adams warned, we must be wary of rationalism and moralism unaccompanied by an open heart. "They can," he said "give us a 'poise' that freezes the knees and keeps us erect . . . in face of the divine demand for repentance, for change of heart and mind."

Perhaps the simplest definition, then, is that prayer is a posture. Whether standing or prostrate, it is a position of humility and openness, a posture of the heart. An acknowledgement of all that we do not know or understand or even believe.

Prayer can be like the eagle circling overhead, rising higher and higher, until that one instant, with one more push of its wings, when it passes beyond our vision from below and disappears into thin air. Even though we know it's there, we cannot see it. Blue sky closes in around it.

"Prayer is circumference we may not reach around," writes the poet Jeanne Lohmann, "space for all we cannot hold, the rim of love toward which we lean."

Worship Theme Resources

BOOKS

The Energy of Prayer

by Thich Nhat Hanh

After the Ecstasy, the Laundry

by Jack Kornfield

The Soul is Here for Its Own Joy: Sacred Poems from Many Cultures

Robert Bly, editor

BOOKS FOR FAMILIES

A Child's Book of Blessings and Prayers Collected and Introduced by Eliza Blanchard. Interfaith prayers, ideally suited for UU families.

The Monk Who Grew Prayer by Claire Brandenburg. A sweet example of "prayer without ceasing": a Christian monk blends prayer in with his daily tasks like chopping wood.

A World of Prayers by Jeremy Brooks. A dreamily illustrated collection of prayers organized into categories like, "Mealtime Graces" and "Bedtime Prayers."

Grandad's Prayers of the Earth by Douglas Wood. A grandfather shows his grandson how the whole earth prays by offering its beauty.

Resources for parents and children, see pages 12-13.

JUST WORDS / WHEEL OF LIFE

Just Words

When 9/11 occurred attendance at churches, synagogues, temples and meditation centers increased. At that same time, Rick Heydinger, a member here at Unity, sent me an article about church attendance after the Titanic went down—proportionally the highest church attendance in the history of our country. The question I had in reading the article was what about the following Sunday, when things felt like they were beginning to go back to “normal.” Did those people find the answers they were looking for or did the answers remain illusive and therefore unsatisfying? The fact of the matter is, most of the visitors didn’t come back and the regular attendees went back to their schedules—two or three Sundays a month or so. Disasters and times of uncertainty and doubt get us to church, but they don’t keep us there.

In a crisis it is human nature to search for answers, to reach out to experts—anything to relieve our stress and uncertainty. The current economic downturn is no exception. We are seeing more visitors here. But unfortunately the economic downturn is not a crisis that is going to go away soon. It is here to stay for some time, though I have no interest in speculating how long. I am interested, however, in how it may shape our priorities and change our attitudes.

I know that many people are facing difficult situations—job losses and down sizing, loss of benefits and other hardships. I do not want to discount these difficulties, but I do want to lift up that difficult economic times create opportunities in our lives. They invite us to get off the material appetite diet and to think about what is truly important to us, to do an inventory of not what we possess, but rather what we are. Times like these call for creative solutions and encourage us to think about what we value most in our lives.

It is not a surprise to me that during tough economic times, people head to church. In times of confusion and uncertainty we look for reassurance and comfort. With ambiguity and paradox at the heart of our faith, what we provide here are not conventional answers. But I do know “the answers” we offer can provide succor in times of defeat, comfort and connection in times of disconnection and dislocation, and a firm foundation from which to live in the world. May those already here and those visiting us also find this to be true!

Janne Eller-Isaacs

The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

William Robert Bray
May 6, 1920 – December 20, 2008

Jean West
February 26, 1913 – January 9, 2009

A memorial service will be held for Jean West on Saturday, February 7, at 2:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary at Unity Church.

If you would like an announcement included in The Wheel of Life, please contact Martha Tilton at the Church Office at 651-228-1456 x105 or martha@unityunitarian.org.

Unity Church Directories

Photo Directories are still available and will be distributed on a “first-come, first-served” basis in the Parish Hall following services on Sundays during February (while supplies last).

Church Office Closed

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, February 16, in honor of Presidents Day.

Unity Church Archive Team Now Forming

If you would like to pour over church pictures, sermons of ministers past, and documents important to the history of Unity Church — here is your chance to join the Unity Church Archive Team.

Contact Barbara Hubbard at the Church Office for more information about the Archive Team and this important church ministry.

commUNITY is the church newsletter of Unity Church–Unitarian. It is published monthly, except the month of July. Deadlines are the 14th of each month. Subscriptions are free to those who make pledges to Unity Church, and are available to others for \$30 per year.

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FEBRUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION

Sunday services are held at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. except where noted.
Sermon podcasts and archives are available on line at www.unityunitarian.org.

February Worship Calendar

February 1

The Taxonomy of Prayer

— Janne Eller-Isaacs

What in the world does the role of prayer play in the life of someone who if they do pray, prays To Whom It May Concern? What do prayer and meditation have in common? Janne and Worship Associate Jean Olson will explore the role of prayer in different world religions and in our own religious lives, even as religious liberals.

February 8

When Words Get in the Way

— Rob Eller-Isaacs

Prayer is a state of being. Practice is what gets us there. Words can make it hard to pray especially when it matters what they mean. Rob and Worship Associate Nick Rath will offer this second service on prayer.

February 15

Praying into the Center

—Ruth MacKenzie

Since Copernicus displaced the earth from the center of the universe, we find ourselves increasingly dwarfed by the infinite creation of expanding space. How, and who, and where is God in this vastness? Marjorie Suchocki asks, "Can we really believe that creatures such as our sorry selves in the littleness of our histories are invited by the creator of the universe to pray?" We will explore an old image of an ever-present God within a new understanding of space and time.

February 22

How Did They Pray?

— Rob Eller-Isaacs

We are not the first doubters to struggle with prayer. Our spiritual ancestors thought deeply about many of the same questions with which we still wrestle. And they found some answers. Rob and Janne will offer insight gleaned from the writings of Carolyn Dall, Margaret Fuller and James Freeman Clarke. Sarah Pradt will join them as Worship Associate.

Offering Recipients

Each Sunday, seventy percent of the offering collection is given to non-profit organizations within the larger community. The remaining thirty percent supports the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church.

February 1 — Heart of the Beast Puppet Theater

The Heart of the Beast Puppet Theatre provides community theatre, produces original plays and commission spectacles, and teaches workshops in mask making and peacemaking throughout the Twin Cities area. This year marks the 35th anniversary of their beloved annual Minneapolis May Day Parade in Powderhorn Park. Many Unity Church children and adults have participated in performances, puppet making workshops and the parade. HOTB generously loaned Unity Church a spirit of the river puppet for the September 7, 2008 service at Harriet Island.

February 8 — The Community Sharing Fund of The St. Paul Foundation

In 1980, The St. Paul Foundation created the Community Sharing Fund as a response to unmet needs of low-income people by providing emergency grants of \$50 to \$500 to individuals and families in the East Metro area. The Community Sharing Fund is unique because it is a one-of-a-kind resource that works collaboratively with a network of front-line staff at respected social service organizations that identify individuals who are in need. The St. Paul Foundation grants go directly to the community service provider to distribute to vendors (i.e. landlord, automotive shop etc.) on behalf of their clients. Many Unity Church members donate to the Community Sharing Fund and Unity Church member, Sally Seiberlich, is on staff at The St. Paul Foundation.

February 15 — Goodwill-Easter Seals St. Paul Medical Equipment Program

The St. Paul Medical Equipment Loan Program lends equipment, such as wheelchairs, walkers, bathtub and transfer benches, commodes and specialized children's equipment to people during times of crisis. They primarily serve low-income, elderly individuals who need relief from temporary or permanent disability or a worsening chronic condition. Last year, they served 5, 123 people with loans of more than 8,881 pieces of adaptive medical equipment. Most who use this service need equipment on a temporary basis and it is free-of-charge.

February 22 — Artesanos Andinos

Artesanos Andinos is a cooperative of indigenous Bolivian women and men who weave textiles using traditional Andean motifs, materials and methods. Based in Cochabamba, Bolivia, the cooperative members are committed to preserving traditional textile handiwork. The organizing principle of Artesanos Andinos is that the weavers must receive a fair price for their work and products and cooperative members themselves make major decisions about how they will be compensated for their work. Melissa Draper, the cooperative's US representative is involved in the upcoming Samuel Morgan forum "Weaving a Fair Trade" on Saturday, February 21, at Unity Church. Unity Church member Patricia Ohmans became involved with Artesanos Andinos during her stay in Bolivia in 2008.

Want to Nominate the Plate?

Have your favorite non-profit organization be a Sunday offering recipient. Go to www.unityunitarian.org/givingawaytheplate.htm. The form is also at the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall on Sundays.

Board of Trustees

from Laura Smidzik, Trustee

I was recently in California celebrating my mother's 75th birthday. One morning my mother stated that we were to meet at 4:00 p.m. for show tunes on the rocks along the shore of the Pacific Ocean. Those of us who were willing gathered and sang loudly, despite the scorn of our teen and tween-aged children. What joy and satisfaction! As we turned to West Side Story we were sure to pay reverence to each song. "Maria, say it loud and there's music playing, say it soft and it's almost like praying. Maria, I'll never stop saying Maria..."

Inspired by the beauty of the ocean, the smell of the air, and the joy of song singing with my family felt like a form of prayer. I feel a similar sense of communal prayer during Sunday worship at Unity. Times of song and moments of silence bring the holy into the sanctuary. Prayer gives me hope, inspiration, purpose, and most importantly, an opportunity to listen deeply.

Mohandas Gandhi said, "Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul." The ends statements, which were created from listening deeply to people who are part of the beloved community, reflect our longings and act as a prayer for the future of Unity. Reading the three sections of the end statements with "we pray," creates a purposeful calling for the board and staff of Unity. We pray the people of Unity Church—Unitarian have a deeply meaningful, transforming, liberal religious experience; we pray Unity Church is a radically hospitable, spiritually vital and supportive community; and we pray Unity Unitarian is a visible leader and partner, making a positive impact in our neighborhood and in the world. What powerful prayers!

The ministers and staff of Unity report back to the board monthly with the ends statements, your prayers guiding their work. The board also refers to the ends for its goals and direction. Ultimately, it will be all of us who answer our prayers for Unity. They are as bold and beautiful as the waves on the Pacific and as soft and as moving as our moments of silence in the sanctuary.

From the Anti-Racism Leadership Team

Anti-racism Training

Unity Church members are invited to attend a 2½ day training session on anti-racism from March 13-15, 2009. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn how prejudice and power combine to produce institutionalized racism.

During this training the attendees place relevant events on a historical timeline. What was happening in the dominant society's treatment of people of color? What resistance to racism was occurring? We find that our knowledge of the resistance to racism is not very great. According to James Loewen in *Lies My Teacher Told Me* this may be because the textbooks used to teach American history leave out much material that is not flattering to our white culture.

February is Black History Month, and learning about one African-American resister to racism would be a good way to celebrate it. One we can suggest is Fannie Lou Hamer, who stood up to some of the most powerful white men in the U.S. government, including Senator Hubert Humphrey, when she told them she was "sick and tired of being sick and tired."

You can learn about Fannie Lou Hamer in the book *The Senator and the Sharecropper* by Chris Myers Asch. Here's the description from <http://www.thenewpress.com>:

"*The Senator and the Sharecropper* is the story of two larger-than-life personalities from one humble corner of the Mississippi Delta: the Senator, James O. Eastland, a fabulously wealthy cotton planter and one of the most powerful figures in the U.S. Senate, and the sharecropper, Fannie Lou Hamer, who grew up desperately poor a few miles from Eastland's plantation. ... *The Senator and the Sharecropper* tells how these two pivotal figures came to confront one another on the national political stage at the height of the civil rights struggle. Their intertwined histories—set against a backdrop of Sunflower County's rise and fall as a center of cotton agriculture—offer a powerful window onto the unraveling of Jim Crow during the upheavals of the 1960s and, in our own time, the persistence of profound inequality in the post-civil rights era."

Unity Church Seeks Assistant to the Director of Congregational Development

Unity Church—Unitarian is seeking an Assistant to the Director of Congregational Development. This position will be responsible for managing the Covenant Group sign-up process, using the church database to manage Welcome Teams and Food Ministry teams, administrative oversight for the Pathway to Membership Classes, and other duties as reasonably assigned. A qualified candidate will have working knowledge of Unity Church and its many groups and ministries, as well as experience with Microsoft Office applications, excellent oral communication skills, and a strong attention to detail.

This position is ten hours per week. A full position description is available on the church website. Send resumes to the attention of "Assistant to the Director of Congregational Development — Search and Screen." The deadline for resume submission is Sunday, February 15. For more information about this position contact Barbara Hubbard at the Church Office.

HALLMAN INTERN

Film and the Impossible Soul

with Leon Dunkley, Hallman Ministerial Intern

Fourth Wellspring Wednesday of the month beginning February 25

Sometimes the most beautiful aspects of our lives are hiding in plain sight. Film can show us exactly where they are. Like buried treasure, the beauty of life reveals itself to us...in song, in humor, in tragedy, in triumph. The human spirit reveals itself as unlimited and free.

Please join in the conversation as we review excerpts from American popular film that open us up to ourselves and to one another. Human freedom and joy are possible, even in the toughest of times.

Over several weeks, we may be looking at the following:

Star Trek: First Contact



The Incredibles



The Silence of the Lambs



The English Patient

Bamboozled

Les Troyens

Wag the Dog

Snow Falling on Cedars



Shawshank Redemption

The Truman Show



The Matrix

Thelma and Louise



Angels in America



An Intern's Public Journal Entry Five

Talking about things like gratitude and repair is relatively easy. Living into them can be extremely difficult.

What is the sound of the voice of God? Or more deeply, what is not? I ask myself these questions all the time. It's a bummer at parties. I ask them more now because I have the attitude of an intern. I am here to learn the practical aspects of running a church. I cannot imagine coming to a more beautiful place. I don't mean the physical "place" that is Unity Church-Unitarian. I mean the spiritual "place" of learning what it means to run a church.

Running a church requires contributions from all types of people. Joni Mitchell wrote a song that speaks to this...

All of the people at this party, they've got a lot of style
They've got stamps of many countries, they've got passport smiles
Some are friendly, some are cutting, some are watching it from the wings
Some are standing in the center, giving to get something

I used to try to figure out "who I was" in the song. Am I friendly? Am I cutting? Am I removed? Am I revealed? Am I giving because I want something in return? I am all of these things...usually, at once.

I am an intern. That's what is says on my business card. My business card. My theological business card. That's interesting because I am here to study the business of church...but that's impossible. It is not "business" to watch a group of people reaching for the holy. It is not "business" to ask the best of ourselves and others. It is not "business" to seek the deepest station in life and ask "What is healthy?" and "May I choose peace?"

When I raise questions about the voice of God, I'm wondering what it is that I am called to do. I know that I am called to love across the borders of our lives. I know that I am called to sing in deepest honesty. I know that I am called to alleviate suffering to the best of my gifts. I know that I am called to love my enemy. That's my dream, anyway.

When Martin Luther King said, "I have a dream," he was actually lying. He had six and he shared them all with us. He had the dream that we would live out the true meaning of our creed; that the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will sit down in brotherhood; that Mississippi would be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice; that his four children would not be judged by color of skin but by content of character; that Alabama would be transformed and blacks and whites would walk together as sisters and brothers; and that every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain made low, all flesh seeing this together.

So, what is the sound of the voice of God? I don't know. I'm just an intern. All I know is that we will find that voice together.

Every blessing.

ld

COMMUNITY / FELLOWSHIP / LEARNING

Wellspring Wednesdays

Dinner: 6:00 p.m.

\$6/adults, \$4/children (ages 5-12), \$2/children (ages 2-4), \$18/family (max)
Vegetarian options are available.

Chapel Worship: 6:45 p.m.

Programming: 7:10 p.m.

February 4

- The Experimental College of the Twin Cities
- Bridge to Benefits: Help for Struggling Families
- Soap Making Class
- Southern Style 5 Animal Kung Fu
- Teens Serve It Up! Serve It Up With Action ~ Jr. High Youth Group

February 11

- *Abraham Lincoln and the Politics of Hope* by Jim Farrell
- Southern Style 5 Animal Kung Fu
- Singing Meditation
- Unity Church Mano a Mano Outreach Ministry Team
- Unity Men's Group
- Teens Serve It Up! Bakin' in the Kitchen ~ Jr. High Youth Group

February 18

- UU History Potluck: What's in the Soup?
- Introduction to the Enneagram
- Southern Style 5 Animal Kung Fu
- Rise Up Singing
- Mother/Daughter Book Group
- Teens Serve It Up! Serve It Up With Action ~ Jr. High Youth Group

February 25

- Inside Haiti with Mission Haiti, Inc. and Haiti Gardens
- Soap Making Class
- Jungian Dream Interpretation
- Southern Style 5 Animal Kung Fu
- Film and the Impossible Soul
- Teens Serve It Up! Bakin' in the Kitchen ~ Jr. High Youth Group

Kundalini Yoga is offered every Wednesday.



Second Saturday Pancake Breakfast

February 14 • 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

You'll enjoy local sausage, OJ, all you can eat pancakes, and lots of lingering and good conversation. **Bring a friend!**
Cost: \$3 per person or \$10 per family.

Celebrate Your Valentine with Unity Singers

Saturday, February 14 • See page 14 for details.

Come to **celebrate Valentine's Day** and **help send** our award-winning Unity Singers to the 2009 National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association! Every purchase of a 'Singing Valentine' and all donations will go towards the cost of traveling to the National Convention in Oklahoma City to perform.

Learn How to Compost!

Sponsored by the Unity Church Green Sanctuary/Sustainable Agriculture Ministry Team
Saturday, February 14 • 10:45 a.m.

Learn how to reduce organic waste through worm or yard composting. Whether you live in a house or an apartment, home composting is an easy way to turn much of the waste from your yard and kitchen into rich material for gardens and flowers.

Yard trimmings and food scraps make up nearly 1/6 of what the average household throws into the garbage. Composting is used as a top dressing on lawns, shrubs, and vegetable and flower gardens. It can also be used as a component of potting mixes to hold water in potted plants. In this family friendly, hands-on workshop, you will learn what materials are needed for an inexpensive compost bin and how to use and maintain the compost. We'll have worm bins on display!

Sunday Soup (or chili) Suppers

Every Sunday following the 4:30 p.m. worship service.
Parish Hall at Unity Church

Meet people, enjoy hot soup, and linger! Donations (\$2-\$5) are gratefully accepted.



Pathway to Membership

Welcome to Unity:

Our Class for Newcomers

Wednesday, February 4 • 7:10-8:30 p.m.
Wednesday, March 4 • 7:10-8:30 p.m.

Finding Yourself at Unity:

A Deeper Exploration of Who We Are

Three Tuesdays:

February 17 • 6:30-9:30 p.m.

February 24 and March 3: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Light supper provided all three nights.

Committing to Unity:

Joining Our Faith Community

Tuesday, March 24 • 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Contact Justin Schroeder at the Church Office to sign up for these *Pathway to Membership* classes.

LITERARY MINISTRY / LIBRARIES / BOOK CLUB

Writing and Reading as Spiritual Practice

Open Page: reflecting with pens in hand

These guided writing sessions, led by the assistant literary minister, Karen Hering, are invitations to the creative spirit, opportunities to correspond with "the still, small voice within." No writing experience required; only an empty page and an open heart and mind.

Sunday, February 15 • 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Reflection Topic: *Sin*

As Unitarian theologian James Luther Adams once noted, we religious liberals often neglect the sinful side of human nature in our desire to celebrate the spark of divinity in all of us. But, he added, "the practice of shunning the word 'sin' because 'it makes one feel gloomy and pious,' has little more justification than the use of the ostrich method in other areas of life."

On Sunday afternoon, February 15, Assistant Literary Minister Karen Hering invites you to resist the ostrich approach to sin and to bring pen and paper together in a guided writing session reflecting on the topic of *sin* (the church's upcoming monthly theme for March).

Tuesday, February 24 • 10 a.m.–noon

Reflection Topic: *Open*

This weekday session will be offered without a named topic. Together, we'll draw from our memories and dreams, from our imaginations and our senses, in free association writing exercises inviting us to open and trust our inner voices, to awaken our senses, to listen to the stories within us, to explore with our hearts.

Lectio Divina: a practice of spiritual reading

Thursday morning, February 5 • 10:00–11:00 a.m. — or —

Sunday morning, February 15 • 11:00 a.m.–noon

*It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.*

- William Carlos Williams

Dietrich Bonhoeffer called it "spiritual reading." Other Christians following a sixth century Benedictan practice call it "*lectio divina*," or holy reading. Both names describe a reflective practice of meditating on the written word and listening for "what is found there" that each reader most needs in a given moment.

Assistant Literary Minister Karen Hering will introduce the practice of *lectio divina* this month using poems and readings focused on February's theme of *prayer*.

For more information, contact Karen Hering at karen@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456, ext. 128.

What's New at Unity Libraries?



Anderson Library • Bookstall

Whitman Children's Library • Bookmobile

The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.

— Barack Obama, Inaugural Address,
January 20, 2009

This February, we can choose our better history in one way by observing Black History Month. Among the many choices in the libraries and bookstall, here are two titles to help you get started:

- *Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope* by Nikki Grimes in the "Biography" section of the Whitman Children's Library.
- *Race Matters* by Cornel West (305.8 W) in the Anderson Adult Library.

2nd Tuesday Book Club Update

Everyone is welcome!

The Second Tuesday Book Club will meet from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 10. The book they will be discussing *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls. Each book has a "sponsor" who begins the meeting by presenting a bit about the author and the book.

March 10: *The Thirteenth Tale* by Diane Setterfield

April 14: *The Latehomecomer* by Kao Kalia Yang

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST HERITAGE WEEK

Unitarian Universalist Heritage Week and the Sources Supper

February 16-22, 2009

Krista Tippet of MPR's "Speaking of Faith" recently said that every religion she's ever studied is based on a story that it tells over and over. What's our story as Unitarian Universalists? How did we begin as a religious movement? What are the key turning points and breakthroughs in our tradition? Who are the martyrs and heroes in our progressive religious journey? How did we come to be a non-creedal faith that nevertheless stands passionately for something in the world? And what does all of this have to do with how we live and practice our faith—and live our lives—today? In truth, few of us, even those raised Unitarian Universalists, can tell the story of our heritage and connect it with our current challenges and opportunities as a religious people. But that is going to change here at Unity!

This February 16-22 we are launching an annual Unitarian Universalist Heritage Week. Our collective story will be everywhere that week, from Sunday services to religious education classes and Wellspring Wednesday. The culminating events will be Sources Suppers celebrated in small groups in our homes on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings February 20-22. We are hoping that everyone who is not out of town that weekend will participate. Here's the low-down on the Sources Supper and how you can get involved.

The Sources Supper ritual, which was developed over a four year period by Twin Cities UUs, aims to create a deep connection with our Unitarian Universalist heritage via story telling and conversation around a common meal. The stories are about four founding events in UU history plus two key turning points in later history. The conversations are based on questions following each story. The meal takes place after the first four stories and is intended to be simple and informal, with the conversation going wherever people take it. The final two stories take place after the meal and before dessert. The whole ritual, including dinner, takes about three hours.

The Sources Supper is intended to be done year after year until it becomes part of the religious identity and collective memories of those who participate in it. The current version of the ritual has been piloted about 20 times locally and around the country to universal acclaim, but this is the first congregation-wide implementation. (Unity will be the seed congregation for the Sources Supper across the denomination.) The ritual, which follows an easy-to-use script, works with adults and youth of 12 years and older; a future version will be adapted for families with younger children.

Now the logistics: There will be sign up opportunities beginning in early February to host and participate in a Sources Supper. Friday and Saturday events will be 6:00-9:30 p.m., with the first half hour for gathering and settling in. (Sunday will start 30 minutes earlier.) Hosting is not burdensome: you just need a table that seats 8-12 people. The Sources Supper implementation team will provide you with the scripts, guidelines, and orientation for the ritual and the potluck meal. Simple is the rule of the land for meal—generally a soup, salad, appetizers, desserts and drinks. We can even provide a recipe for a soup that's been popular at Sources Suppers.

There is a big, bold vision behind Unitarian Universalist Heritage Week and the Sources Supper: let this be the last generation of Unitarian Universalists who don't know where they came from. Let the next generation stand inside a tradition they know and love—and then take it to new places.

The Sources Supper Implementation Team: Bill Doherty, Leah Doherty, Lisa Brosseau, Allen Giles, and Ruth MacKenzie. To read about the origins of the Sources Supper and the key events covered, go to www.SourcesSupper.org. You can look at a copy of the script on this website.

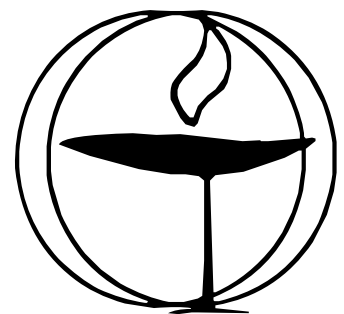
UU History Potluck

What's in the soup? Soap to computers to vegetables, a look at action in the world by 19th century Unitarian Universalists.

Wednesday, February 18
7:10-8:30 p.m.

Lamp Schmamp. Forget the image of the "lady of the lamp"—men wrote that and were only too happy to constrain famed UU Florence Nightingale to an angel-of-mercy role. UU Florence Nightingale was really the "lady of the stats"—what she contributed to 19th century medical reform was a pioneering use of statistics. Not only did she quantify battlefield conditions to demonstrate that the burden of disease was greater than artillery-inflicted wounds, she was one of the first to devise a visual explanation for this bold argument that persuaded Parliament to effect sanitary reform.

Flo is just one of three influential—and quirky—UUs you'll meet in a brief intellectual tour of UU history from Unity member Anne Brataas, award winning science writer, historian of science medicine and technology, specialist in visual rhetoric, and president of The Story Laboratory, (<http://www.thestorylaboratory.com>) a St. Paul small business inspired by the UU heritage of innovative intellectual applications.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Where Healing Happens: Going Deep With Strangers

from Maura Williams, Restorative Justice Ministry Team



I drive out to meet for the first time a group of about a dozen inmates at the Department of Correction's Women's Prison at Shakopee. After arriving at the facility I trade my driver's license for a prison ID, lock up personal items, walk through a metal detector and set of doors controlled by a switch behind the security desk, then show the materials I'm carrying to the guard before I'm allowed to proceed to the room where we will meet. My co-leader and I arrange the chairs into a circle and place a selection of talking pieces in the circle's center.

The women enter the classroom directly after 'count' is completed. This prison is not fenced and relies on a system by which each inmate's location is known at any given time, reinforced by frequent counts. We sit in the circle and all introduce ourselves by first name. We do some simple ice-breaking exercise and then talk about restorative justice. Some of the women have heard the term, most don't know what it means, and they surely don't know what this Healing Circle class is. We describe the principles of restorative justice as repair rather than retribution, and talk about how RJ processes seek to restore wholeness (healing) at both the individual and community levels. We talk about the circle process, the role of a talking piece, respectful listening and speaking. We tell the women that each will need to tell the story of her crime to the group, and we give them a first assignment to write a letter to someone they love explaining why they are in prison. They are to bring the letter to share at our next session. We pass a talking piece around the circle so each can respond to the question "What do you hope to get out of this class?" and then "What quality will you bring to this group?" A few women lead with unexpectedly honest and open responses, pulling us all into greater depths of conversation. A few don't feel comfortable and won't be back.

The rest are ready to face some risky work. There's an implicit understanding that they are saying 'yes' to speaking and hearing stories that can be ugly and hurtful, that they will relive painful experiences in telling them, that they will need to let their guard down – which does not happen easily in this place – and go beyond their fears and comfort level in revealing their experiences and emotions.

They don't know at this first session that they will learn how to listen to each other compassionately and without judgment, and that they will experience — some for the first time — a profound sense of trust and safety within the group. They don't yet know how often they'll hear their own fears and wounds in someone else's story and feel less alone, or how both the tears and the laughter that we will share are so integrally a part of the healing.

Ten weeks later I again drive out to the facility for the final meeting with this group. It's bittersweet. We've come to know each other so personally and we've shared a difficult journey communally. And now we sit in circle finally and say goodbye, hoping these wise women can sustain and satisfy the aspirations they've shared here.

I have mentioned in circle that I find it ironic that I need to go to prison to find profound, meaningful conversations beyond what I routinely experience in my everyday activities. Wisdom happens when people meet intentionally for deep conversation, and it's an honor and a privilege to witness, over and over, the transformative conversations that help these women become better acquainted with who they were meant to be.

Fight Global Warming! Take the Minnesota Energy Challenge

from Ken Green, Green Sanctuary Team

I have taken the Minnesota Energy Challenge, along with 43 other members of Unity Church and together our actions have kept more than a quarter-million pounds of harmful carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere.

That goes a long way toward offsetting Unity Church's carbon footprint—but we need your help to cut it to zero.

Creating the energy for the church's lighting, computers, air-conditioning, etc., puts 642,345 pounds of CO₂ into the atmosphere each year. The 44 of us who have now taken the Minnesota Energy Challenge have cut that figure by 250,473 pounds.

Only 391,872 pounds to go!

If we all pitch in, we can easily cut Unity's carbon footprint to zero by the end of this church year.

The Minnesota Energy Challenge (www.mnenergychallenge.org) asks you to take five easy steps—things like driving sensibly and replacing energy-wasteful incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents (CFLs) — and shows you how your actions positively affect the global effort to address climate change.

Taking the Minnesota Energy Challenge will help Unity Church-Unitarian live out our mission and values.

And did I mention that it will also help you save a lot of money? The Minnesota Energy Challenge calculates that my actions have saved our family nearly \$1,000 in energy costs!

To take the Challenge, go to www.mnenergychallenge.org — or stop by the Green Sanctuary Team table in the Parish Hall.

With your help, Unity Church can become a Zero Carbon Congregation by the end of this church year.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Unity Church and the Partner Church Ministry Team Practicing Hospitality

The Reverend Kinga-Reka Szekely, our Partner Church minister in Homoródszentpeter, Romania, will be visiting Unity from Monday, March 2 through Wednesday, March 4. Kinga-Reka's visit to St. Paul is the final stop on her travels to the U.S. to attend the International Convocation of UU Women in Houston, Texas. Kinga-Reka will present a Wellspring Wednesday program on March 4, so mark your calendar to come learn about the Convocation and what is transpiring in our partner church community.

Endre Nagy, this year's Balazs Scholar at the Starr King School for the Ministry in Oakland, California, and his wife, Eva Patko, will be our guests from March 21 through March 29. Endre has a strong interest in music programming and Eva in theatre. On Sunday, March 22, Endre will participate in the annual hymn sing service at the White Bear Lake UU Church. On March 25, Endre will be at Unity Church for Wellspring Wednesday. He will also participate in the morning services on Sunday, March 29. Unity Church is arranging for Endre to meet with Twin Cities UU music directors and musicians and for Eva to meet with theater organizations. We look forward to learning about Endre's ministry.

The Partner Church Team has invited two couples from Homoródszentpeter to visit us in November 2009. Gyöngyi and Dénes Gergely and Balázs and Ida Máté are beginning the complex visa application process, and we hope all four of them will be with us in November, as planned. Their visit gives us an opportunity to reciprocate the hospitality that has been extended to members of our congregation by the people of Homoródszentpeter. We will bridge and strengthen our relationship with the village and learn from each other as we introduce the Gergelys and the Mátés to our church community.

Your continued generous support of the Partner Church Ministry Team's fund raising activities like our winter fun and food events, spring plant sales, and Sunday offerings make this hospitality and other village projects possible. Thank you, and plan on helping us welcome our guests and being part of Unity's ministry of hospitality.

Evergreen Foodshelf

The third Sunday of every month is Evergreen Food Drive Sunday. For February 15, suggested items are canned vegetables and tomato sauce. Any and all donations are welcome! Donations can be brought anytime and left in barrels located at both the Holly and Portland Avenue entrances. All food is taken to Sharing Korner Food Shelf.



Whole Farm

Buy meat, cheese, produce and much more from local, sustainable farms and pick it up right at Unity Church from Whole Farm Cooperative. For this month's pickup, place an order at www.wholefarmcoop.com or 320-732-3023 by Wednesday, February 11. Orders will be delivered to Unity Church on Wednesday, February 18. Pay by sending a check with the invoice enclosed with your order to Whole Farm.



Unity Church Pilgrimage to New Orleans

There's still time to register for the Unity Church New Orleans pilgrimage taking place from February 28 to March 7, 2009. For more information please contact Pat Haff at the Church Office.



Partner Church at Wellspring Wednesday

Report on the 1st International Convocation of UU Women Observations from a Transylvanian perspective

Wednesday, March 4 • 7:10–8:30 p.m.

We welcome back to Unity Church Kinga-Reka Szekely, the minister of our partner church village of Homoródszentpeter for approximately the last ten years. She was a Balazs Scholar at Starr King School for the Ministry from 1999-2000. The convocation will have just ended on March 1.

Transylvanian Guests

Wednesday, March 25 • 7:10–8:30 p.m.

Endre Nagy and Eva Patko will present and discuss popular music among Unitarians in Transylvania, and the status of professional community theater in Transylvania.

Endre Nagy, the current Balazs Scholar at Starr King School for the Ministry, is an accomplished musician. He is absorbing UU music to be able to enrich the church music in Transylvania. His wife, Eva Patko, is a community theater director in Transylvania and will describe the state of theater in her country.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY



Three related presentations on aspects of global travel, philanthropy, and service. All three events are free and open to the public. All will be at Unity Church. For more information, please contact Pat Haff at the Church Office.

Weaving a Fair Trade

Samuel Morgan Community Forum: Saturday, February 21 • 12:30-3:30 p.m.

Craft Bazaar: Sunday, February 22 • Following the morning services

Examine the fair trade movement using the specific example of artisan-woven textiles from Bolivia. Through hands-on weaving exercises and small-group discussion, we will learn about the art of Andean weaving, and how fair trade textile sales can help develop indigenous communities.

The Saturday Samuel Morgan Community Forum is co-led by Unity Church member Patricia Ohmans and by Melissa Draper, both recently returned from Bolivia. Melissa worked with democracy-building and fair trade initiatives and now represents a Bolivian womens' weaving cooperative seeking markets in the U.S. Workshop space is limited to 40; please contact Pat Haff at the Church Office to register. Then on Sunday, February 22, following both morning services, workshop participants and others can purchase textiles and other handicrafts, at a fair trade crafts bazaar co-sponsored by area fair trade organizations.

Philanthropic Tourism

Wednesday, March 25 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Philanthropic Tourism is what the *New York Times* calls the new trend toward service or volunteer vacations, in which travelers combine traditional sightseeing or adventure with service activities such as teaching, building, providing medical services and more.

Unity Church member Laney Ohmans who recently returned from teaching English at a tribal girls school that Vivek and Vidyulatta Pandit founded through the UUA Holdeen India Program in rural Maharashtra, India, will describe the work she did during her "summer vacation." She'll be joined by a panel of travelers, each of whom has a different tale of philanthropic tourism to tell. Resources and information from local and national service vacation organizations will be available.

Global Giving in Tight Times

Wednesday, April 29 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Learn how to make rational decisions about your charitable donations to international development organizations. International development expert Garth Osborn will join Patricia Ohmans to describe the global health and development world, explain common misconceptions about donations to development groups, and help you plan where to donate money in the future. Patricia and Garth are co-authors of the book *Finding Work in Global Health* and both have worked with a variety of non-profit global development organizations.

Bolivia's Dignity and Defiance

Jim Shultz, director of the Cochabamba, Bolivia-based Democracy Center, will be at Macalester College on Monday, February 23 from 7:00 until 9:00 p.m. at the John B. Davis lecture hall, on the lower level of the Macalester College Campus Center, 1600 Grand Avenue in Saint Paul. Shultz will be reading from (and signing) the Center's new book *Dignity and Defiance*, described as "a powerful eyewitness account of Bolivia's rebellion from below, with...compelling first-person accounts of Bolivia's historic water revolt, of a massive Shell-Enron oil spill and its aftermath, of a nation's battle to control its oil and gas, and of one people's dramatic and successful challenge to the policies of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund."

Shultz, a longtime citizen activist, spoke about Bolivia at Unity Church at a popular Samuel Morgan forum two years ago. His colleague and co-editor Melissa Draper, an expert on indigenous textile cooperatives, will be featured in the "Weaving a Fair Trade" workshop at Unity Church on February 21 (see left).

Both Jim's talk and the weaving workshop are co-sponsored by Unity Church and the Mano a Mano Community Outreach Ministry Team.



Photo courtesy of Yves Van Damme



Prayer for Unitarian Universalist Families

from Kerri Meyer, Director of Religious Education

Unitarian Universalist parents express a great deal of worry about prayer. We struggle with its motivation, with its language, with its results (or lack thereof) and we wonder anxiously what these elements of prayer might impress upon our children as they grow. If we assume Ghandi's perspective and think of prayer not as asking, but as the practice of surrendering our selves to that longing in our souls, we might see a crack of light in the doorway to prayer with our kids.

This time last year, our Religious Education classes focused for six weeks on prayer. Children who participated in Workshop Rotation will be familiar with the ideas below, but they are worth repeating and exploring in the context of the home. Bedtime is a natural moment for the quiet, centering experience of prayer: you can share in the words and the silence or you can turn the moment over entirely to your child.

"What Am I Supposed to Say?": Five types of prayer for children



Using the five fingers of your hand, or even five colorful prayer beads that you string with your child, you can practice all five types in one prayerful sitting. You can also separate the types of prayers and slip them into different points in your family's day, depending on the rhythm of comings and goings, shared meals and private moments.

1. Prayers of Thanksgiving – in which we express our gratitude for the blessings in our lives
2. Prayers of Praise – in which we express our wonder and amazement at the miracles of the Universe
3. Prayers of Petition – in which we express our own needs and our own intentions to change and ask for help
4. Prayers of Intercession – in which we express our compassion for others and hope for fulfillment of their needs
5. Prayers of Contemplation – in which we let go of words and wait, listening to the stillness of the Divine within us

Whether the beliefs you're sharing with your child include a personal God that is available in communion with the human heart or celebrate a world shaped by our own human intentions, there are words that can work for your child in prayer. Some families might feel comfortable with phrases like "Thank you for..." and "Please help me...". Other families can choose word like, "We are thankful for..." and "May I learn to..." Whatever words feel right for your family, modeling the pattern of the five types of prayer is an easy way to introduce your child to both shared and individual prayer:

One way the words might work...

1. "We are thankful for this day and for all we have learned. We are thankful the home we share, for our warm beds and for the chance to start a new day tomorrow.

2. We celebrate the miracles of sunset and sunrise and all the beauty in between.
3. May we act in ways that are fair and kind.
4. May all people live in peace and share the things that humans all need to live well.
5. May we find inside us the love and courage to build such a world. [generous silence]. Blessed be."

Another way the words might work...

1. "Holy One, thank You for this day and for all I have learned. Thank You for this home we share, for my warm bed and for the chance to start a new day tomorrow.
2. Today, I saw You in the beautiful sunrise and sunset.
3. Please help me to be fair and kind.
4. Please help all people share and live in peace.
5. I remember that You are inside everyone, and inside me, too. [generous silence]. Amen."

The Body in Prayer

Prayer is a kinesthetic experience for children. Make a prayerful space at home that engages the senses in a calming way. Learn about the different ways that people hold or move their body in prayer. If you learned to pray as a child, show your child how you learned and talk about how that feels for you now. Ask your child what feels best for him or her. Prayer beads, in their many forms, are wonderful tools for centering and focusing the praying child.

What if...?

What if my child does ask for something in prayer that they are not likely to see come to fruition? Given a belief in a Universe in which myriad things are

continued on page 13

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul.



Prayer for UU Families
continued from page 12

possible or in an all-loving God, kids may offer unanswerable petitionary or intercessory prayers that make a parent's heart ache. Grandma may not ever recover from her stroke. The earthquake on the news cannot be undone. Your child will not ever be able to fly like a bird.

Here are some possible responses to those longings of the soul that may remain longings.

- "I hear you pray that Grandma will get better, because you love her so much. That would be the most wonderful thing for you and for me. This may be the time in Grandma's life, like in all living things lives, when she doesn't get better. What if we pray for what *Grandma* needs *right now*, even if her body can't heal? May she be free from pain. May she remember that we love her. May the love she taught us shine in us as we take care of her."
- "I hear you pray that the disaster we saw in the news will be undone. In our beautiful Universe, time only goes forward. What can we pray will happen from now on? What can we do to make those prayers become reality?"
- "I hear you pray that God will make you able to fly. Do you know any people who can fly? I bet lots of other people have the same great idea as you and pray to God to let them fly. Why do you think God doesn't respond to those prayers by making people fly? I wonder if what you really want is to be extra special? I'm going to pray a prayer right now to say thank you for all the ways you are already extra special – want me to pray it on the outside or the inside?"

Books on prayer for families –
turn to the front cover.

Teens Strut Their Stuff in the Name of Unity

"When I created this show, I wanted to engage an audience in a new and enthralling experience and take them on a journey of self-discovery and education. This show is about opening people's eyes, hearts and minds to the racism that exists today in our very own community." High school junior Nathan



Eckstein used these words to describe A Fashion Show for Social Change, a teen-led effort to engage Unity Church and the broader community in calling attention to white privilege and discrimination against African Americans.

The January 17 fashion show was free and open to the public, and over one hundred people packed the Parish Hall to witness the show. Tower Club teens modeled their original t-shirt art adorned with symbols and words, accompanied by selected text from their artists' statements. For instance, Abby Guthmann writes, "though the struggle between ethnicities still remains today, we have been gifted with the forgiveness and hope to overcome it."

Nathan was inspired to create the show as a vehicle for education and dialogue following his experiences in Penumbra Theatre's Summer Institute, "in which social justice and responsible civic action are essential to the practice of art." Participants in the program are charged with the task to apply their learning and demonstrate their leadership through a project of their own design.

Prior to the show, Nathan spent several weeks engaging the Tower Club in discussion about racism and white privilege, using work such as Peggy McIntosh's writing on white people's "invisible weightless backpack." Cindy Starkweather Nelson later hosted a t-shirt-making workshop when the teens were ready to create their art.

The fashion show's collection of clothing will be the featured art display in the Parish Hall in May. Thank you to the church community and Penumbra Theatre for supporting this event!

Donate Books Now for the High School Book Sale

Donations are being accepted for the annual Tower Club used book sale. Donations in bags or boxes can be left on the labeled cart in the Parish Hall. Proceeds from the book sale help youth pay for the pilgrimage to Boston.

February Dates for Your R.E. Calendar

- Sunday, February 1: regular R.E., Celebration of New Lives, 4:30 service
- Wednesday, February 4: Junior High Youth Group - Civic action w/Mason
- Wednesday, February 11: Junior High Youth Group - Baking in the Kitchen
- Sunday, February 15: Story Sunday (Workshop Rotation kids begin in Sanctuary)
- Wednesday, February 18: Junior High Youth Group - Civic action w/Mason
- Wednesday, February 25: Junior High Youth Group - Baking in the Kitchen

MUSIC MINISTRIES

Valentine's Day

Pancake Breakfast
and Concert
with the Unity Singers!
Saturday, February 14
Unity Church Parish Hall

Pancake Breakfast

All you can eat pancakes, sausage, juice and coffee from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Cost: \$3/person or \$10/family.

Singing Valentines!

Purchase a Singing Valentine to celebrate your very own Valentine and help support our Unity Singers as they travel to Oklahoma City to sing at the prestigious ACDA National Convention.

Reserve your Singing Valentine at the 'Singing Valentines' table in the Parish Hall on Sunday, February 1 and February 8, after morning services.

Valentines will be sung on site in Parish Hall or over the phone between 8:30 and 10:00 a.m., during the breakfast.

Suggested donations (cash or check):

♥ \$20.00 for a Singing Valentine by phone (sung by a small ensemble of the Unity Singers)

♥ \$35.00 for a specially dedicated Singing Valentine to your Sweetheart sung in Parish Hall during the breakfast (sung by a small ensemble of the Unity Singers)

♥ \$100.00 for a Singing Valentine sung in Parish Hall by all the Unity Singers

Demonstration Concert

Join us in the Sanctuary from 10:00 until 10:30 a.m. and see the concert that 4,000 will see in Oklahoma City! Concert is free. All donations gratefully accepted.

Music Notes

"Being part of Unity Singers is, for me, a very compelling and enriching opportunity. It not only provides an outlet for my personal expression and growth, but an opportunity to mesh my love of beautiful music and thirst for spiritual connectedness."

"Song as ministry: to ourselves and our community. Just 16 voices, speaking to the human experience, through words, harmony, and spirit."

"We sing to serve our loving church and take our music, but not ourselves, seriously."

"We find great joy in working together to create something different and better than what we could create separately."

.....members of Unity Singers

This last June I opened a letter which took my breath away. Our very own Unity Singers had been selected for an amazing honor. The letter reads as follows:

"It is my distinct honor to inform you that the Unity Singers has been selected to appear on the concert program of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) 2009 National Convention in Oklahoma City. Congratulations! This accomplishment by you and your choir represents an affirmation of the best choral work to be heard in the United States. Your choir was selected by blind audition from a significant number of applicants and from an exceptional representation of choirs throughout the United States and around the world."

This is a huge honor and a wonderful opportunity to express the above ideas that so beautifully represent our beloved church community. My great privilege to work with these 16 amazing individuals is an opportunity to witness in microcosm the commitment, generosity and passion found throughout Unity Church.

We accepted this honor and challenge knowing the opportunity it gave us to represent the ideals of our lives through our music. We will sing a 25-minute program twice on Thursday, March 5, for approximately 4,000 people. Both performances will take place in a concert hall that seats 2,500. The work is intense and the challenge great to prepare for such a grand experience. Our Singers are up to all of it and stretch continually in all of their work and life commitments in order to accomplish this.

Now we need to ask your help. Please join us for several opportunities to support our efforts to travel to Oklahoma City, stay one night in order to perform our two concerts, and then travel immediately back to the Twin Cities. You can do this in the following ways:

1. **Come and Celebrate Your Valentine** with Unity Singers at the February 14, Pancake Breakfast. Singing Valentines (either over the phone or on site at the breakfast) can be purchased in Parish Hall after morning services on Sunday, February 1 and February 8.
2. **Come and hear a Demonstration Concert** in the Sanctuary immediately following the Pancake Breakfast on February 14 from 10:00 to 10:45 a.m. The concert is free. All donations gratefully accepted.
3. Any other methods of donation (check or online) should specify the **ACDA FUND**.

Our thanks to this community for your continual support of our music program and all those individuals who find connection and "great joy in working together to create something different and better than what we could create separately."

My thanks.....Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries

PARISH HALL ART / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

February Parish Hall Artist

Ellen Wold

The Secret Life of Trees

I am primarily a nature photographer, spending time outdoors in all the seasons, listening to the changes and shifts of mood each day and each season brings. I do find myself interacting with trees. I see trees as my friends. I began to see a theme in my art work that involved the world of trees and all that they provide: shelter and shade, sustenance and warmth.

I also wanted to expand the vision of a tree's secret life by exploring as well the tree as metaphor. In many cultures, the shamanic image of the Tree of Life is an important symbol. It connects heaven and earth by sending roots into the underworld and branches into the sky, while the trunk exists on the earthly plane. What if the tree symbolized us? For example:

Q: The Roots - who and what has given you nourishment and vitality in your life?

A: I am nourished by my interaction with people and with the world of nature. I have included a collection of people images in this show because they are important to me in my development as an artist.

Q: The Trunk - what are your strengths? What events have channeled new life into you?

A: One of my strengths is vision. For 10 years I designed gardens and helped people care for their gardens. I am moving on from that work but will always appreciate the beauty of a garden, cultivated or wild.

Q: The Buds on the ends of the branches - what is your hope?

A: I hope I am able to bring forth something positive with my work – to bring out joy and laughter, perhaps confusion, but always connection with one another.

In the Language of Beauty

An Exploration of Theology, Spirituality, and the Arts with Ruth MacKenzie

Tuesdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24 • 6:30–9:00 p.m.
Carondelet Center, 1890 Randolph Ave., St. Paul
\$125.00 / \$35.00 single session

We open ourselves to the creative arts – painting, music, writing and story making, dance, theater – and meet beauty. Beauty reveals the Holy speaking in the language of metaphor, color, and sound. Move beyond art interpretation as “likes and dislikes” to experience a selection of art forms as living, expressive entities that reverberate with their own truth. Each session will be comprised of three sections: an exploration of a particular art form, a time of meditation, and a “hands-on” experience of creating a communal or individual art piece within that discipline.

February Fellowship Group Meetings

All are invited to attend the following groups. For more information, contact the Church Office or the persons listed with each group.

Men's Retirement Group

Monday, February 9 and 23 • 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Contact: Phil Morton, 952-934-3578

Unity Divorce/Transitions Group

Meets every Saturday • 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Contact: Justin Schroeder at the Church Office

Unity Singles Group

Watch *This Week at Unity* for scheduled events
Contact: Justin Schroeder at the Church Office

A New Look at the Bible

First Thursday of the month • 7:00 p.m.
Contact: Joan Lovrien, 651-739-6958

Afterthoughts

Every Sunday following the 9:00 a.m. service
Contact: Paul Gade, 651-771-7528

Mother-Daughter Middle School Book Club

Every third Wednesday for a girl led discussion of modern and classic books
Contact: Millie Adelsheim, millie@peapods.com

Unitots!

A group for families with kids through preschool age
Every Friday • 9:30 a.m.
Contact: Michelle Hill, 651-264-0884

Grandparent Unitots!

A group for grandparents and their grandkids
Every Monday • 9:30 a.m.
Contact: Sue Conner, 651-646-6667

Unity Bridge Club

First Friday of each month at members' homes • 7:00 p.m.
Contact: Mary Barrett, 651-225-9708

Evergreen Quilt Group

Tuesday, February 10 • 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 28 • 10:00 a.m.
Contact: Michelle Hill at 651-264-0884

Unity Book Club

Second Tuesday of the month • 7:00 p.m.
Contact: Justin Schroeder at the Church Office

Career Transitions Group

First and Third Thursday of the month • 6:00-7:30 p.m.
Contact: Wendy Frieze, wendyfrieze@mac.com

Hey Kids, Let's Put on a Show!

20th Anniversary Unity Church Annual Children's Musical

Performances February 26-28, 2009

This year's musical is about putting on a children's musical. The story has fun with what has been 20 years of wonderful experiences, while showing that what happens behind the stage and before the spotlights are lit is as important, and often more compelling, than the performance the audience sees.

Join us for the anxiety of auditions, the confusion of being cast and creating a new personality, the embarrassment of learning a new dance, the thrill of singing out loud, and all the humor that comes when children are really having fun together.

Starring Unity Church 5th and 6th Graders

Script by Michael Lee • Music and Lyrics by Sandy Waterman

Directed by Mary Blouin Auffert • Choreography by Joyce Paxton



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