

Time Together, Time Away

by Kit Brady on behalf of the Board of Trustees
and Janne Eller-Isaacs on behalf of the ministers

From Kit...

On August 15, 2000, Unity Church entered into a contract with our ministers, Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs, which requires a sabbatical leave to be taken after five but before seven years of service. Sabbatical leave is a standard requirement in ministerial contracts. The term has its roots in the Hebrew concept of sabbath, or rest, after seven days or years. The purpose of the leave is to enable the ministers to spend extended time away from normal responsibilities to pursue personal renewal and growth.

Sabbatical is not a reward for longevity of service, nor is it simply an extended vacation. Sabbatical provides an opportunity for our ministers, who give unselfishly of their time to us, to step away from the daily demands of congregational life. A well-planned sabbatical leave can strengthen both ministers and congregations. Ministers return with a renewed sense of purpose, re-energized for the work they feel called to do. That in turn renews and re-energizes the congregation. Sabbatical is an important part of the partnership between the congregation and ministers.

From Janne...

With this in mind, we are intending to take a sabbatical in 2007. It is our intention to leave sometime in mid-January or early February and return in June. We have secured the services of two highly qualified interns who will study with us for six months and then will take over many of our ministerial duties. They will work closely with Barbara Hubbard and Louise Wolfram as members of the Executive Team and the incredible staff that dedicates themselves to Unity Church. In addition to the interns we will have a number of colleagues preach during our absence. We are also planning "Welcome Home Weekends." These weekends are designed to welcome back each of the interns that have served this congregation since we arrived. Jen Crow, Melissa Ziemer, Bill Neely, Dottie Mathews and Katie Lawson will all return to preach, to catch up, to share their new perspectives and ideas. You will be in good hands!

What are we planning? We are the kind of people who try to do too much while on vacation and our sabbatical planning reflects this tendency. Everything is still in the "dreaming stage," but we are thinking the following: Rob wants to write a book about the Unity men, I want to take a Spanish immersion course and write two curricula. We are in negotiation around the possibility of working in India for a month with a remarkable man doing remarkable work with newly freed indentured servants and slaves. We want to travel to some of our favorite spots. We are planning to walk for a month to six weeks on an ancient pilgrimage route. We want to attend some church related workshops and trainings. Of course we won't

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Religious Education Volunteer Recruitment Begins!

This month and next are peak season for finding your niche in Unity Church's Ministries with Children and Youth! We're planning ahead for the 2006-07 church year and we're facing the exciting challenge of a third service of Religious Education. There are so many ways in which your talents and energies can help nurture our children in their spiritual growth. Here are a few examples of the roles you can play in the religious life of our young people:

- ♦ **Our Whole Lives Advisor.** Guide 9th graders through a nationally esteemed curriculum on human sexuality. Training provided! Commitments last from September to December.
- ♦ **Spirit Play Teacher.** Join a team of dedicated adults who share Unitarian Universalist identity and explore spiritual questions through story, song and play. Commitments are for one year, with flexible scheduling.
- ♦ **Wellspring Wednesday Facilitator.** Share a hobby, play some games and read stories from the Families All Matter Book project. Commitments are one or two Wednesdays a year, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Please see the special Religious Education Adult Volunteer form on pages 7-8 for a comprehensive list of opportunities to touch the hearts and minds of Unity Church's next generation. You can also sign up for any of these roles at the R.E. Parish Hall table. Members of the Religious Education Ministry Team will also be calling by phone to answer questions and enlist your help.

Those who sign up early for all volunteer positions will be entered in a special raffle of fabulous prizes. Watch the This Week at Unity insert for details. Contact Kerri or Martha at the Church Office with any questions or requests regarding our Ministry with Children and Youth.

JUST WORDS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Just Words

One hopes that we grow and develop as we move through the challenges and opportunities that life presents us. How to talk about that growth and development was one of the challenges facing the ministers, interns, and worship associates as we discussed the services for the winter season. After a lengthy conversation we decided to look at the growth of the soul in three parts. Those services have now been completed.

I've gotten a lot of feedback about my sermon on the aspects or qualities of spiritual maturity. At the conclusion of the sermon I essentially ran out of time and encouraged people to think about what *they* considered the qualities of spiritual maturity.

Some of you are coming up with your own lists. And I love seeing what you have come up with. I keep working on mine. With this in mind, I am considering offering a class next fall to explore these qualities in greater depth. These qualities are not age-related but are the fruits of spiritual growth and development. If you haven't thought about what qualities of spiritual maturation you have gained from the life you have lived, I encourage you to make your own list.

Howard Thurman, minister and mystic, once wrote that, "Everything that happens to you in our life is spiritual sustenance. Everything is usable for your spiritual development." I believe that this true and that there are certain spiritual challenges we must face in order to possess some dimension of spiritual maturity.

The list that I created has been borrowed from colleagues, teachers and the principles of the world's religions. They have been gleaned from listening to wise people talk to me about what important lessons they have learned in life. They have come to me as I have watched people navigate through tragedies and triumphs. They are (in no particular order):

1. The ability to commit oneself to something larger than self
2. The ability to open oneself to new ideas, new ways of doing things
3. The ability to absorb and transform suffering
4. The ability to live with paradox, uncertainty and ambiguity
5. The ability to live a life grounded in gratitude
6. To be attracted to beauty, mercy and justice
7. To live a life grounded in the fact of our mortality. The Latin phrase *Memento Mori* means "remember that you will die."
8. The ability to admit mistakes, brokenness, imperfection
9. The ability to see the sacred in all life and to understand that we are all connected to one another
10. The ability to repent and forgive

This is my working list. I hope that it continues to be refined as I grow and mature and listen to all of you. I look forward to seeing yours.

— *Janne*



General Assembly, Here We Come!

Every year UUs from all over the continent gather together to learn, celebrate and make decisions. The General Assembly of UU Congregations is being held in St. Louis this year, and we hope to pull together a merry band of delegates from Unity. We are allotted 17 slots, and it would be exciting to fill them all. If you are interested in being a part of Unity's delegation please contact Katie Lawson at the Church Office.

And Prairie Star District Too!

Join UUs from eight states in Iowa City on the weekend of April 28–30 for the UUA Prairie Star District Annual Conference. Hear speakers from the UUA, participate in worship services, choose from a variety of workshops to attend, and enjoy music and art. Contact the Church Office for a brochure and registration form.



Happy 20th Anniversary!!

On April 5, 1986, Janne Eller-Isaacs was ordained as a minister in the Unitarian Universalist tradition. We mark the passing of the 20th anniversary of her ordination with a celebration of Janne's ministry.

Stop by the Parish Hall after either service on Sunday, April 2, to have some light refreshments and give your best wishes.

ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES...

Living By Heart

Living By Heart is an introduction to a uniquely Unitarian Universalist spiritual discipline. Developed by Laurel Hallman, Senior Minister of First Unitarian Church in Dallas, in response to the life and work of Harry Scholefield, Minister Emeritus of our church in San Francisco, "Living By Heart" has helped inspire the spiritual lives of many people including our co-ministers, Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs, who will lead this day-long introductory workshop.

Please bring a text, either poetry or prose that you would like to learn by heart. Lunch will be potluck. Please bring a dish to share. You may register in advance by calling the church office at 651/228-1456. Living By Heart will be held Saturday, April 15, from 9:30 to 4:00 p.m. (*Bring food to share at lunch.*) Registration is free of charge for those who make a financial pledge to Unity Church, and \$60 for those who are non-pledging.

Committed Couples Class

Each year Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs offer a seven-session course on marriage as a spiritual path. The course is intended for couples, gay or straight, who wish to strengthen their relationships through self-reflection, focused conversation and the support of good companions on the path. This class can be very helpful if you and your partner are:

- ♦ preparing for marriage
- ♦ searching for a second wind
- ♦ wanting to renew your vows

It will meet on seven consecutive Tuesday evenings beginning on April 11 from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. Childcare is available upon request if you notify us by the Wednesday before class time. Register by contacting Julie Handberg by phone at the Church Office or by email at julieh@unityunitarian.org.



Daylight Savings Time!

Don't be an April Fool! Daylight Savings Time begins at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 2. Be sure to set your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed on Saturday, April 1!

If You're Happy and You Know It

by Katie Lawson, Hallman Ministerial Intern

Recently the London School of Economics published a World Happiness Survey that ranked countries based on the percentage of people who reported being happy in those places. The United States does not fair particularly well in this competition, I'm sorry to report. We come out 46th — behind countries like the Dominican Republic, Estonia, and India. Bangladesh is first.

The study also asked people what it is exactly that they feel contributes to their happiness. This reminded me of a memorable visit I made to my college career center as an alumni. I was investigating the career change that would eventually lead me to divinity school and stopped in for a visit with a career counselor. The first thing she had me do was fill out a Personal Wellness Survey. The premise was that you shouldn't make any major career decisions in the midst of unhappiness that may have nothing to do with your career. Work on general happiness first, THEN think about whether or not your career is satisfying. The way this survey was constructed was to ask you about factors that had been shown to be determiners of happiness. For example, it has been shown that having a pet contributes to people's happiness, so this survey asked how much time you spend each week with an animal. Another asked about time outdoors.

My favorite question wondered how much time I spent each week listening to live music. To be perfectly honest, I have never thought of myself as a music person. I like music well enough and have some preferences, but I'm not a true zealot the way many of my friends are. However, the other night, we splurged to go see Catie Curtis in concert and to hear my friends' singing group open for her. I had never heard Catie Curtis' music and went mostly to support my friends, but those three hours lifted me from Fairly Content to Absolutely Joyful. I found myself completely enlivened by the conversation between these artists and their music. I even went home and spent a couple of hours the next day playing my guitar. I had forgotten what a difference it makes to hear and watch and feel people making music.

The frustrating thing is that when you aren't happy, it is the hardest thing in the world to find the energy to do the things that might help. We tend to do the things that lead us toward happiness when we are already happy. It doesn't always help to put the cart before the happy horse, but sometimes systematically attending to those little things that really do matter is enough to turn the corner.

Rob asked us the other day in a staff meeting what it was we did to regain our center when we were feeling off balance. I know that sleeping outside is one thing that helps me. Others knew it to be exercise or tidying the house. Another survey on happiness found that people who have a sense of being connected to a community report being happier. I can certainly see this at work in the lives of people at church.

What is it that works for you? What items would you put on your own happiness survey to know how well you are serving your happiness these days? However happiness blooms for you, may it find you and may you know how much your presence contributes to the happiness of those around you.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH / ANTI-RACISM NEWS

FROM THE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM:

2006 Easter Offering

The Easter Offering this year will support the efforts of the Restorative Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team.

Restorative Justice, in the broad sense, is a philosophy and a process that seeks healing after the harmful actions of an individual have damaged the community. The primary way that this kind of healing takes place is when stakeholders come together in a circle conversation. Restorative justice circles allow for all involved individuals to take an active role in coming to terms with the brokenness they have caused or experienced. Examples of how restorative justice has been used in the criminal justice arena include victim-offender mediation groups, sentencing circles, and community-based support groups for crime victims and ex-offenders.

Unity Church's Restorative Justice Ministry Team members express their commitment to Restorative Justice in various ways. Some team members befriend imprisoned offenders, some participate in circle conversations in a neighborhood or prison setting, some collect goods that ex-offenders will need upon release, some work professionally in the field. Additionally, the team has decided to join other faith communities in tolling the church bell at 6:00 p.m. on days when an execution takes place anywhere in the U.S. And the team sponsors the national UU *Behind Bars* conference at the end of this month.

For many on the team, participating in circle facilitation trainings at Unity has been an insightful, powerful, even life-altering experience. We look forward to dedicating a significant portion of the Easter collection to fund circle training at Unity in the fall for interested Unity members together with others beyond our church community who wish to deepen their understanding of and facility with the Restorative Justice circle.

"Behind Bars" Prison Ministry Conference

There are still many ways you can help... On the weekend of April 21-23, Unity Church's Restorative Justice Ministry Team hosts prison chaplains and other professionals and lay people from across the country in a first of its kind conference. "Behind Bars" will provide opportunities for people involved in prison-related ministries to gather together, share ideas and experiences, hear from experts, and begin a national dialog about the role of liberal religious values in criminal justice work.

Your help is needed! The Restorative Justice Team is especially looking for volunteers able to help with:

- ♦ **Conference logistics and hospitality.** These include making signs, staffing a registration table, and so on
- ♦ **Ground Transportation.** Transportation is needed between Unity Church and places of lodging
- ♦ **Housing.** The conference hopes to provide in-home lodging for about 40 conference participants. Meals will be provided at Unity Church. Spare bedrooms would be very helpful to those who do not have extra funds for hotels. (And a way to meet new people!)
- ♦ **Kitchen Volunteers.** The conference will need help cooking and/or serving meals and advance food preparation.

If you're able to help, or would like more information about the conference, contact Pat Haff at the Church Office or Marion Seeley Kreisman at 651/488-9274. If you know Unitarian Universalists who work actively in restorative justice, please help us spread the word about this upcoming conference.

FROM THE ANTI-RACISM TEAM:

Looking for Team Members

The Anti-Racism Leadership Ministry Team is looking for new members. This is a three-year commitment and you must have already had the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative (MCARI) anti-racism training or be willing to take it soon [see below]. If you are ready to join our anti-racism work please stop by the Anti-Racism table in the Parish Hall or talk to any member of the team. Current team members are: Cris Brizuela, Sue Connor, Pauline Eichten, Allen Giles, Kevin Harris, Wendy Harris, Katie Lawson, Steve Lewis, Angela Newhouse, Lia Rivamonte, and staff liaison Pat Haff.

An Anti-Racism Workshop

This one-day workshop, scheduled for Friday, April 28, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. is an in-depth consideration of the systemic, institutionalized dynamics of racism. It examines the power equation that is central to all social expressions of racism and explores practical strategies for dismantling systemic racism. This is an excellent opportunity for participants to explore how their faith communities can respond to systemic racism. The workshop is based on the work of the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative (MCARI). MCARI has provided substantial guidance and training to members of Unity Church's Anti-Racism Leadership Team. There is a \$15 fee for the workshop. It is important to register soon as there are limited spaces available. For more information, contact Pat Haff at the Church Office.



commUNITY

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH / THIRD SERVICE

A Time Together...

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be able to do all that we are dreaming about. What we do know is that both you as members and friends of the congregation and we, as your ministers, will be enriched immeasurably by the time apart.

From Kit...

Without a doubt, we will miss both of the ministers while they are pursuing new adventures! But we also know that this is the right thing for our church to require of them. With the continued presence of two Executive Team members, we will enjoy continued stable leadership. Visiting former interns and guest ministers will enliven our weeks. And the familiar routines and opportunities will go on until Rob and Janne return in the summer.

FROM THE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE TEAM:

Whole Farm Coop Orders For April

Members and friends of Unity Church can buy meat, cheese, produce and much more from local, sustainable farmers and pick it up right at Unity. The Sustainable Agriculture Ministry Team has partnered with Whole Farm Cooperative to make Unity Church a delivery location for their products.

During April, place an order with Whole Farm using the internet (wholefarmcoop.com), or by phone at 320/732-3023 by Friday, April 14. Orders will be delivered to Unity Church on Wednesday, April 19. Invoices are enclosed with your order. You pay by sending a check for the invoice amount directly to Whole Farm.

To find out more, stop by the table in the Parish Hall or contact Pat Haff at the Church Office.



FROM THE EVERGREEN PROJECTS MINISTRY TEAM:

Evergreen Quilt Raffle and Silent Auction

The Evergreen Quilters have been at it again — every month for the past year, stitching up another wonderful quilt for this year's raffle as well as smaller "story quilts" for the 2006 silent auction. Keep your eyes open for the quilts during the month of May when they will be hung in the Parish Hall. We encourage you to buy raffle tickets and bid on the smaller pieced, quilted, and embroidered items all during May. The proceeds from the raffle and the silent auction go toward supporting several important projects focusing on programs for homeless and hungry people in St. Paul at two shelters and a foodshelf.

Evergreen Foodshelf News

The next Food Drive Sunday will be April 16 when the foodshelf items will be canned vegetables and tomato sauce. Remember that any item, including non-perishable items not listed, can be donated at any time. Monthly items are simply suggestions for what can be brought each month. Please deposit items in the Portland or Holly Avenue foodshelf bins.

THIRD SERVICE SURVEY

Starting September 2006, Unity Church will add a third service to our regular Sunday schedule. Your input is very valuable to us in this process, so please indicate below which services you and other members of your household would likely prefer. **Please return this survey to the Church Office by Sunday, April 12. Additional comments are always welcome.**

1. Assuming that all three services are similar in content and Religious Education offerings, please indicate the Sunday scenario below that meets your preference most closely.

SCENARIO A: SUNDAY SERVICES AT 8:30, 10:00 & 11:30 a.m.

- or -

SCENARIO B: SUNDAY SERVICES AT 9:00, 11:00 a.m. & 4:30 p.m.

2. For each scenario, please rank the times from 1 through 3 (with 1 being most likely) that you would be apt to attend:

Scenario A (rank 1-3)

8:30 a.m. _____

10:00 a.m. _____

11:30 a.m. _____

Scenario B (rank 1-3)

9:00 a.m. _____

11:00 a.m. _____

4:30 p.m. _____

For planning purposes, please provide us with the following information for your household.

When do you normally attend services? _____

Adult #1 (Name): _____

Adult #2 (Name): _____

Child/Youth: _____ Age: _____

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Registration for Fall R.E.

Registration for 2006–07 will begin in May. Watch for schedule information and registration forms in the mail and on the Unity Church website at unityunitarian.org. Early enrollment will be especially important to a smooth start to the church year, as Unity is implementing a third Sunday service this September.

Dedication of Older Children

Unity families whose children were not celebrated as infants are invited to have their children to participate in our yearly special dedication ceremony on May 21. Generally speaking, children ages 3 to 12 find this a meaningful experience. Each child will process to the chancel with other children, participate in a dedication liturgy and receive a chalice for the family. The ceremony takes place during both worship services. Please contact Kerri at the church office by May 14 if your family is interested in taking part in the Dedication of Older Children.

Religious Education Teacher — Early Bird Raffle

This spring's recruitment for R.E. teachers for the 2006–07 church year offers an exciting incentive to Unity adults to commit early to a volunteer teaching position. Early commitments allow the staff and lay leaders to plan ahead and helps the church year start smoothly. Recruitment will begin in April; this raffle will take place in May. Prizes are needed for this event. Contributing a prize is an easy, effective way to support Religious Education here at Unity. Prizes that might appeal to potential teachers might include:

- ♦ Artwork done by Unity members
- ♦ Professional services such as tax preparation, massage, childcare, photography
- ♦ Weekends at a lake house
- ♦ Event tickets from a season package
- ♦ House concerts by musicians and choir members

If you would like to offer a prize for our teacher Early Bird raffle, please contact Kerri at the Church Office.

Unity Young Adult Group

Tuesday, April 11

6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Potluck Dinner and a Brainstorming/Planning session for future events! Please come with your ideas, input and reflections — not to mention your favorite yummy dish to share.

Tuesday, April 25

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

"Developing Ethics without a Creed" with Janne Eller-Isaacs, who will reflect on the Unitarian Universalist path. As a non-creedal faith, how do we develop ethical standards and guidelines for our lives?

Death Unit

Beginning April 2, our Workshop Rotation children will be exploring death and dying in our Sunday School sessions. The Big Ideas for this unit include the truth that death is inevitable; it awaits us all and will touch our lives many times through the death of loved ones. We will also affirm death's positive role as a teacher, a reality that informs the way we choose to live.

Activities will include the construction and destruction of a mandala and the reading and play-acting of the Buddhist parable of Kisi and the Mustard Seed Medicine. In this parable, a parent loses a child and learns that every village family has been touched by death. In Music, we'll introduce the five stages of grief through Mozart's Requiem. A guest panel of nurses, doctors and hospice workers will answer children's questions in the Science Workshop.

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to attend our workshops with their children. If your family is facing a recent or impending loss, please contact Kerri before April 2 so that staff teachers can anticipate your child's special needs and concerns around this topic.

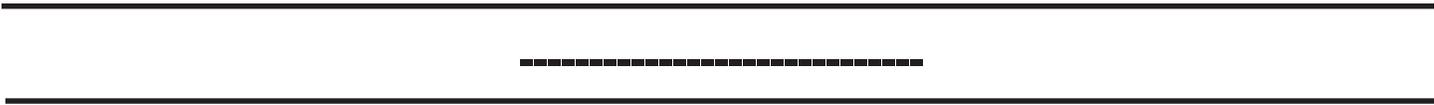
Unity adults who work as nurses, physicians and hospice workers are invited to participate in our Science Workshop. Professional knowledge and experience are gifts that can be given to our children through responses to their questions.

Coming of Age

Our Coming of Age youth and mentors are drawing near the exciting culmination of their time and learning together. Friends and family from Unity and beyond are warmly invited to attend the presentation of the class' statements of spiritual identity during the ceremonies on Friday, April 28, and Saturday, April 29 — both evenings' presentations begin at 7:00 p.m..

Important dates remain for our COA families:

- ♦ **Wednesday April 19: COA Statement Prep night.** 7:15 to 8:30 p.m. Get feedback and suggestions from peers, mentors and advisors — and a former English teacher, too.
- ♦ **Saturday, April 22: Service Learning Saturday at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.** 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. with potluck lunch.
- ♦ **Sunday, April 23: Statements of spiritual identity due.** Email to Kerri at kerri@unityunitarian.org
- ♦ **Friday, April 28: Coming of Age Ceremony, Group 1.** 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. Banquet for mentors and youth followed by presentation of statements to the congregation.
- ♦ **Saturday, April 29: Coming of Age Ceremony, Group 2.** 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. Banquet for mentors and youth followed by presentation of statements to the congregation.
- ♦ **Sunday, April 30 (11:00 service): Coming of Age Sunday.** Please arrive by 10:00 a.m. for photos and instructions.





HERITAGE SOCIETY / GLBTQ LOBBY DAY / EASTER PLANTS

HERITAGE SOCIETY DINNER 2006:

Ann Bancroft Comes to Unity's Heritage Society Dinner!

Ann Bancroft, one of the world's preeminent polar explorers, comes to Unity Church for our Heritage Society Dinner on May 12. A native Minnesotan and internationally recognized leader, Ann is dedicated to inspiring women and girls around the world to unleash the power of their dreams.

Ann enjoys using her achievements on the polar ice caps as a platform for bigger, more important work. As Ann says: "My polar expeditions have less to do about making history or firsts and much more to do about igniting young people to their own dreams and possibilities. The best way for me to be an educator is to teach by doing."

All those who have made a planned gift to Unity Church will have an opportunity to meet Ann at the Heritage Society Dinner on May 12. You need not have a large estate or be wealthy to join the Heritage Society; people of all means are able to join — and encouraged to do so. To find out more about the Heritage Society and how easy it is to join, contact Barbara at the Church Office.

Easter and the Partner Church

by Sue Conner

Easter comes this year on April 16. For our Partner Church in Transylvania this is an important liturgical celebration day. It is a Holy Day. Communion is celebrated by the congregation. Our Partners in Transylvania are Unitarians. They and their ancestors for over 400 years have been Unitarians. For them their faith is what may be called a "received faith," one into which they were born, one which is given them with all the richness of its heritage and the knowledge that their forebears relied on this faith for sustenance throughout the travails of history. For this faith some of their ancestors died. Their Unitarianism has been for them and their ancestors a joy, a comfort, a guide, and, no doubt, a challenge — all that one would wish for from a faith.

The Partner Church Team will be finish their blooming plant sale on April 2. You will be able to pick up your plants at church on Palm Sunday (April 9) so that you will have them in your homes on Easter. A. Johnson and Sons, florists, will be getting the plants for us this year. Johnson florists is a third generation family owned local business. It has been in its location on Grand Avenue for 70 years. You may be interested to know that all of their roses are Minnesota grown. "How on earth do you do that?" we asked Mr. Johnson. He told us that they are all grown hydroponically in Hammel, Minnesota. If you would like to be able to see and tour the facility, that can be arranged. It is evidently a sight to behold as they have to wear stilts as they cut the roses!

Lobby Day at the State Capitol for GLBTQ Equality

Thursday, April 27
Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul

Just Fair Lobby Day is a wonderful opportunity for Minnesota's GLBTQ and allied communities to make their voices heard at the Legislature. It is time to build relationships with your elected representatives. To find out more, contact Laura at the Church Office.

Unity Church Board of Trustees Resolution Opposing Constitutional Amendment Banning Gay Marriage

We oppose any amendment to the Minnesota Constitution that prohibits marriage, civil unions and/or legal protections for same-sex couples. [passed unanimously, February 22, 2006]

BRING BLOOM BACK INTO YOUR LIFE WITH UNITY'S Easter Plant Sale

A Fundraiser for the Partner Church Team

Quantity		Price
_____	Easter Lily x (\$20) = _____	
_____	Hydrangea (pink) x (\$30) = _____	
_____	Hydrangea (blue) x (\$30) = _____	
_____	Tulips x (\$20) = _____	
	() yellow () purple () pink () red	
_____	Begonia x (\$20) = _____	
	() pinks () peaches	
_____	Cyclamen x (\$20) = _____	
	() purple () red () pink	
_____	Hyanciths x (\$20) = _____	
	() pink () blue () white	
_____	Azalea x (\$30) = _____	
	() white () hot pink () red	
	() coral () lavender	
_____	Daisy Mums x (\$20) = _____	
	() white () yellow () lavender	

Total Enclosed: _____

DEADLINE: Drop off order forms at the table in the Parish Hall or fax to the Church Office (651/228-0927) by April 2.
Make check to Unity Church (attn: Partner Church Team)

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

PICK UP YOUR PLANTS AT CHURCH ON THE MORNING OF PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 9.

MUSIC / PASTORAL CARE

Music Notes

by Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries

*Music expresses that which cannot be said
and on which it is impossible to be silent.*

— Victor Hugo —

It's your turn! Throughout the year — and particularly in this 'spring-turning' season — I am looking ahead with plans for the next season here at Unity Church. I begin evaluating what to continue and what to add, looking for music that will stun us with its beauty, excite us with its energy, even bring us to laughter with its inherent ebullience. Depending on the appropriate range that a morning's thematic topic opens up for us, what are the variations possible, genres most meaningful, and ethnic musical perspectives possible. I begin the 'season' in which I am most challenged and most excited — the search for music that will be meaningful to us in our time of gathering and sharing on Sunday mornings. What is the music that will offer us moments of individual reflection within the embrace of community?

I would like to hear from you! While understanding that there is a wide range of preference among us, your comments and reactions are very valuable in assisting me to determine that course which can touch as many 'ports' as possible. What are the moments that have been of interest or meaning to you? What are the moments you are interested in experiencing? Here is your chance to be part of this 'search'. Please email me at ruth@unityunitarian.org or drop me a note. I would love to hear from you!

Next month: On your request! Some of the most popular recipes from the Concerts with a Cause receptions prepared by Marikay Litzau and assisted by Sara Langworthy and Lynn Schoenstedt.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for National Conference

Unity Church is the host for the Unitarian Universalist Musician's Network (UUMN) annual conference from August 1–6. We need you to assist and show the country the warm welcome of our congregation. As volunteers, you would be a guest to the concerts and plenary sessions. Help is needed with registration, lunchtime activities, hospitality, programs, concert coordination, and other general and miscellaneous areas.

Please consider helping us with this national convention here at Unity Church. If you are interested in being part of this exciting event please contact Ruth at the Church Office.

Choir 'Walk-In' Sundays: June 4 & 11

Put this on your calendar now and plan to come and sing with some of the Unity Choir members on these Sundays. Rehearsal is at 9:00 in the Foote Room with an 'easy-to-put-together' anthem. Sing at the 10:00 service that morning! Great fun and a wonderful way to satisfy that 'urge to sing'!

A Pastoral Letter Update

Dear Unity friends,

Since mid-December we have known that our son, Aaron, is no longer in remission from a malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumor. This is his fourth attempt to fight the disease. After months of careful thought, Aaron's oncologist has found a world-class team of surgeons who think they can resect the tumor with minimal damage to the nerves to which it is attached. The surgery will be done at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York. We will spend the month of April in Manhattan for tests, Aaron's surgery, healing and rehabilitation. After a month or so of rest at home, Aaron will have seven weeks of radiation therapy — most likely at Fairview University Hospital.

This plan took a long time coming. The waiting has been tough, but we have felt tremendous support from our community at Unity. Many of you have responded with cards, hugs, meals and prayers. Aaron even has his own special candles burning during each children's chapel service. Thank you so much for lifting our spirits during this difficult time.

Sincerely,
Jen and Charlie Vanek

Follow the progress of Aaron's treatment by visiting his site at:
www.caringbridge.com/page/aaron

Welcome Spring in the Garden with Mila!

Mila Vocal Ensemble warmly invites the members of Unity Church to join them on Saturday, April 1, from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. "in the garden" at Cowles Conservatory at the Walker Art Center. The concert celebrates the release of their most recent CD, *V'Gradinata* (To the Garden), a compilation of traditional music from Bulgaria. Mila, an eight-voice women's a cappella choir, will be joined by instrumental musicians for an evening of thrilling Bulgarian music, food, wine and fun. Tickets for the event are \$15 and may be purchased at the door or on their website. For more information, visit www.milavocalensemble.com

SPONSORED BY THE MACALESTER UU GROUP: A Benefit Concert for Children in Afghanistan

All are invited to attend an event inspired by The Breadwinner Trilogy, by Deborah Ellis, which includes performances by many local musicians. The event will be held at Weyerhaeuser Chapel at Macalester College on Sunday, April 23, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Freewill donations will be accepted at the door. Proceeds will benefit Friends of Aschiana — an Afghan Non-Government Organisation that has provided services, support and programs to street working children and their families for close to ten years. For more information, contact Marita Bujold at 651/646-0851.

ART / MUSIC / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

April Art

A Visual Documentation of Habitat for Humanity and its Work in the Twin Cities

This exhibit consists of work by students who were taking a photography workshop at the University of Minnesota. Their project was to document different aspects of Habitat for Humanity and its work in the Twin Cities. The goals behind student interest in the class included the opportunity to gain professional experience working with volunteers and clients of Habitat for Humanity. The class also offered students the opportunity to develop their own unique photographic vision and approach to defining the nature of the documentary photograph. This included the great pleasure of working with an interesting group of people and doing the best job they could in communicating the goals of Habitat for Humanity.



Chamber, Candlelight, and a Cause ♦ April 2 at 4:00 p.m. ♦

The Drama of Voice and Poetry An Array of Songs from Handel to Libby Larsen KrisAnne Weiss & Ruth Palmer

Hear and explore the dramatic combination of poetry and song. Experience the effect of these elements combining to create a unique dramatic scene in songs spanning several centuries and in several languages. KrisAnne Weiss is a mezzo-soprano who is well-known for her work in opera, concert, and recital. A native of St. Paul, she has performed with the Minnesota Opera, the Lawrence University Symphony and the Bakken Trio, among many others.

Tickets are on a 'plus generosity' system: suggested amounts are \$10/adult; \$5/child age 6 to 12; \$20/family unit — though larger donations for our 'cause' are always welcome. Child care is provided with one week's notice to the Church Office.

Calling All Artists

Unity Church Art Shows 2006–2007

Unity artists and artists who are friends of Unity Church are invited to apply to exhibit in the Parish Hall for the months of August 2006 through July 2007. Application materials will be available beginning the first week of April from Laura Schlatter at the Church Office. All applications should be returned to the Church Office, attn: Art Team, by Monday, May 15. Applications will be reviewed by the Art Team at the end of May.

THIS MONTH'S 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, April 3, April 17, and May 1 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Contact: Phil Morton at 952/934-3578

Many Voices Political Discussion Group

Contact for dates and topics: Vince Grundman at 651/488-0778

Unity Divorce/Transitions Group

Contact Laura at the Church Office.

Unity Singles Group

Contact Laura at the Church Office.

A New Look at the Bible

First Thursday of each month, 7:00 p.m.
Contact: Joan Lovrien at 651/739-6958

Afterthoughts

Every Sunday after the first service
Contact: Paul Gade at 651/487-7806

Unity Young Adult Group

Second and fourth Tuesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
(Potluck on the second Tuesday)
Contact: Katie at the Church Office

Mother-Daughter Book Club (grades 3–6)

Held monthly at members' homes on the first Sunday of every month.
For times and locations, contact Gretchen Olson at 651/647-9591.

Unitots!

A group for families with kids through preschool age.
Every Friday at 9:30 a.m. Contact: Ryan Shriver at 651/365-1156.

Grandparent Unitots!

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

Unity Bridge Club

First Friday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at members' homes. For location and directions contact Bernice Hansen at 651/633-3276.

Interweave

...for LGBT people and their friends and allies
Contact Laura at the Church Office.

Evergreen Quilt Group

Second Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m.
Contact: Kathie Simon Frank at 612/379-4253

U-Knitarians

...for those who enjoy knitting and crocheting
Contact Laura at the Church Office for more information.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE INFORMATION

Sunday services are held on Sundays at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted. Worship leaders are assisted on Sundays by Worship Associates and Sunday Welcome Teams.

April 2 (9:30 and 11:00)

"What Wondrous Love" — Dottie Mathews

As suffering befalls each of us, to what resources do we reach in our efforts to find our way back onto the path? Where is our grounding and sense of connectedness amidst the inevitable turmoil of life? Join Ministerial Intern Dottie Mathews and Worship Associate Jay Horan as they reflect on that which sustains us in life's most difficult times.

April 9 (9:30 and 11:00)

"Gravity and Grace" — Rob Eller-Isaacs

Taking their title from Simone Weil's challenging philosophical treatise, Rob and Worship Associate Sonia Hazard present the fourth service in our series on suffering. Religious liberals reject the notion of atonement by suffering and yet we cannot ignore the spiritual distillation which sometimes comes when one is able to meet one's fate with equanimity and even love.

Easter Sunday, April 16 (9:30 & 11:00 a.m.)

"Practice Resurrection" — Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs, Katie Lawson, and Dottie Mathews

Come join the entire Unity Church family as we celebrate Easter. There is a quality of resurrection in finally coming home at last. When that "day of days" is finally here, when we recognize our longing as an existential state, when we realize that home is more a state of being than a place to go, then the sense of dislocation drifts away and you and I are finally at home. This year's Easter Offering benefits the Restorative Justice program.

April 23 (9:30 and 11:00)

"The Soul's Appetite" — Janne Eller-Isaacs

We are creatures of deep desires and needs. We have great appetites for the things that life has to offer. What are the consequences to wanting too much or starving our appetites? Janne and Worship Associate Ray McGee will wrestle with this beginning service in our series on appetite.

April 30 (9:30 and 11:00)

"Because I Told You So" — Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs

Coming of Age Sunday is one of the turning points in Unity Church's liturgical year. We come together on Friday and Saturday evenings to listen to the theological credos of our ninth graders. Then, on Sunday morning to the rock and roll stylings of The Eclectics, we invite them to cross the threshold. Rob and Janne will conduct the service. Rob's sermon will examine parental authority and its relationship to self-actualization.

Sunday, May 7 (9:30 & 11:00 a.m.)

"Arthur Foote Music Sunday" — Katie Lawson

Unity Choir will present choral works by American composers Morten Lauridsen and Eric Whitacre. These richly textured compositions capture the poetry of Agee, Cummings, Neruda and Rilke. These works will be woven together by various readings and supplemental poetry. Katie Lawson will conduct the service with Worship Associate Brian Newhouse.



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