

Going Unitarian in the Digital Age or How I Found Myself at Unity

by Vincent Sharma

Not all days at work are busy, and it was definitely a slow day for me. It was fifteen minutes before quitting time and I had completed all my work for the day. I logged on to my Hotmail account hoping someone had emailed me, but I saw that my inbox was empty and my junk email folder was full.

I'll spare the gentle readers of this story a description of most of the junk email messages I received that day, but one email did catch my eye. It had the subject "What religious type are you?" I was skeptical, but seeing that I had nothing better to do in the next fifteen minutes, I clicked on it.

It took me to a site called beliefnet.com which had a quiz that promised to tell me what religious type I was. After I was done, I hit "Submit" and the site returned a page that said my beliefs were most closely aligned with the religious philosophy of a "Secular Humanist". Huh? I'd never heard that term before, so I highlighted the term, copied it to my clipboard, opened up a new browser window and pasted it into Google.

After Googling it, I started clicking on the links Google returned. There were some that were for various Humanist organizations, and one lead me to the Humanist Manifesto, but I was most interested in the ones that individual Humanists wrote to describe their beliefs. Then I noticed that some Humanists had links to UU churches and organizations on their pages. I thought that very odd, since I knew no church would ever admit a Humanist.

After viewing the fifth page which had a link to a UU organization my curiosity was piqued, and I clicked on a link to uua.org. I was electrified by what I saw there. There actually was a church for people like me! I read the various sections, some containing questions and answers about UUism, some describing the long and often turbulent history of the faith.

Then I came upon a section that which allowed me to a radius search for UU congregations by entering my zip code. The search brought up several churches: a Universalist one in Minneapolis, a Unitarian one in Saint Paul, and several others in Woodbury, Eagan, and White Bear Lake. So I started clicking on the links to the web sites of the churches, and I was immediately drawn to Unity because I liked its architecture. I saw that Unity had a class called Finding Yourself at Unity and after telling my thunderstruck wife that I would actually consider going to a church, I signed up for the class. From there the church staff made us all feel so welcome and had such a great respect for what I had previously considered to be beliefs only I had, that within a year we were members and we had my daughter and son dedicated there.

I have undergone a spiritual awakening at Unity, and I credit the church for being a beacon for me and my family as we go through the trials and tribulations of life. And that is why you will find me at Unity to this very day.

Vincent Sharma is a member of Unity Church's People of Color Fellowship Group. This article is the first in an occasional series about how members of the fellowship group found Unity Church. Watch for more in the future.

Third Service Information!

Want further information
about the transition to three
services this fall? See the
articles on pages 4 & 5.



The Church Office will
be closed Tuesday, July
4, in observance of
Independence Day.

JUST WORDS / WHEEL OF LIFE

Just Words

A few weeks ago, on April 23rd, I preached a sermon entitled "The Soul's Appetite." In it I called attention to some of the simple ways we can align our actions with our values. We so easily fall right into line with mainstream cultural expectations. Madison Avenue assures us that something readily available, something we can buy, will fill the emptiness inside. But you and I both know it isn't so. Wendell Berry's great poem "Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front" includes these lines:

*So, friends, every day do something
that won't compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it.*

The sermon included a number of things we can do every day that won't compute, simple ways to declare our independence. Then, over the past couple of weeks I've gotten a number of notes with additional suggestions.

- ◆ Simplify children's birthday parties (They tend to be far too expensive and imply that love can be bought and sold.)
- ◆ Refuse to complete any marketing surveys (except, of course the annual survey at church)
- ◆ Throw out your T.V.
- ◆ Buy only used clothes
- ◆ Accept no mail order catalogues
- ◆ Purchase sustainable and locally grown foods

One can easily argue with any of the suggestions above. My hope is not to convince you to accept any or all of these particular approaches but instead to encourage you to ask what can I do today to declare my independence from the false gods of sales and marketing? How can I bring my checkbook into closer alignment with my values? Berry's poem ends:

*As soon as the generals and the politicians
can predict the motions of your mind,
lose it. Leave it as a sign
to mark the false trail, the way
you didn't go. Be like the fox
who makes more tracks than necessary,
some in the wrong direction.
Practice resurrection.*

Rob and I wish you a restorative summer, After General Assembly we plan to head up to our Pike Bay cabin for the month of July. Then we're back to serve as chaplains to the National Conference of the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network, which will be held at Unity Church the first week in August.

You can expect an array of excellent services this summer beginning on June 25 when Briana Melom will offer a service on the life and ministry of Frederick May Eliot. The Pastoral Care Team will be on duty as will many members of the Unity Church staff.

Blessings,
Janne Eller-Isaacs

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Rachel Elizabeth Howey

born April 21, 2006

daughter of
Dale and Alana Howey

ANNOUNCEMENTS / MINISTERIAL INTERN

On Making a Good Ending

by Katie Lawson, Hallman Ministerial Intern

A Celebration and Farewell for Katie Lawson

A celebration of Katie Lawson's ministry will be held after the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, June 11. Stop by and wish Katie well as she ends her Hallman Internship year.

Summer Solstice: N-S-E-W

Night of Midsummer Solstice Celebration
Evening Potluck on a Wellspring Wednesday.

Come gather with other members and friends of our church community as we celebrate the Summer Solstice on the well-lit evening of Wednesday, June 21. A potluck dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m.; the rest of the festivities will begin about 7:30.

Join the celebration of stories, songs and a little dancing as the longest light of summer holds on into the night. If you would like to assist in the planning or would like more information, contact Bryan Janssens at 651/646-4216.



Flower Communion Collection for the UUA

As of May 23, Unity Church has donated \$8,087.50 in the special Flower Communion offering, benefiting the Unitarian Universalist Association. We thank you for your generosity.

Ingathering of New Members

The next Ingathering of New Members will be held at the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, June 4. If you wish to be part of this Ingathering, contact Laura at the Church Office.

Summer Musicians Wanted!

Summer is a great time to share your musical gifts during Sunday services. If you are interested in participating with the music, please contact Kathleen Bartholomay at 651/698-2431 or Ruth Palmer at the Church Office.

A friend recently asked me what my favorite part of a worship service is. This is a hard question. I hate to choose favorites, especially given how much it can change for me from week to week and how much each element of worship is connected and inextricable from the others. That being said, I have to say that in this year with you, I have really come to love benedictions. I love their spontaneity and their bare-boned-ness, and I also think benedictions have taught me something I need to learn about saying goodbye.

Our society hasn't given us many tools with which to say goodbye well. How many times have you heard someone (maybe yourself) say, "I hate goodbyes." It's not that we hate the leave-taking, though it is surely painful to part; it's the actual act of saying goodbye that's so hard. Goodbyes are intimate. It is sometimes like saying "I love you" to someone you haven't said that to before. And while it is often difficult and awkward, to say "I love you" or "goodbye" with sincerity and intention, to do so is sacred. When we say goodbye, we are acknowledging our connectedness and honoring the value of that connectedness. Some of what I think I know about God shows up in goodbyes.

Both benedictions and goodbyes ask us to pause, reflect, and be present to transition. Our culture is heavy on movement and light on stillness, and it is no wonder that we give short shrift to goodbyes. We seem to speed through leave-takings, not taking the time to acknowledge the transition and instead moving on to the next thing before our bodies and our spirits have had a chance to catch up. One of the most valuable things churches offer us is the opportunity to pause and honor goodbyes. Whether it is the Bridging ceremony or a memorial service or a benediction, we are able to stop long enough to watch one sun set before the next one rises. In so doing we are recognizing the value of a shared time and connection. We are letting the holy settle in for a moment.

Benediction, which comes from the Latin for "uttering a good thing," is a blessing that most often comes toward the end of a service. It is an invocation and an acknowledgement of the holy and a well-wishing. Many of the world's goodbyes sound like short benedictions: Adieu, Vaya con Dios, Shalom, Salaam Aleikum, Na pas sto kalo, Go with God, Godspeed, God keep you, God be with you... there are many more. I have developed deep trust in benedictions this year. I have come to know that in that moment my connection to the Whole and to you will let me know what to say. I never script them and I am astonished every time by how I am led by grace during benedictions. Lately, I am trying to let that same sense of connection and love lead me in my goodbyes.

As my time here at Unity Church comes to an end, I will be pausing often to say goodbye to this place I have come to love. Let me begin here by letting you know that I am humbled and emboldened by having been a part of this institution. I am so grateful for what you have taught me about the real value of church life, and I will take you with me wherever I go. I have no way of repaying you for this experience except to promise you that it will serve me well as I try to serve others. May you know how loved you are and may you have holiness as your most trusted companion.

Adieu, shalom, salaam aleikum, and amen.

THIRD SERVICE NEWS / HEART TO HEART

Opening Our Doors Ever Wider

by Dottie Mathews,
United Theological Seminary Intern

As I wrap up my final week here at Unity Church, I cannot help but reflect on the vibrancy and dynamism that I have witnessed here. This is an extraordinary congregation and I am so grateful to have been a part of your ministry team over these many months.

On August 1, I will assume my responsibilities as Assistant Minister at my home congregation, the Fox Valley UU Fellowship (FVUUF) in Appleton, Wisconsin, and I will take with me vivid memories and copious bits of wisdom that I have garnered while here. This is certainly a place of change and growth — a place where the concept of transformation is key to all we do and say.

One of the many ways this is evinced at Unity Church is in the excitement around planning for the Third Service coming in September. I have brought some experience to our discussions, having been a member of the FVUUF during the period of their addition of a third service years ago.

Back then, some folks wondered aloud, “Why do we have to do this now?” or “Is this really necessary?” The leadership took those questions quite seriously and the answers were always variations of the same theme: “We do need to do this — and we need to do this now — because we have a saving faith to which people are responding. We are dedicated to making it possible for more and more people to hear this message and join their hearts and spirits with ours!”

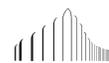
As at Unity Church, the FVUUF did not want to grow merely for the sake of larger numbers on our rosters but because we realized deeply that in order to open the doors of this community as wide as possible, we needed to take action that wasn’t necessarily comfortable or easy — but it was needed to fulfill the faith community’s goal of remaining welcoming and inclusive.

Recognizing the import of the Third Service’s viability, the FVUUF had a group of families who volunteered to switch their regular attendance to the new afternoon service. They were a “seed” group and their commitment has been acknowledged as very beneficial to the rapid attendance growth at that service.

These sorts of logistical challenges are very good problems to have! It is a great joy that there are people in this region who want to join their lives with this liberal religious community, with our beliefs and our dedication to social action. It is our task to be certain we are making the room ready for their arrival.

Heart to Heart: A Couples Enrichment Weekend

Heart to Heart is a program designed to enrich communication and intimacy in your relationship. This year’s 12th annual retreat will be held November 3–5. All couples committed to their partners and to their relationships are welcome — same-sex and opposite-sex, married and unmarried. Space is limited, so register early. For more information, visit the Heart to Heart website at <http://heart.mn.cx> or contact Laurel and Eric Lein at 651/227-0486.



commUNITY

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/year.

UNITY CHURCH–UNITARIAN
732 HOLLY AVENUE
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55104
651/228-1456 ♦ FAX: 651/228-0927
WWW.UNITYUNITARIAN.ORG

Why Did You Choose *Those* Service Times?

by Laura Schlatter, Membership Coordinator

Since we have decided on and begun to talk about the new worship service times with members of the Unity religious community, a number of people have asked staff, "Why did you choose *those* service times?" We want everyone to understand the reasons for these choices which, we believe, are in the best interests of Unity Church.

Once we decided that this is the right time to add a third Sunday worship service, we began to ask ourselves "when"? We held two primary values in our hearts and minds as we considered the "when" question: how to best serve people who are already part of this religious community, and how to "open our doors ever wider" — as Dottie Mathews says — to make our faith community accessible to those people who are searching for us but who have not yet found us.

As a staff, as we sat with the decision in the discernment process, we shared a growing sense of clarity about what would be in the best interests of Unity Church. As we talked it through, we agreed on a couple of ideas:

(1) Three services, all in the morning, would not enhance the quality of any of the services. People leading the worship, and leading and providing the music, would be very hard-pressed to offer three consecutive worship services that could truly offer "hope, beauty and inspiration" in a matter of four hours!

(2) If we want to make ourselves open and accessible to people who are not currently attending worship at Unity Church, we should offer an opportunity that is at a different time than the ones we currently offer. There are clearly people who are unable, or prefer not, to worship on Sunday mornings but who would welcome the opportunity to come later in the day.

Given the choice to start a third service in the afternoon, it was also clear that this is an opportunity to move the morning services a little bit further apart so that we can have more space — for parking, in the Parish Hall (maybe to see the artwork a bit better) — and just to breathe as we move from one event to another on those busy Sunday mornings. Starting at 9:00 a.m. did not feel so very early that people would find it terribly difficult.

In considering the time for the third service, we agreed that 4:30 in the afternoon should be late enough to finish with Sunday activities and yet early enough to get home in time for Sunday dinner. (If you are considering the 4:30 service and are concerned about having dinner by 6:00 — remember the crock pot!) We also wanted to find a time that would make sense for the Coming of Age and High School programs.

So, in these very busy times, we know that there are pros and

cons for many options. But as we considered the Mission and Goals, the Value, Vision and Moral Ownership statements developed by the Board of Trustees, it really did seem that some of the options seemed better than others. More capable of sustaining our community and helping us to share our faith with others. That is why we chose those service times.

We are counting on all of you to make the adjustments that are necessary to choose them as well. We invite you to consider carefully whether you can support the work of this religious community by committing to attend the 4:30 p.m. service at least three of four Sundays a month. We are excited about this important new step in the life of the church! We hope you are as well.



FROM THE WELCOMING CONGREGATION
MINISTRY TEAM:

Unity Church at Twin Cities Pride Festival

The Twin Cities Pride Festival will take place on June 24–25 in Loring Park in Minneapolis. This year, for the first time, Unity Church will be officially involved. The Festival will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Saturday and from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Unity Church will share a booth with other UU churches during the Festival. We'll be sharing information about Unity and its welcome to GLBTQ people and their allies. On Sunday, a group from Unity will march in the parade with others from UU churches. The parade starts at 11:00 a.m. and moves down Hennepin Avenue to the Park. We hope you'll consider attending the Festival or viewing — or marching in — the parade to support GLBTQ members of Unity Church and the many allies in the congregation.

Welcoming Congregation Movie Nights!

The Welcoming Congregation Ministry Team and boosters will be hosting three evenings of movie-viewing and discussion this summer! Each movie will touch on issues having to do with gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgendered people and, we hope, will provide a jumping-off point for good conversations.

Watch This Week at Unity announcements for names and details — we will show the movies on three Wednesday evenings — June 14, July 12 and August 9. We'll bring the popcorn, you save the date!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Religious Education News

Celebration of New Lives

The last Celebration of New Lives of this church year will take place on June 10 at the 10:00 a.m. service. This joyful event marks a public dedication of parents and congregation to the spiritual upbringing of our children. Families with new children under 18 months are invited to participate; we ask that celebrants be members of Unity Church or on the path toward membership. Contact Christy Randall, Coordinator of Young Children's Ministries, at the Church Office for more information about participating in this special service.

Jo LaFerla Joins Unity's Staff

Beginning June 15, Jo Laferla will officially be on board as Unity's Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. Church families and young adults can contact Jo with questions about OWL and COA, Tower Club, singles and young adult fellowship and education opportunities as well as the Macalester College UU group. Jo can be reached at the Church Office at extension 112 or at jo@unityunitarian.org.

Childcare Reminder

Did you know that childcare is available at all church-sponsored events, except evening events that end after 9:30 p.m. or events where alcohol is served? Christy Randall, Unity's Coordinator of Young Children's Ministries, can arrange childcare for children ages 6 months to 10 years of age. One week's advance notice is required.

Religious Education Registration 2006-2007

Uh-oh! Did you miss the Early Bird Registration for R.E. programming next year? Not to worry: registrations can be sent in through June. Class and service preferences will be honored on a first-come, first-served basis.

Families can download and print the necessary forms from our church website or pick them up at the Holly Avenue entrance. Please note that a complete registration will include a commitment on the Adult Volunteer Opportunities form. Contact Kerri at the Church Office with questions or to request that a registration packet be mailed to your family.

Grade 9 Religious Education: OWL/COA

Families with incoming ninth grade students should note that the registration deadline of June 4 is fast approaching. It is very important that we have complete registrations in order to reserve retreat centers and prepare our volunteer teaching staff. Confirmation letters, calendars and permission forms will arrive in the mail in August. If your family has questions about the program or needs a replacement packet, contact Kerri as soon as possible.

A Flotilla of Unitarians: Family Tubing Trip!

Join other Unity families on June 25 for a relaxing afternoon of tubing and picnicking on the Cannon River. We'll meet at church at 11:15 a.m. to arrange carpooling, or your family can meet us at the Welch Mills Canoe and Tubing Livery in Welch, Minnesota.

If your family would like to be guaranteed tubes, you must sign up in advance — they go fast on warm summer afternoons and you may be faced with a long, hot line.

The trip takes 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 hours (shorter trips are available); large tubes (adults and big kids) cost \$8, small tubes (smaller kids and coolers) cost \$7. Sign up in the Parish Hall or by contacting Kerri at the Church Office.

Summer Sundays: Kids Activities

It's summertime! Religious Education classes do not meet again until September. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, nursery care (ages 6 months to 3 years) and children's activities (ages 4 to 12) are offered at the 10:00 a.m. service. Parents can bring their children to the Yellow Hallway as early as 9:45 a.m. and should pick them up immediately following worship.

Supervising our children's activities is a great way for adults to volunteer in our ministry to kids: contact Kerri if you'd like to spend an occasional summer Sunday playing games and making crafts children.

Boone Con Congratulations!

Congratulations to Nolan Filter and Steve Volkenant, both from Unity, who helped plan and run the Boone Youth Conference this year in Boone, Iowa, from May 12-14. Boone Con is a district-wide annual youth event that gathers 7-12 graders for workshops, fellowship, and worship.

Rave reviews from youth and adults alike attest to Nolan's and Steve's hard work and collaboration with other Prairie Star Youth-Adult Council members. Boone was attended by a group of Unity youth, sponsored and transported by Rosemary Kessler. Thanks, Rosemary!

We look forward to more great things from this generation of YAC leaders!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

FROM THE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY MINISTRY TEAM:

Unity Church Summer Build With Habitat for Humanity

Unity Church will join forces again with Faith Builders, the St. Paul-based group of interfaith congregations, to build a new Habitat for Humanity house in St. Paul. Faith Builders has committed to staffing three weeks of volunteer construction crews.

Faith Builders consists of St. Paul congregations and volunteer organizers committed to affordable housing for St. Paul. This will be the second year of Unity's participation with Faith Builders.

Habitat for Humanity has a long history of helping construct affordable housing. Homeowners are required to contribute 300 hours of construction labor to their new homes or the homes of other prospective Habitat homeowners. After construction, Habitat homeowners are responsible for making monthly principle payments for mortgages. The interest-free loans for Habitat homes has helped almost 650 Twin Cities families realize the dream of home ownership.

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity has a wall panel construction shop in northeast Minneapolis and is able to efficiently construct and deliver completed wall sections to Twin City Habitat job sites. Many area building products suppliers and manufacturers donate building materials, and several area contractors donate work by licensed trades for electrical and heating system installations. These efforts help keep costs low for Habitat for Humanity, and make the Habitat homes very affordable.

Opportunities to Volunteer: Work dates are Mondays through Fridays, between June 12 and 30. Work days start at 8:00 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. Opportunities to help are available for all skill levels: general construction, crew leader, and food preparation. Stop by the Parish Hall after services for more information or contact Shane Albertson at 651/690-1575.

FROM THE PROJECT HOME MINISTRY TEAM:

A Thank You from the Project Home Ministry Team...

Thank you to the wonderful people who volunteered their time for Project Home this year:

Karen Hanson, Nina Tuttle, Martha Eaves, Bruce Beneke, Klaus Wormuth, Mary Barrett, Dianna Diers, Judith Devine, Jennifer Bruber, Becky Rose, Jane Evans, Tony Shostak, Barbara Taylor, Jessica Peterson, Anna Newton, Robin Fondow, Deanna Kramer, Ellen Green, Ken Green, Heide Erickson, Dennis Jewison, Jennifer Harrington, Jim McCreary, the Tower Club, Alison Green, Danny Chang, Kathleen Stack, Ann Parker & children, Chris Cuddigan, Rebecca MacKenzie, Ellen Costello, Jerry Kettunen, Katherine Barton, Phil Morton, Marci Micek, Chuck Griggs, Theresa Ganglohassemouei, Maria Hanson, Mary Zannmiller, Priscilla Morton, Jennifer Maloney, Margaret Jones, Ann Parker, Olly Staneslow, Ray Wiedmeyer, Karen Abraham, Cay Emkovic, Kathy Sidles, Susan MacPheron, Jane Miller, Kathy Bellus, Paul Gade, Charles Vanek, Gillian Lawrence, Dan Obst, Priscilla MacDougall, Ellen Merlin, Jim Leuthner, Barbara Nelson, Patt Keane, Jacquie DeLong, Lila Poullada, Kelly Boucher, Bob Boucher, Jean Baker and Rene Meyer-Grinberg.

Thanks also to the outstanding work of the project coordinators: Liz Curran, Team Leader, Ann Nelson, Terri McNeil and Romeyn Taylor!



FROM THE SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURE TEAM:

June Whole Farm Orders

You can now buy meat, cheese, produce and much more from local, sustainable farms and pick it up right at Unity. Unity Church is now a delivery location for Whole Farm Cooperative products. For June pickup, place an order with Whole Farm at wholefarmcoop.com at 320/732-3023 by Friday, June 16. Orders will be delivered to Unity Church on Wednesday, June 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.

A Sustainable Agriculture Conference in Romania

Several members of Unity Church are attending a Sustainable Agriculture Conference from May 31 to June 2 in Transylvania, Romania. This conference, co-sponsored by Project Harvest Hope and several other Transylvania institutions, addresses development possibilities affecting the future of rural Unitarian communities in Transylvania as Romania moves towards European Union accession in 2007.

The representatives from Unity Church at the conference are: Linny Siems from the Sustainable Agriculture Ministry Team; Sally Foster, Mark Foster, Laurel Lein, and Eric Lein from the Partner Church Ministry Team; and Olga Zoltai and Rob Eller Isaacs from the Project Harvest Hope Board of Directors.

Members of the Unity delegation will also spend time before or after the conference in our partner village of Homorodszentper. All are invited to a conference report from the travelers following a potluck dinner at Unity Church on Friday, June 16, at 6:00 p.m. in Parish Hall.

NEW MEMBERS AT UNITY

Welcome New Members of Unity Church!

The following people have recently joined Unity Church as new members. If you see them on a Sunday morning around church or another time during the week, be sure to say hello. For more information about joining Unity Church, contact Membership Coordinator Laura Schlatter at the Church Office.

Dan Duke

I found Unity Church a few years ago. My older son, Daniel, completed the OWL and COA programs here, and my younger son Aaron currently goes to 8th grade Sunday School. I also taught 7th and 8th grade Sunday School last year. Currently I work in I.T., but must admit my heart (as well as my formal training) lies in music and the arts. I love to play piano, play guitar, sing, write speed novels, and generally take in life from my bench in a coffee shop. I was raised as a Southern Baptist, and have been a Catholic for much of my adult life. Becoming a member of Unity Church feels like coming home at last.

Gene Bard

My past work and training includes counseling/psychotherapy, team building, management, program evaluation, and data analysis. Aside from the above, life has included all of the joys of raising two children with the luck of not having many pitfalls. I enjoy amateur radio, sailing on Lake Superior, auto racing, house and furniture construction, music, reading, bridge, racquetball, and volunteer work.

My present joys include woodworking, woodcarving, making musical instruments, automobiles, biking, playing classical guitar, listening to music (especially jazz and classical), computers, movies, plays, children, four grandchildren, my wife, and an intent of being kind and helpful to others.

About one-third of my life was spent in Oregon and Washington, over half in Duluth, and the rest sprinkled around the Twin Cities, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and some other places. I look forward to contributing and receiving at Unity in ways that may not yet be totally clear to me.

Peggy Bard

I enjoyed my career as an elementary teacher. I am a Macalester graduate and did graduate work at the University of Minnesota. I am also certified in Special Education. I grew up in Winona, Minnesota, taught in San Diego, California, traveled and taught in Pirmasens, Germany. We lived in Duluth and upon retirement, moved to Virginia.

In addition to most of Gene's joys, I love to walk, bike, travel, and garden. We've also enjoyed contacts with international students, hosting students from Germany, Russia, Iran, China and presently a Macalester student from Moldova. Joys are times spent with children and grandchildren, meeting new people, music and theater, biking, traveling, and finding ways to be of help to others. I also look forward to being a part of and contributing to Unity Church.

Caryl Kaler

I'm Caryl Kaler and, together with my husband Dan and son Matt, we are becoming new members during February. Dan and I are "settling in" in our new location in Hager City, Wisconsin, which is between Ellsworth, Wisconsin, and Red Wing, Minnesota.

I have recently retired after 35 busy and very fulfilling years of teaching mostly middle school vocal music in the public schools, 31 of those years in the North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Schools. I am currently loving singing in the Unity Choir with lots of enthusiastic singers, and with Ruth's inspiring leadership and great musical choices.

The greatest attractions of Unity are the welcoming staff and "beloved community." We have been made to feel at home here.

Dan Kaler

Greetings from Dan Kaler, New Member at Unity Church.

My experiences in education, other religions, and life in general have all been contributing factors to my desire to seek a more liberal approach to religion to nurture my spiritual growth. Caryl and I, along with our son Matt, have attended Unity Church off and on for the past five years, and we are convinced that the welcoming, stimulating, and inspirational environment of Unity will provide us with the experiences we want and need at this time in our spiritual journey.

This is my 36th year in education and I am currently the Superintendent of Schools in Ellsworth, Wisconsin. We have recently moved to the area and now reside in Hager City on an acreage where we can garden, plant and care for trees, and enjoy the rural setting. I spend as much time as possible in nature—planting trees, canoeing, skiing, camping, biking and hiking—all of which I find to be spiritual experiences. I look forward to involving myself in many activities at Unity where I can meet and work with others who share the same values.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Mark it on your calendars...

Unity Women's Retreat

Camp Courage

Maple Lake, Minnesota

October 7 – 9, 2006

To find out more, watch future issues of commUNITY newsletter!

NEW MEMBERS AT UNITY / CAMPING / EVERGREEN PROJECTS

Welcome New Members...

continued from page 8

Matt Kaler

Matt Kaler is joining Unity concurrently with his parents, Caryl and Dan, and is a career (perpetual) student. He is currently in 19th grade at the University of Minnesota making steady progress toward his Ph.D. in Psychology.

Outside of learning, he enjoys singing in the Unity Choir, tennis, softball, and getting outside in the temperate months. He also lives for food, wine, and modern architecture. He joins the church, enthusiastic about the many opportunities Unity provides to broaden and strengthen his community involvement and engage his spirituality.

Chuck Bidwell

My first memories of Minnesota are walking the streets of Minneapolis door knocking for McGovern and his causes; I was going to solve the world's problems by getting McGovern elected. Years later I am moving "across the river"; I am divorced and with kids out of college, and I hope to work in St. Paul for similar causes.

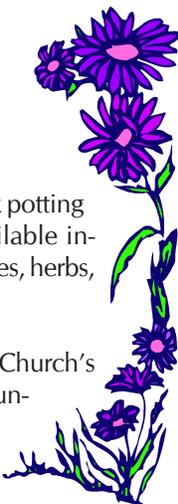
My personal passion is the understanding of the human experience through the study of history, biology and psychology and their relationship to the arts. And through this, I am on a journey to find my spirituality.

As an entrepreneur my professional life has focused on starting and rescuing businesses. My goal is to work with companies whose businesses are consistent with my liberal social beliefs; rescuing such a company brought me to St. Paul a over a year ago.

Unity Gardeners Spring Plant Sale

The Unity Garden Group has been hard at work potting up plants for sale. Many varieties will be available including perennials, raspberries, heirloom tomatoes, herbs, and a few house plants.

All proceeds help support maintenance of Unity Church's gardens. Stop by the Portland Greenspace on Sunday, June 4, between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon to pick up a plant for you or a friend. In case of rain, the sale will be held in the cloister.



A Unity Church Intergenerational Campout

Fill your soul with fresh air, campfire smoke, and wildflowers the first weekend in June! Kick off summer and head outdoors for fun and fellowship with others from your church community.

We will leave the church on Saturday morning, June 3, for St. Croix State Park (Minnesota's largest) where we will camp out on Saturday night. We will return to the church by late afternoon on Sunday. The weekend will provide opportunities for guided hikes, swimming, singing and quiet reflection.

No prior camping experience is necessary, and we will help you find the gear you need. Reserve your spot by contacting Katie at the Church Office. If you wish to lend your special expertise to the weekend — taking people birding, teaching them an outdoor craft, playing guitar, or other such activities — please also let her know.



FROM THE EVERGREEN
PROJECTS MINISTRY TEAM:

Evergreen Foodshelf Corner

The next Food Drive Sunday will be June 11 when the foodshelf items will be cooking oil, dish detergent, and clothing detergent. Small bottles are preferred.

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.

Quilt Me a Story: Evergreen Quilt Raffle and Auction

Remember your favorite story as a child? After reading it a million times, I bet you know all the words by heart. Now imagine what it would be like to sleep under a quilt that illustrates that story. You may find your dream come true at the Evergreen Quilters' Raffle and Silent Auction fundraiser.

The raffle quilt this year is "Star Trails," a queen-sized eye-popping brilliant colorful quilt, pieced and quilted by the Evergreen Quilters. Raffle tickets for the quilt are available in the Parish Hall for \$2 each. The drawing for the raffle quilt will take place after the worship service on Sunday, June 4. You need not be present to win.

Proceeds from the raffle and auction will be used for programs at four organizations that Evergreen regularly supports: Sharing Kerner Foodshelf, Ramsey County Family Center, The Family Place, and the Jeremiah Project. Each of these agencies helps people who need assistance obtaining the basics: food and shelter.

MUSIC NEWS

Music Program Offerings for 2006–07

Offerings for Children and Youth

Unity Church's move to three services has offered us the opportunity to think creatively and both evaluate and improve our music program offerings for children and youth. Our hope is that they will be more coordinated with the R.E. program and designed to meet the needs of our children and youth with greatest effectiveness. Beginning Fall 2006 our program offerings are:

Unity Children's Choir: Grades 1–4

Kathleen Radspinner, director.

Sunday mornings 10:15 to 11:00 a.m. in the Ames Chapel

Children's Musical: Grades 5 & 6

Sandy Waterman, Michael Lee, Joyce Paxton, directors.

Grade 5 students will have a year off from the traditional program offerings in anticipation of their first year of involvement in the Children's Musical

Unity Youth Ensemble: Grades 6–8.

A variety of directors to be announced.

Sunday mornings during the 11:00 a.m. service in the Ames Chapel — to be offered as a module of choice in the R.E. program offerings. This will be divided into various modules of musical experience with the largest emphasis on singing but including instrumental opportunities as well.

Offerings for Adults:

Unity Singers: auditioned 16-voice ensemble.

Tuesdays, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Unity Singers small ensembles: Quartet, Octet, etc.

Developed from and during Unity Singers rehearsal times

Unity Choir: Non-auditioned ensemble of 60 to 75 voices.

Thursdays, 7:30 to 9:15 p.m.

Unity Choir Ensemble: Smaller divisions of Unity Choir.

Often occurring on Sundays when the choir splits between services, memorial services, various occasions, etc.

Guest Musicians:

We always look forward to inviting outstanding musicians to participate in our services and are enriched by the presence of their expertise.

Carmina Singers:

The Carmina Singers are a short-term, high-gear'd 'special project' ensemble open to all choir members and congregation members only able to commit to limited rehearsal times — three successive Mondays (dates to be announced), 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Contact Ruth Palmer if you are interested.

Unity Church Volunteer Musicians:

As always we will be looking forward to hearing from our own Unity musicians in various venues. Of particular interest is the Wellspring Wednesday Worship Service. We encourage solos, small ensembles and family musical teams to participate.

Concerts with a Cause:

These one-hour concerts will be offered periodically on Friday nights throughout the year at 7:00 p.m. followed by a reception and social time from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Chamber, Candlelight and a Cause

Community, Culture and a Cause

Choirs, Carols and a Cause

Cabaret, Coffee and a Cause

Watch for additional information in newsletters next fall.

Unitarian Universalist Musician's Network National Conference

Hosted here at Unity Church... Volunteers needed!

We are so excited to be welcoming some 300 musicians to the Twin Cities and Unity Church this summer from August 1–6.

Those who volunteer are welcome to attend all the plenary sessions held at Unity Church on weekday mornings. They will feature Libby Larsen, our keynote speaker, and presenters Ruth MacKenzie, Glenda Maurice, Peter Mayer, and Sangeet, a Middle Eastern music specialist.

Volunteers are also invited to attend the evening sessions held at the Riverfront Crowne Plaza Hotel (previously the Radisson Riverfront) in downtown St. Paul. These include a Gospel 'Sing' with Carl Walker and Kimberly Walker; a concert by One Voice Mixed Chorus and OVation; and a concert by Mila.

Contact Ruth Palmer to assist with registration, hospitality, workshop coordination and setup, conference bookstall and many more possibilities for volunteering. Also please let us know if you can a 'home stay' to anyone during that time.

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

Come and sing with Unity Choir members on June 4 and 11. Meet for rehearsal at 9:00 a.m. in the Foote Room and sing at the 10:00 a.m. service. On June 4, we will sing Bobby McFerrin's "The 23rd Psalm." June 11 offers Ron Jeffers' setting of "I Have Had Singing."

This music should provide enjoyable rehearsal time and choral singing on these Sunday mornings. Hope to see you there!

ART / FELLOWSHIP / ANNOUNCEMENTS

June/July Art

John David Wilson

My sculptures celebrate Nature's gift of Beauty and energy — the reaction of my Being to this experience of Life. Enamels reveal a realm of depth within, drawing the observer into the heart of Being, the flow of life which we all share. I hope that you are transported to your own inner wilderness experiences, renewed by the fresh breath of Beauty.

I have written poetry since childhood and share these words and images hoping that they open and speak to the same heart center which opens to Beauty. Insofar as we have separated our lives from Beauty, may these offerings heal and reconnect us with those still waters that restore our souls.

John David Wilson, M.Ed., sculpts natural forms from copper and glass enamels. His work has won many awards over the last 33 years, including, recently: Best of Show, Ann Arbor Summer Art Fair, 2004, enamels/misc.; National Enamelists Guild, 1997 exhibition, awarded by the director of the Smithsonian; Arts & Apples, Rochester, MI, 1996, sculpture.

Unity Singles Group

Are you an adult single ages 35 and beyond interested in dining, socializing, and experiencing cultural activities with each other? Join our group by contacting Karen Pike at 651/695-9800.

Note for current members: Be sure to unblock Yahoo from your spam filters so our information to you is not blocked.

Mark your calendar for these upcoming events:

Saturday, June 17: Potluck dinner at a member's house.

Saturday, July 15: Canoe on the St. Croix from Interstate Park to Osceola, Wisconsin. Dinner to follow in Osceola for those interested.

Saturday, August 19: Afternoon potluck and pontoon rides on the Mississippi at a member's home.

MUUSJA Celebration & General Meeting

This year, Minnesota UUs have done some amazing work for social change. Now it's time to celebrate! The Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance cordially invites all UUs to join them in celebrating their work in marriage equality and global warming and energy alternatives and reflecting on what it means to be doing this work collectively as Unitarian Universalists.

The gathering will be held Thursday, June 8, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Foote Room. Rob Eller-Isaacs will discuss how our UU theology and legacy can help strengthen and ground our social change work. Please RSVP by June 4 to Betsy Allis at erallis@aol.com or 612/871-6946.

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.

Unity Singles Group

Saturdays from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
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

On hiatus for the summer...
For more information, contact 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: Bridget Borell, 651/644-5618.

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.
Contact Bernice Hanson at 651/633-3276.

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
Fourth Wednesday of each month at Wellspring
Wednesdays, 7:10 to 8:30 p.m.
Contact: Laura at the Church Office

Men's Retirement Group

Monday, June 5 and 19 and July 10 and 24
from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Contact: Phil Morton at 952/934-3578

Many Voices Political Discussion Group

Contact: Vince Grundman at 651/488-0778

Unity Divorce/Transitions Group

Contact Laura at the Church Office.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE INFORMATION

Sunday services during the summer are held at 10:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted. Worship leaders are assisted on Sundays by Worship Associates and Sunday Welcome Teams.

Our final sermon series of the formal church year will address the form and function of Sabbath. Though religious liberals gave up rigid adherence to Sabbath laws some centuries ago we still have much to learn about the efficacy of Sabbath observation as spiritual practice.

June 4 (10:00 a.m.) “Sabbath Moments” — Janne Eller-Isaacs

The Sabbath series begins with a service exploring what Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh calls “sabbath moments.” Janne Eller-Isaacs and Worship Associate Brian Newhouse consider how best to include such moments in our daily lives and point out how the Sunday morning liturgy creates such moments through the alternation of music, words and silence. The service features jazz, reflecting our privilege to improvise, to find the ways which work for us.

June 11 (10:00 a.m.) “The Seventh Day” — Katie Lawson

The tradition of the Sabbath is ancient, but what was its intent and what is its relevance today? What would a meaningful Unitarian Universalist Sabbath look like? Join Hallman Ministerial Intern Katie Lawson in her final sermon of her internship as she considers weekly sabbath in light of a world that is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

June 18 (10:00 a.m.) “Letting the Land Lay Fallow” — Rob Eller-Isaacs

Everyday, Sabbath moments, every week, a day of rest, and every seventh year, sabbatical. As our ministers contemplate a sabbatical leave to begin in February 2007, they are asking themselves how best to make use of that great gift of time. Rob will share some of the historical background of the sabbatical leave as well as the values and considerations which inform their plans.

June 25 (10:00 a.m.)

“Shaping Unitarian Universalist History:

The Ministry of Frederick May Eliot” — Briana Melom

In all of us there is a hunger, marrow deep, to know our heritage - to know who we are and where we came from. — Alex Haley

This service helps us to remember the ministry of Dr. Frederick May Eliot, minister of Unity Church from 1917–37 and president of the American Unitarian Association just prior to the merger with the Universalists in 1961. As we make space in our busy lives for what Eliot called “sacred reality,” we recall one who illuminated our heritage of faith. Briana Melom will be joined by Worship Associate Sharon Hogenson.

A PREVIEW OF SUMMER SERVICES

Worship leaders for summer will be announced as they are finalized. Watch for more information in upcoming This Week at Unity inserts.

July 2 (10:00 a.m.)

Worship Leader to be announced

July 9 (10:00 a.m.)

Briana Melom

July 16 (10:00 a.m.)

Chico Hathaway

July 23 (10:00 a.m.)

Laura Schlatter

July 30 (10:00 a.m.)

Craig Allen

August 6 (10:00 a.m.)

UUMN Conference

August 13 (10:00 a.m.)

Jenny Wilson

August 20 (10:00 a.m.)

Kerri Meyer

August 27 (10:00 a.m.)

Richard Foushée

September 3 (10:00 a.m.)

Worship Leader to be announced



732 HOLLY AVENUE ♦ SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55104
651/228-1456 ♦ FAX: 651/228-0927 ♦ WWW.UNITYUNITARIAN.ORG

KIT BRADY, CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
JANNE ELLER-ISAACS, CO-MINISTER
ROB ELLER-ISAACS, CO-MINISTER
BARBARA HUBBARD, DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION
LOUISE WOLFGRAMM, DIRECTOR OF RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ST. PAUL, MN
PERMIT NO. 1141

**TIME SENSITIVE
MATERIAL**