

Repair

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

A few benighted souls among you will remember that in 1968 the Firesign Theater released an album entitled "Waiting for the Electrician or Someone Like Him." The title provides a quirky point of entry into this month's theme; repair. Just when you thought everything that could be said about the Christmas season had already been said along comes this new notion. Could it be we're "waiting for the electrician or someone like him"? Just for fun let's stretch this metaphor a bit.

Advent is the season of waiting. And Jesus could certainly be seen as a master electrician who is about to come down to hook us up to a power far greater than ourselves. See how it works? "Or someone like him" reflects our understanding that Jesus is not the only begotten child of God but rather, Channing would have said, a perfected human being whose ministry provides a path for us to follow. So we're not waiting for Jesus per se but for someone like him, someone whose way of being in the world calls us to a larger love.

Repair is not often used as a theological term. But we've chosen repair as our advent theme because it lends itself so well to the task of deepening our understanding of the task at hand. In a 17th century Jewish story attributed to Kabbalist Isaac Luria, it's told that God began to create the world by forming great vessels intended to hold the light. But as

God poured the light into them the vessels shattered. Countless shards flew out and covered all creation, each shard embedded with a spark of divine light.

Advent for families turn to page 12.

Our task then is to help free and reunite the scattered light, to heal, restore and yes, to repair, this broken world. Quite sure we are unable to heal the world by ourselves, we wait. In metaphorical terms we wait for a messiah who will lead us in the work, we wait for the redeemer, the one uniquely prepared to bring in the reign of light and love. In *Holy the Firm* Annie Dillard writes:

...Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his Holy place? There is no one but us. There is no one to send, nor a pure heart on the face of the earth, but only us, a generation comforting ourselves with the notion that we have come at an awkward time, that our innocent fathers are all dead - as if innocence had ever been - and our children busy and troubled, and we ourselves unfit, not yet ready, having each of us chosen wrongly, made a false start, failed, yielded to impulse and the tangled comfort of pleasures, and grown exhausted, unable to seek the thread, weak, and involved. But there is no one but us. There never has been.

To stand firm in that knowledge should not delude us into thinking that our waiting is in vain. We easily fall into thinking that waiting is a passive state. In fact, waiting well can become an essential spiritual practice. Waiting well allows time for discernment. Waiting well helps us to discipline our minds for the work ahead. By waiting well we learn to befriend the emptiness, the "God-shaped hollow" inside us. And sometimes, just once in a while waiting well can teach us we need help from others. So wait well friends and when you need to call an electrician, or a plumber or a friend, place that call. You'll have to wait awhile but it will be worth it.

Worship Theme Resources

BOOKS

The Silence of Jesus James Breech (Fortress Press 1983, 1987) A brilliant work of textual criticism in which the author points to the parables of Jesus as authentic to his ministry and message.

The Gospel According to Jesus Christ Jose Saramago (Harcourt Brace 1994) The Portuguese Nobel Laureate tells the ancient story with an astounding twist. Could it be that Jesus, like so many sons must do, was attempting to complete Joseph's unfinished business?

Repair: the Impulse to Restore in a Fragile World Elizabeth V. Spellman (Beacon 2002) "We live in a world constantly in need of repair. We fix things and relationships all the time without giving it much thought." Could it be that another title for "the Prince of Peace" might be "Repairer of the World."

FILMS

***It's a Wonderful Life* (1946)**

There was a run on the bank! I know. It's hard for us to imagine (hmm), but this classic directed by Frank Capra is an all-time great.

***The Shawshank Redemption* (1994)**

A broken legal system falsely imprisons a broken-hearted man for the murder of his newly estranged wife. Time and "grace" do their best to repair the situation.

***Love Actually* (2003)**

This is a joyous and touchingly serious tale about finding wholeness and greeting the season with care and honesty.

JUST WORDS / WHEEL OF LIFE

Just Words

This from Kathleen Norris's latest book, *Acedia and Me*:

"Waiting seems at odds with progress, and we seldom ask whether it might have a purpose in and of itself. Etymology helps us here, for when we look up the word *wait* we are instructed to see *vigor*. Waiting, then, is not passive but a vigilant and watchful activity designed to keep us aware of what is really going on. Isaiah evokes his radical waiting as a source of vitality: 'Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles.' Such waiting is meant to engender a lively hope rooted in the physical as well as the psyche. It is an action, the 'hop' contained within the word. To hope is to make a leap, to jump from where you are to someplace better. If you can imagine it, and dare to take that leap, you can go there—no matter how hopeless your situation may appear."

In addition to recommending this book as a source of spiritual nourishment, I do want to lift up Kathleen Norris' image of waiting. It is a vigorous and vital activity, she reminds us. It is an activity in and of itself. It is sufficient just to take time to wait. This is one of the ways that we can repair this season of frenzy. We can engage in the vigorous and spiritually demanding practice of waiting.

Growing up I had a dear friend down the street who attended the local Congregational Church. Her parents took Advent very seriously. No decorations were brought out in her house until Christmas Eve. As a family, they would spend each Sunday evening of Advent in a quiet reflective mood. They engaged in the practice of waiting with intention. Now I remember feeling great sympathy for her and her siblings. Their religious celebration of Advent seemed to me to border on child abuse. Now, as an adult, I have great admiration for the depth of their practice. There was great wisdom in their approach. The waiting was full of challenge for the younger children, but it got easier with the passing of each year. Though my friend did envy our decorations while her house was still barren, she did learn to wait much more effectively than I ever did.

At this season the physical environment encourages us to wait, to slow down, to go to bed earlier and to take time to hibernate a bit. It provides us with the necessary encouragement to take time to experience the gifts of the spirit, of just being rather than doing. At the same time, it is a time of increased social invitations and obligations. These too, can feed the spirit. But as we approach this season attempting to be more mindful, I encourage you to keep the doing and the being in creative tension. I encourage you to take seriously the practice of waiting with intention and vigor. Perhaps in the waiting, we will discover gifts that we imagined.

"Waiting is designed to keep us aware of what is really going on." Slowing down helps us to reinvigorate and strengthen our spirits, to ground ourselves in what is most important. It provides time for the wellspring of love and generosity, which is at our core, to increase and develop. It helps us alter our vision from a version of the deer in the headlights to a vision of what the Dalai Lama refers to as kind eyes. As we wait in the darkness, our shy souls have the time to come out and express themselves.

When you are thinking how you might reclaim and repair your approach to this season of the darkness giving way to new light and new life, I encourage you to begin with waiting. You might just be surprised what you find.

— Janne

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Sophie Marie Satoskar

born November 11, 2008

daughter of

Amy Bryant and Rand Satoskar
sister of Francesca

In Memoriam

Catherine Julia Hill

November 9, 2008, age 93

Miriam "Mimi" Lein

June 15, 1912 — November 6, 2008

mother of Eric, Kristin, and Kurt
mother in law of Laurel
grandmother of Alisa Lein and
Beldonna Brown
and sister of Meredith Bend

In Remembrance

Robert C. Heege

February 4, 1922 –

October 24, 2008

father of Peter Heege

The Church Office will be closed on Thursday, December 25; Friday, December 26; and Thursday, January 1, 2009.

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DECEMBER SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION

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

Worship Calendar

December 7

The Silence of Jesus

— Rob Eller-Isaacs

Is our relationship with Jesus beyond repair? We say we follow Jesus but we do not worship him. What exactly might that mean? As we once again await his birth, Rob and Worship Associate Chico Hathaway will ask us to reconsider our relationship to Jesus.

December 14

Do We Get to Keep Christmas?

— Janne Eller-Isaacs

This question is legitimately asked by people new to Unitarian Universalism. Though our religious taproot is the Judeo-Christian heritage, our religious perspective and inspiration is not confined there. At the same time, we do not throw away the powerful stories or images that exist in the Christian narrative. This Sunday we will celebrate the ancient invitation to rebirth and renewal. Please note: The 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. services will have a carol sing and the 11:00 a.m. service will contain the wilder and louder carol shout.

December 21

Embrace the Darkness • Family Sunday

Every great religious tradition kindles new light in the midst of the darkness.

December 28 • 10:00 a.m. only

Home By Another Way – Reflections on The Slaughter of the Innocents

— Leon Dunkley

There is a challenging passage in the Gospel of Matthew (2:16-18) to which we return, year after year. We ask what scared King Herod so much that he unleashed such violence upon the world. What strength within us is tough enough to resist him?

Turn to page 8 for all the holiday worship information.

Offering Recipients

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

December 7 — Family and Children's Services

This well-established agency serves families and children at risk throughout the metro area, working with schools, law enforcement personnel and other social service agencies. Numerous programs in counseling, family and schools, violence prevention, and public policy and engagement are offered in many neighborhood settings. Unity Church member Georgia Lindeke nominated Family and Children's Service of Minnesota for this offering. Her daughter, Claire DeCoster, a social worker at Family and Children's Services, and Molly Greenman, Executive Director, both attended religious education at Unity Church.

December 14 — Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts

Since 1996, Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts has been the only organization in the nation that offers professional-level training in theater arts, visual arts and writing to support the creative growth of artists with disabilities. Intergenerational and multicultural, the 100+ artists with disabilities ranging from brain injury and cerebral palsy to Down's syndrome and blindness participate. This organization also exists to challenge existing stereotypes that assume people with disabilities are not capable of artistic achievement. Susan Shippee, daughter of long-time members Elizabeth and Warner Shippee, was raised in the church and has been a member of the company for seven years after sustaining a brain injury in 1994 and being confined to a wheelchair.

December 21 — Nonviolent Peaceforce

Nonviolent Peaceforce is an unarmed, professional peacekeeping force composed of trained civilians who not only work to establish dialog among conflicting groups, but also incorporate innovative strategies to ensure lasting peace. It is the world's only paid and trained unarmed civilian peacekeeping force. In partnership with local groups, Nonviolent Peaceforce members apply proven nonviolent strategies to protect human rights, deter violence, and create safe space for local peacemakers to do their work. With international headquarters in Brussels and administrative headquarters in Minneapolis, Nonviolent Peaceforce has worked in the conflict areas of Sri Lanka, Mindanao in the Philippines, Palestine and Guatemala since its initiation in 1999. Longtime Unity Church members, Barbara and Ken Ford are active members of this organization.

December 28 — Summit University Living at Home Block Nurse Program

The purpose of SULAH, a neighborhood-based and neighborhood-governed program is to improve the quality of life for older adults (65+) so they may live at home for as long as possible. Through a collaborative and team approach, volunteers, community service providers, paraprofessionals and professionals knit together a reliable support system for seniors in the Summit University Community. The program services include homemaking, home health care and nursing assistance. SULAH has been housed on the second floor of Unity Church for the past seven years. Members of Unity Church have both benefited from SULAH's services and served SULAH as well.

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / ANTI-RACISM LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Need for Repair

from Carol Bauer, Board of Trustees, Chair

With the conclusion of another election, we eagerly wait to see what our new national leadership team will do. Facing an economy in disarray, a failed foreign policy, skyrocketing energy prices and a crumbling infrastructure, the new administration has a daunting charge. Everything, it seems, is in need of repair.

As people of faith, we are called upon to help heal our broken world. In our own community:

- 5,500 children and youth in Ramsey County have difficulty at home, at school and in the community due to severe or long-term problems with mental health, substance abuse or delinquency.
- Seven in ten children enrolled in the Saint Paul Public Schools are from low-income families.
- In third grade, only about half (52 percent) of these low-income children are proficient in reading compared to 85 percent of their higher-income classmates.
- Every school dropout will cost the public \$300,000 in remediation, corrections, and public assistance.

Communities of color are far more likely to live in poverty, less likely to graduate from high school, less likely to own their own homes, and more likely to suffer from chronic illness. The financial cost to society for these failures is tremendously high. But the spiritual poverty—anger, fear, violence and despair—is an even greater tragedy.

We can and we must do better. The need for repair is undeniable, and the time is now. In this season of joy and renewal, let us consider how we as a church and each of us as individuals can work to end injustice and inequity and create a world where there is renewed hope, opportunity and joy for all people. Yes, we can.

UUA Responds to Unity Church After Pastor Board of Trustees Report

Last March the Unity Board of Trustees submitted a report to the Unitarian Universalist Association's Ministerial Fellowship Committee regarding concerns about our former minister, Rev. Roy Phillips. The report, based on information gathered with the help of consultants and reviewed by our attorneys, included both positive reports and also concerns about interactions and relationships with Rev. Phillips. The members of Unity Church—Unitarian were informed of our action by letter dated March 26, 2008, and members of the Board held an open meeting to discuss the report with interested members.

The report was received by the Ministerial Fellowship and shared with Rev. Phillips, who was then asked to appear at their fall meeting. Before the meeting was held, Rev. Phillips, sadly, died. We recently heard from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee that they will take no further steps in this issue. The Unity Church Board of Trustees supports this decision by the MFC. Our report and related correspondence will be added to Rev. Phillips's file.

Some work remains. The consultants found our policies to be in good shape, but they recommended that we review and clarify our grievance procedure. We will address this as part of an overall policy review in 2009.

The Trustees will hold one more open session to address any lingering questions or concerns you may have. This session will be on Tuesday, December 9, at 7:30 p.m. in the Robbins Parlor.

ARLT Designated Board Advisory Group

Now Seeking Four Team Members

In October, 2009, the Unity Church Trustees designated the Anti-Racism Leadership Team (ARLT) as a Board advisory group to further recognize and support their work. The ARLT informs Unity's efforts toward our Ends which call Unity Church to offer "...lifelong opportunities for growth, learning, engagement and racial healing;" to ensure "People...feel welcome at Unity Church—Unitarian and connected across identities including race..., and to influence the world through a "...commitment to anti-racism and racial healing in covenant with people and communities of color." This recruiting and nominating process is shared by the Board and the ARLT. Members of the Unity Church congregation should contact the Board or ARLT if interested in serving.

The Anti-Racism Leadership Team is looking for four team members to fulfill three-year terms on the ARLT. A nominating team, made up of ARLT and Board of Trustee members, will be looking at candidates' commitment to the organization, demonstrated leadership, the ability to perform the functions of the position, and diversity and points of view needed to reflect the stakeholders and moral owners of Unity Church.

Descriptions of the role of the ARLT, the position description, and a short application form can be picked up at the ARLT table in the Parish Hall, at the table by the Holly Avenue entrance, or by contacting Sue Conner at 651-646-6667 or sue.conner@comcast.net or Laura Smidzik at smidzik@msn.com.

Applications can be returned to Laura or Sue or left in the ARLT mailbox in the copy room by December 12.

MEN'S RETREAT / HALLMAN MINISTERIAL INTERN

Men's Retreat Reflections

Thirty men from Unity Church got together for a 2-day retreat at the St. Croix YMCA camp on November 1-2, 2008. The retreat involved spending time addressing spiritual topics (mindfulness, prayer, forgiveness), social issues (healthy body awareness, male film images, providing outrageous support) and having just plain fun (Take a Risk Talent Show). Here are some reactions from participants:

"I knew that as a group, the Men of Unity were a talented bunch, but when it comes to individual talent there are none better than these guys. At the "Take a Risk" talent show there was a wide...and I do mean wide range of talent on display...guitar players, storytellers, jugglers...and even a cowboy poet. I hadn't laughed that hard in a long, long time." – Tim Como



"I was tremendously grateful for the willingness of so many men to open up and talk about both painful and joyous issues." – Steve Harper

"Blessed with great weather. It was a nice blend of learning, relaxation, nature, and spontaneous conversation. There was nothing forced about it. Effortless. Very cool." – Gary Jader

"Tuned out to the everyday and in to the outdoors...to outrageous entertainment and support, and deeper reflections, conversations and meditations..." – Nels Otto

"There was so much I would like to write about: the angst and rush of leading our opening prayer, how great it was to get to play outside and stand around a bonfire, Leon's closing service with all the candles, Rob's workshop on prayer, three walks by the lake and seeing eagles, and of course impromptu conversations.... Perhaps it's enough to say it was a wonderful time with wonderful people." – Kevin Roberg-Perez

"The workshops invited people to open up and get past the surface right away, and pretty much everybody in the workshops I was in responded to the invitation." – Bob Steller



An Intern's Public Journal—Entry Three

The beauty of this moment is spectacular to behold. A shift is palpable, although it is difficult. Perhaps, we recognize it. Perhaps, we know again something we have never felt before. The paradox is absolutely wonderful.

More than the election of an American president, there is a change in the energy of public life. A sobriety has returned like a cup of social "coffee." Both rude and delicious, it awakens us from sleep.

I watched the election results on television as they unfolded, state by state. I called home when Barack Obama was announced as the winner. My folks raised me to believe that such a thing was possible. I never knew I doubted them until it actually did. When I saw Obama's image on the screen with the word "winner" placed underneath it, I almost couldn't believe my eyes. The world was changed and could never be the same.

Ironically, the most spectacular part of the shift was its slightness. Everything is exactly as it was – the colors of the flag and its complicated history, parking tickets and the internet, the magic of take-out pizza and light-hearted conversation. Everything is exactly as it was, except one thing and I knew my parents better than ever before.

I called home when Obama was declared the victor. My dad answered. We didn't say anything. We said nothing to one another for a minute and a half. It was wonderful. Then, I called Rob and Janne on their cell. Rob answered calmly, "Congratulations." I called him a rock star and got off the phone before I made a complete fool of myself.

I received many messages that day. One of the most special was a message that was exactly one word long: "Amen." It took me a long time to read that one. I didn't have time for such a long and heavy conversation. I only had time enough to say thanks and to say that I understood the message. Then, I got back to work with a deeper sense of joy.

Every blessing. Id

COMMUNITY / FELLOWSHIP / LEARNING

Wellspring Wednesdays

December 3

Dinner: black bean tamale pie • green salad • coconut pudding

- Martha Brand — Executive Director of the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
- Welcome to Unity: A Class for Newcomers — Justin Schroeder
- Your Money Life: What Do We Need to Learn Now? — Marianne Combs
- Advent Journey • see page 10
- Kundalini Yoga
- Teens Serve it Up! Santa Pause Planning — Jr. High Youth Group

December 10

Dinner: most requested chickpea stew with chermoula • breadsticks • green salad with oranges, olives and red onion

- Building Leaders for the Community: Our Individual and Collective Responsibilities — Benjamin Mchie, Executive Directory of the African American Registry
- Advent Journey • see page 10
- Singing Meditation — Katy Taylor
- Your Money Life: Looking Back, Looking Ahead? — Marianne Combs
- Mano a Mano Ministry Team
- Teens Serve it Up: Bakin' in the Kitchen — Jr. High Youth Group
- Kundalini Yoga

December 17

Santa Pause - See page 9!

Covenant Groups

Covenant Groups are groups of 8-12 people who meet regularly for spiritual reflection and sharing. Each Covenant Group has a trained facilitator and the content for each meeting is based on the monthly theological theme. As a part of the spiritual practice of Covenant Groups, members of each group make a commitment to share deeply, to explore faith through reflection and deliberate, non-judgmental listening, and to practice radical hospitality (the idea of letting a stranger into your heart). Covenant Groups focus more on process than content.

Participants in a Covenant Group meet for five months. For the final meeting, group members have a chance to practice “endings,” and to hold themselves accountable to saying a “good goodbye” to one another. **New Groups are formed at the end of each five month cycle.** Covenant Groups live out the idea of “radical hospitality,” as they continually make room for the newcomer.

In January, 2009, Unity Church is launching a new five-month session of Covenant Groups that will meet from February through June. Groups will meet for a total of seven or eight, two-hour sessions at church. Days and times will vary to fit all schedules.

Starting in late December, you can sign up for a Covenant Group at the “Covenant Group Sign Up” table in the Parish Hall following any service. Sign up forms will also be available online at www.unityunitarian.org.

We hope you will join one of these Covenant Groups! Your circle of connection and friendships will grow. You will engage in a meaningful group spiritual practice, creating a sacred space for your soul to be nurtured and heard.

Themes for 2009:

February: Prayer
March: Sin
April: Redemption
May: Blessings
June: Sabbath

Second Saturday Pancake Breakfast

December 13 • 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.



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

Song and Silence for the Soul

Facilitated by Ruthie Rosauer

Saturday, December 13

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Lunch break at noon, bring a bag lunch.

Experience the joy of singing and the solace of silence during this season of Solstice and Advent. Join us for a day of music interspersed with periods of silence for meditation and contemplation. You don't have to be an experienced singer to sing these easily learned songs drawn from Christian, Sufi, Neo-pagan, and other spiritual paths. The day will include toning, singing, easy circle dance, periods of silence for contemplation or prayer, and a brief lecture about the spiritual practice of Singing Meditation. Drop-ins are welcome but class is limited to 35 participants. To reserve a spot contact Ruthie Rosauer at rutharose@yahoo.com.

Tower Club Fashion Show for Social Change

On Saturday, January 17, at 7:30 p.m., Unity's high school youth group, Tower Club, will be performing: A Fashion Show for Social Change, directed by Unity junior Nathan Eckstein. The show will feature the members of Tower Club wearing t-shirts of their own design, which will highlight the issue of white privilege and discrimination against African Americans. Watch for more details.

Unity Church Bless the
World Fund ~ Share and
read blessings at:

[unitychurchblesstheworld.
blogspot.com](http://unitychurchblesstheworld.blogspot.com)

December Holiday Worship and Joy

A four-page guide to holiday offerings at Unity Church

December Holiday Calendar

Wednesday, December 3 ~

Advent Journey • 7:10 p.m.

Saturday, December 6 ~

Jolly Holly Service Auction • 6:00–10:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 7 ~

Advent Journey • 1:00-4:15 p.m.

Christmas Caroling Out & About • After the 11:00 a.m. service

Bolivian Handicrafts Sale • After the morning services

Evergreen Quilters Annual Sale • Following services

High School Wreath and Cookie Sale • Begins today

Model Cities Gift Giving • Sign-up begins today

Wednesdays, December 10 ~

Advent Journey • 7:10 p.m.

Thursday, December 11 ~

Elders Group, Best Gifts • 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 13 ~

Holiday Music Smorgasbord • 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 14 ~

Pageant Costume Fitting • Between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services

Christmas Caroling Out & About • After the 11:00 a.m. service

Theotokos, An Advent concert • 7:30 p.m. • College of St. Catherine

Evergreen Quilters Annual Sale • Following services

High School Wreath and Cookie Sale • While supplies last

Wednesday, December 17 ~

Santa Pause (Drop and Shop) • 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 18 ~

Congregational Neighborhood Caroling • 7:15 p.m.

Sunday, December 21 ~

Adult Pageant Choir Rehearsal • 10:00 a.m.

Children's Pageant Choir Rehearsal • 10:00 a.m.

Winter Solstice Celebration • 7:00 p.m.

Model Cities Gift Giving • Bring wrapped gifts to church today

Tuesday, December 23 ~

Pageant Dress Rehearsal • 1:00 until 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 24 ~

Find A Stillness • 10:00 a.m.

Christmas Pageant • 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.

Lessons and Carols (Family Candle lighting Service) • 7:00 p.m.

Lessons and Carols (Candle lighting Service) • 10:00 p.m.

Christmas Communion • 11:30 p.m.

Mitten Tree ❄️

This year, the Mitten Tree is set up at the intersection of the three hallways in the basement R.E. space. Everyone is encouraged to decorate our tree with new and handmade hats, mittens, gloves and scarves. These warm winter items will be shared with area nonprofits that work with families and children. Collection will conclude on Christmas Eve.

Bolivian Handicraft Sale ❄️

Sunday, December 7

After the morning services

Fresh new items from Bolivia just in time for Holiday shopping — backpacks and beach bags, ponchos and photo albums, tablecloths, potholders and the ever-popular finger puppets — all for sale in the Cloister. Give cool gifts while supporting health care in Bolivia.

Evergreen Quilters Sale ❄️

Sunday, December 7 and 14

Following worship

Handmade cloth gift bags in many sizes, and attractive tote bags. Most of the tote bags are modeled after the big brown grocery bag, perfect for the grocery store and a great gift! All funds raised from the bag sales will be used to provide monthly meals at two foodshelves and special projects at two homeless shelters, all in St. Paul.

High School Wreath ❄️ and Cookie Sale

Please plan on getting your holiday wreath and festive baked goods from our Tower Club youth beginning December 7 in the Parish Hall. Wreaths will be one-of-a-kind creations! Cookies will include our famous Church Mice! Proceeds help youth travel to Boston, General Assembly and leadership trainings.

Holiday Worship and Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 21 ❄️

Winter Solstice Celebration • 7:00 p.m.

Come join us for a contemplative, family-friendly, Celtic-inspired ritual to mark the turning of the year as the darkness gives way to the growing light. This participatory ritual will be held in the Ames Chapel and will include chanting, meditation, candle-lighting, singing, cauldron jumping, and refreshments. Kids—bring animal masks and hand percussion (rattles, shakers, bells)! If you would like to be involved with music, would like to volunteer to help with refreshments, set-up, decorations, take-down, or in any other way, or if you have questions, please contact Katy Taylor at katysong@earthlink.net or 651-291-8551.

Wednesday, December 24 ❄️

Find A Stillness • 10:00 a.m.

In the full rush of Christmas Eve morning we will gather in the quiet of Ames Chapel. There will be extended periods of silence to provide time for relief and contemplation.

Christmas Pageant • 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.

Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs narrate the story of the nativity as Unity Church's children and youth act out the story in the Sanctuary. Children, youth, and adults are welcome to come and participate in Unity Church's annual holiday tradition. Families with children 3 and under are encouraged to attend the 4:00 p.m. service.

Lessons and Carols (Family Candlelighting Service) • 7:00 p.m.

All families are welcome to join us for stories, singing and the dedication of our own redeemers as we imagine the holy entering our life through wonder, new birth and, as always, candlelight. Come celebrate with us at this new family candlelighting service.

Lessons and Carols (Candlelighting Service) • 10:00 p.m.

The whole church family will gather to hear again the age-old story of a child wrapped in swaddling clothes and laying in a manger. It's a tale told in every religious tradition. We'll sing carols, share some of the finest poems of the season and kindle again the lights of hope in the midst of darkness.

Christmas Communion • 11:30 p.m.

We invite all those for whom the life and ministry of Jesus is a source of nourishment and inspiration to come together in Ames Chapel to celebrate his birth. We'll read from the Gospel, sing songs of praise and, as midnight comes, we'll serve one another communion as we remember that every child born bears the spark of the redeemer.

January 4, 2008 ❄️

Tolling of Bells • 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

We begin each new year with a memorial service for those who have died in the previous year. Rob and Janne will each eulogize men and women whose lives have shaped the world of art or politics, literature or science. Everyone will have an opportunity to acknowledge those they've loved and lost. In grief and gratitude and gladness we turn to welcome the new year.

Christmas Pageant and Pageant Choir News

All families with children and youth who are or have been recently enrolled in R.E. are invited to participate in the annual Unity Church Christmas pageant. Pageant information and registration materials (pdf) are available on the Church website homepage at www.unityunitarian.org. Forms are also available at the Church Office. Registration must be returned by Sunday, December 7. For more information about the Pageant contact Kelley Loughrey at kelleyloughrey@comcast.net.

The adult Pageant Choir is open to all. The Children's Pageant Choir is open to children in third through sixth grade. For more information about the Pageant Choirs, please contact Ruth Palmer at the Church Office.

Please note the important dates below (parents are asked to assume volunteer roles and should plan to attend all of the following events):

Sunday, December 14 ❄️ Pageant Costume Fitting

Pageant costume fitting will take place between the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. worship services. Look for signage.

Sunday, December 21 ❄️ Pageant Choir Rehearsal

Adult Pageant Choir and Children's Pageant Choir rehearsals will take place from 10:00 until 11:00 a.m. The Children's Pageant Choir meets in the Chapel (Kathleen Radspinner, director) and the Adult Pageant Choir meets in the Foote Room (Jeffrey Hess, director).

Tuesday, December 23 ❄️ Pageant Dress Rehearsal

Pageant dress rehearsal will take place from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 24 ❄️ Pageant Performances

Pageant performances are at 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. Performers and parents should arrive at 3:00 p.m.

Holiday Gifts and Music

Santa Pause ❄️

(formerly known as Drop and Shop)

December 17 • 6:00-8:30 p.m.

It's a gift of grown-up time from your church! Parents with children ages six months through ten years are invited to take advantage of the Junior High Youth Group's offering of supervised childcare from 6:00 until 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 17. We'll entertain your children with crafts, songs, games and A Charlie Brown Christmas. Pizza dinner included! Advance registration is required: please contact Christy Randall at the Church Office. Junior High youth and their parents who wish to participate in this fun night of ministry should contact Kerri Meyer at the Church Office.

Model Cities Gift Giving ❄️

Model Cities is a St. Paul nonprofit providing healthcare, social services and housing to low-income families in our community. Over the years, Unity Church has partnered in sponsoring some of these families by purchasing and wrapping holiday gifts and giving them anonymously.

This year, you are again invited to sponsor a family or an individual. In the Parish Hall, following morning services from November 30 through December 14, the Gift Giving Project will have a table where you will find lists of family members and their "wish lists." On December 21, wrapped gifts will be collected for delivery. If you have questions or would like to help with sign up in the Parish Hall or with delivering gifts contact Marilyn Ulrich at marzyd8@iphouse.com.

Best Gifts ❄️

December 11 • 1:00-2:30 p.m.

The Elder Group will gather to discuss the topic of 'best gifts.' What are the 'best gifts' that we have given and received in the past, the 'best gifts' that we are giving and receiving in the present and the 'best gifts' still to come!

Holiday Music Smorgasbord ❄️

Saturday, December 13

5:30 Holiday Potluck • 6:30 Carol Sing

7:00 Holiday Concert: *Go Tell It!* • 7:45 Dessert Buffet

Come and join us for an array of offerings! Bring family and friends to share the musical spirit of the holidays and participate in whatever aspects of this evening appeal to you! Childcare is provided for young children during the concert.

For the Potluck plan to arrive by 5:15 p.m. to get a seat! Bring an entrée or salad to share. Stay for the Concert and Holiday Dessert Buffet, and bring a plate of your favorite holiday goodie to share.

The Carol Sing will begin at 6:30 p.m. featuring favorites of the season. The youngest children will have special activities and music at this time with Kathleen Radspinner, director of our amazing Children's Choir.

At 7:00 p.m., all are invited into the Sanctuary to hear the Holiday Concert *Go Tell It!* presented by Unity Choir and featuring some of the most beautiful choral music you will hear this season!

If you can help with set up or clean up, please call Lynnanne at 651-646-0168.

2nd Annual Congregational Neighborhood Caroling ❄️

Thursday, December 18 • 7:15 p.m.

Meet in the Parish Hall

In coordination and partnership with SULAH (see below) we will be spreading holiday joy to neighbors we know are not easily able leave their homes. After dividing into four groups, the carolers will go out in several directions. Plan to leave Unity Church by 7:30 p.m. and carol for about 45 minutes, returning to the church for cocoa, coffee and tea... bring goodies to share. All are welcome – children, family and friends!

SULAH: The Summit University Living at Home Block Nurse Program is a community based effort. Their goal is to improve the quality of life of seniors by helping them live safely and independently in their own homes as long as possible. SULAH is the offering recipient on Sunday, December 30.

Christmas Caroling Out & About ❄️

Sunday, December 7 and 14

After the 11:00 a.m. service

Come Christmas caroling out and about! Meet at the Holly Avenue reception desk at 12:30 p.m. (might be good to bring a sandwich to eat before you head out to sing). We'll go caroling for some of the Unity Church people who can't get here to share the holidays. We can pretty well promise tears of joy and smiles of delight!

Theotokos *An Advent concert celebrating the story of Mary, Mother of God* ❄️

Sunday, December 14 • 7:30 p.m.

Created by Ruth MacKenzie; performed by Ruth MacKenzie, Mila Vocal Ensemble and Unity Singers Choir. Using Christmas music from around the world, Theotokos retells the story of the Nativity as a renewal of creation: connecting theology, ecology and our everyday lives. Concert is held at Our Lady of Victory on the College of St. Catherine Campus. For tickets call 651-690-6700.

UU Christmas Reclamation Project

With all the buzz about the UU Christmas Reclamation Project, we've been asked to tell the story behind it. After a December 2007 workshop by Unity member Bill Doherty on the topic "Have Yourself a UU Christmas," a group began a year's worth of meetings to generate ideas and practices that our community might embrace in order to reclaim Christmas for our religious tradition. Here's a summary of our process and what we decided to work on this year.

We focused first on the common cultural challenges of Christmas, such as consumerism, growing up in an entitlement culture, lack of emotional and spiritual meaning, and turbo-stress from the commercial obligations, all the gifts to purchase, debt, and frantic busyness with no time to find our own values.

We then looked at specific challenges we face as UUs, such as how we relate to the Christmas story, how we might make Christmas part of the UU story instead of being a time out from the UU story, and how we might do critical thinking and analysis of Christmas without being mainly debunkers. Overall, we asked what Christmas story do we want to tell, how do we want to tell it, and how do we address the spiritual challenges and possibilities with our children. We each took an area to investigate and present to the group.

We decided on an overall approach to reclaiming Christmas. We wanted to connect Christianity, Unitarian Universalism, and the culture; to explore the Christmas story/myth to see how we at Unity can deal with Christmas; and then to examine related myths. We wanted to address the dramatic disconnection between the richness of the story/myth and the emptiness of the culture, to address the challenge of finding and keeping our balance during this season, and to focus mainly on Advent as a time of spiritual reflection and preparation. And we liked the idea of the church doing a big, bold, publicly vision action along with creating smaller,

more intimate opportunities to create meaning in this season.

Next we did interviews of about 20 Unity members to get their perspectives on the challenges and possibilities of Christmas, and to get reactions to our ideas and our approach.

We then decided on two action projects to be tried out this Christmas season: 1) in-depth, small group activities on Wellspring Wednesday and Sundays; and 2) a Black Friday at Church event that would offer cultural critique and spiritual depth on the feast day of consumption in our culture.

In January we will evaluate what we've done this year, solicit feedback from others in the congregation, decide on future steps towards the goal of reclaiming Christmas for Unitarian Universalism, and see if other UU congregations are interested in our work.

This article was authored by Bill Doherty and Phil Lund. Other members of the UU Christmas Reclamation Project are Elaine Ambrose, John Butler, Shelley Butler, Eric Lein, Ruth McKenzie, Linny Siems, and Jill von Koolwijk. Intern Matt Alspaugh participated last year, and Janne Eller-Isaac served on the Black Friday planning team.

Advent Journey

**Wednesday, December 3 and 10
During Wellspring Wednesday**

A time of ritual and reflection for children, youth, and adults to gather together during this Advent season. Join us for this opportunity to slow down and nurture your spirit as we await the return of the light. Come for any or all of the three sessions.

Advent Journey

**Sunday, December 7
1:00 until 4:15 p.m.**

Unity Church—Unitarian

Join us as we explore the significance and diverse values inherent in this winter festival season. We will sit in circles, pass a talking piece, and tell our stories. This is relationship-building work that can generate long-term personal, relational, community, and cultural transformation. Our extended time together will deepen conversation and nurture relationships. Light refreshments will be provided.

We will consider the following questions: For me, what brings meaning to this season? What experiences or rituals attract me? Which ones isolate or cause me to disengage? When and in what ways do I find it rewarding to engage with my community?

Before coming together to share our stories, we want to acknowledge that this topic is likely to mean something different to each one of us. It could include many aspects of your life – children, relationships, religion and spirituality, volunteerism, caring for loved ones, and nature.

We invite you to explore your experiences, both separately and with others, that you hold sacred and that bring deep feelings to the surface and help you to live your beliefs.

Please bring an item to share in our circle. It could be an object, a poem, or a photograph that represents or brings meaning to your winter festival season.

Youth and adults are welcome. RSVP to Eric Lein at Advent-elein@apts.cc or 651-227-0486. To reserve childcare for this workshop contact Christy Randall at the Church Office.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY / BOOKS

Project Homeless Connect

Project Homeless Connect is a way to help end homelessness one person at a time! On December 8, at the Minneapolis Convention Center, this one-stop shop event for the homeless will be held for the fifth straight year. Volunteers are needed to guide individuals through a host of free services for surmounting obstacles related to homelessness.

Some of the many services available include free dental and eye exams, free dentures and glasses, employment counseling, veterans and social security counseling, housing applications, vouchers for shoes, haircuts and many more. Last year at the St. Paul April Project Homeless Connect, 1300 volunteers helped 2800 homeless guests to obtain the services they needed and in the process, gained a new understanding of what it means to be homeless.

This volunteer service comes highly recommended by members of the Unity Church Affordable Housing Team who have participated in both the Minneapolis and St. Paul Project Homeless Connect Days. Two-hour volunteer training shifts will begin on November 17 and end by December 6. For more information contact Kathy Stack, member of the Unity Church Affordable Housing Ministry Team at 612-673-2525 or <http://homelessconnectminneapolis.org> or email: projectconnectmpls@gmail.com.

Party with the Partner Church Ministry Team!

Save the Date! Saturday, January 24, 2009 • 7:00 p.m.

Parish Hall at Unity Church

Food, Fun & Frolic with the Partner Church Team. Tickets Go On Sale January 4! Never partied with the PCMT? Don't miss your chance!

If you would like to help plan the event, call Beverly Heydinger, 651-222-5305. Proceeds will support Unity's relationship with its partner church in Romania.

Bolivian Handicraft Sale • Turn to page 7

Evergreen Quilters Annual Sale • Turn to page 7

Model Cities Gift Giving • Turn to page 9



Whole Farm

Buy meat, cheese, produce and much more from local, sustainable farms and pick it up right at Unity Church from Whole Farm Cooperative. For this month's pickup, place an order at wholefarmcoop.com or 320-732-3023 by Wednesday December 10. Orders will be delivered to Unity Church on Wednesday, December 17. Pay by sending a check, with the invoice enclosed with your order, to Whole Farm.



Evergreen Foodshelf

The third Sunday of every month is Evergreen Food Drive Sunday. December 21 suggested items are bottles of detergent: dish or laundry and toilet paper - but all donations are welcome! Donations can be brought anytime and should be placed in the barrels located at both the Holly and Portland Avenue entrances. All food is taken to Sharing Korner Food Shelf.



What's New at Unity Libraries?



What's a **LibraryThing**?

The only really valuable **thing** is intuition, according to Einstein. But then again, he also said that the important thing (as opposed to valuable) is to "not stop questioning," that science is a wonderful thing, the most beautiful thing is the mysterious, the hardest thing to understand is income tax, and that the only thing to get in the way of his learning was his education.

No offense to Einstein, but ask anyone on the Unity Library Team and they will tell you that LibraryThing is valuable, wonderful, and a beautiful thing. They have all been working hard on creating a library quality catalog for Unity Church that is now available online. For the first time, you can search the library catalog by author, title, date, subject, call number, or keyword, and from any computer that has web access. Let me repeat: You can search the Unity Library catalog from your home, office, an Internet café, or anywhere that is online!

You can find a link on the Unity Church web site or go directly to the catalog here: <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/UnityChurch>.

LibraryThing

What's on your bookshelf?

2nd Tuesday Book Club Update

Everyone is welcome even if you haven't read the book!

THE SECOND TUESDAY BOOK CLUB will meet from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 9. The book they will be discussing is *Being Peace* by Thich Nhat Hanh. Each book has a "sponsor" who begins the meeting by presenting a bit about the author and the book.



Advent for Families: Raising the Two-Marshmallow Child

Waiting is a spiritual practice. In a culture that has nearly lost the art of delayed gratification, parents sometimes feel as though they're swimming against a current of appealing advertisements, new technologies and relentless social competition. This season of Advent is a natural moment to turn our attention to the deep art of waiting and to teach it to our children.

In a longitudinal study started in the early 1960s, a psychologist at Stanford conducted an experiment in delayed gratification with four-year-olds. The children were given an option: eat one marshmallow now, or – if you can wait 15 minutes – we'll give you two marshmallows to eat then. The children who were able to wait for the two marshmallows matured into adolescents who were more socially adaptable, had better coping skills and demonstrated greater dependability. Reliably, one-marshmallow kids developed into teenagers with lower self-esteem who were easily frustrated and performed worse in school. Waiting is a life skill worth learning, and worth teaching.

Advent is an entire season of waiting, one mirrored in the natural world and in the liturgical year; it's a perfect opportunity to engage your family in the countercultural practice of delayed gratification. The journey into longer, darker nights and the anticipation of the sun's return, coupled with the excited anticipation that precedes Christmas, offer parents a chance to point out the blessings that come with being present in the moment, even if the moment itself doesn't offer us any fulfillment.

How to teach the practice of waiting? Here are some tips for families:

Practice Advent. Share in a family Advent wreath or Waldorf-style Advent spiral as a way to visually mark the weeks. Put up an Advent calendar. Note the times of sunrise and sunset each day. Sit in the darkness together each morning or evening without any

lights or candles. Take some time to fix the things in the house that need repair or mending. Make handmade gifts that take time and creative energy.

Contain Christmas. As a religious season, Christmas starts on the 25th and continues for the "Twelve Days" until Epiphany. For those of us who have a hard time sustaining joy and cheer and goodwill toward men from Halloween on, this makes a lot of sense. Limit the number of Christmas obligations throughout late November and December. Wait until Christmas Eve to put up the tree and enjoy it for 12 days. Consider stretching out the exchange of gifts in a way that works for your family (stockings on Christmas Eve, one gift on Christmas morning, smaller gifts each of the Twelve Days).

Include naturally extended experiences in your family's Advent life. Read a special chapter book at bedtime throughout Advent; kids learn that the story will continue tomorrow night. Bake bread as a gift for friends and family; yeast can't be hurried along and the rising dough is a pleasure to watch. Grow amaryllis or paperwhite bulbs in your child's bedroom; observe any new growth each morning. Explain how and why these things have to happen at their own pace.

Play waiting 'games'. While waiting in the airport lines, see how many UU songs you can sing or how many church friends you can name out loud before it's your time to go through the security check. Try doing the "marshmallow experiment" with your preschooler and then refer to it in instances where your child has to wait for something different. Set a timer and play, "Guess How Long 5 Minutes Is" to help develop your child's sense of time passing. Doing holiday errands? Have a book or quiet activity ready for times when you know there'll be a wait.

Turn off the television. In the marshmallow experiment, the least

effective parenting strategy for extending wait time was focusing on how the yummy the marshmallow would be when the child got to eat it. Advertisers' goal, of course, is to persuade children that their 'marshmallow' is the yummiest, so why not help our kids extend their capacity for waiting by sparing them the more than 3000 commercials they'll see in the four weeks before Christmas?

Guest at Your Table Ends January 4

Families participating in UUSC's Guest at Your Table program should return their boxes (or a check written out to Unity Church – Unitarian with UUSC-GAYT in the memo) on Sunday, January 4. Families whose funds are not turned in by this date should send their donation directly to the UUSC (www.uusc.org).

Have Yourself a Merry UU Christmas!

Our ancestors' contributions to holiday traditions should help even the Scrooges among UUs enjoy the season in good cheer. Sing, read and celebrate proudly!

- "Jingle Bells" was written by Unitarian James Pierpont and "Over the River and Through the Woods" was written by Unitarian Lydia Maria Child
- Nathaniel Currier, of Currier & Ives, was also Unitarian!
- Charles Dickens (who, for all intents and purposes invented Christmas), author of "A Christmas Carol" was a Unitarian
- "Little Tree" by Unitarian Universalist e.e. cummings, and Little Women by Unitarian Louisa May Alcott, are beloved holiday reads



Teaching Opportunities

Sharing R.E. lessons with our children and youth is an enriching experience for all adults, whether you're parenting children of your own or not! The following openings need to be filled in order for our church to live up to its promise to nurture our young people and help families raise children who will always cherish the spiritual life:

Preschool teachers: Spirit Play teachers are needed at all three services. Teach as part of our wonderful team on Sundays that work with your calendar!

Elementary School Journey Guides: Be the grown-up who represents "church" for a group of children. Work with 3rd and 4th graders at 9:00 a.m., or at 11:00 a.m., work with either 1st and 2nd graders or a group of 5th and 6th graders.

Workshop Leaders: Our topic is compassion. Teach Music, Body or Story at 9:00 a.m.; Music or Story at 11:00 a.m., anything you please at 4:30 p.m. — January 11 through February 8

Junior High Teachers: Course options include "Extreme Religion: Fundamentalism and Cults" and "High Feasts and Holy Days, Part II". Teach January 25 through May 10 as part of a team, several Sundays off.

Second Semester Junior High Courses

Families with students in Grades 6, 7, & 8 at the 11:00 a.m. service and 4:30 p.m. service are encouraged to help their youth select between the two course offerings for the second half of the R.E. year. If your youth is already registered, you will get a confirmation letter in the mail in early January. Course descriptions are as follows:

High Feasts and Holy Days, Part II – We explore the "holiday of the week" across religious traditions, comparing and contrasting the ideas that are at the foundation of sacred celebrations, including story and prayer, food and song. Teachers needed.

Extreme Religions: Fundamentalism and Cults – This course looks at negative expressions of religious zeal and explores the human needs that seem to be met by religion that turns in on itself in isolation or out on the world in aggression. Teachers needed.

Please note that the Youth Music Ensemble has reached maximum enrollment and is not open to new registrations. Contact Kerri in the Church Office to register for or confirm your youth's choice of course.

December Dates for your Family Calendar

Friday, December 3 – High School youth overnight (cookie baking & wreath making)

Sunday, December 7 – Wreath and Cookie fundraiser sales start! All three services

Sunday, December 14 – Family Sunday - Carol Sing (9:00/4:30) and Carol Shout (11:00); Pageant costume fitting between the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services

Wednesday, December 17 – Santa Pause, 6:00-8:30 p.m. (registration required)

Sunday, December 21 – Family Sunday (Solstice: all kids and youth worship with family, 9:00, 11:00 and 4:30); Pageant Choirs' rehearsals, 10:00 a.m.; Solstice service, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 23 – Christmas Pageant Rehearsal, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 24 – Christmas Services and Pageant (see page 8)

Youth Notes

Serve It Up! Junior High Teens

This month teens will be planning and providing engaging childcare for the December 17th drop and shop. Special thanks to the 9th grader hosts for their leadership, and to Sherri Knuth and others for helping organize this Wednesday night programming.

OWL

This is the last month of Our Whole Lives...so sad! Next month our 9th graders begin the Coming of Age program. Congratulations to all our teens who participated in OWL; you will be a model to your peers with your knowledge about sexual decision-making, options, risks, and what you can expect from a healthy sexual relationships. Thanks again to our rock star teachers Jacques, Angela, Paula and Alain!

Tower Club

In November the Tower Club learned about race and privilege as they began to organize an event to promote inclusivity through fashion. They also got to meet their younger religious education buddies they've paired with in the "Big U/little u" program they've initiated.

Fundraiser News

Wreaths and holiday cookies will be sold in the Parish Hall on Sunday, December 7 and 14. Those who pre-ordered Christmas trees can pick them up from the church courtyard on December 7 (or contact Joseph in the church office to schedule another time). Fundraising proceeds benefit church youth events; thanks for your support!

Mitten Tree / Wreath and Cookie Sale • Turn to page 7
 Christmas Pageant • Turn to page 8
 Santa Pause • Turn to page 9



MUSIC MINISTRY

Children's Musical

"Hey Kids, Let's Put on a Show!"

The 20th anniversary Unity Church–Unitarian Children's Musical

Performances: February 26-28, 2009

Auditions are January 8, 2009, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. and are open to 5th and 6th graders.

For more information contact:

Bob Utke at baja_jack@hotmail.com or 612-759-7878. Rene Meyer-Grimberg at rene.me@mac.com or 651-298-9711. Joyce Paxton at jd_paxton@yahoo.com.

Music Ministry December Calendar



Find all the details on page 9.

Sunday, December 7 ~

Christmas Caroling Out & About
After the 11:00 a.m. service

Sunday, December 14 ~

Caroling Out & About
After the 11:00 a.m. service
Theotokos, An Advent Concert
7:30 p.m. • College of St. Catherine

Saturday, December 13 ~

Holiday Music Smorgasbord
Evening fun begins at 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 18 ~

Neighborhood Caroling
7:15 p.m.

Sunday, December 21 ~

Adult Pageant Choir
10:00 a.m.
Children's Pageant Choir
10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, December 24 ~

Christmas Pageant
4:00 and 5:30 p.m.

Music Notes

from Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries

For beauty is the cause of harmony, of sympathy, of community. Beauty unites all things and is the source of all things. It is the great creating cause which bestirs the world and hold all things in existence by the longing inside them to have beauty.

from *Pseudo-Dionysius (The Divine Names)* as quoted in
Beauty: The Invisible Embrace — John O'Donohue

Still, still, still

The angels make music so sweet.

Sleep, sleep, sleep

My dear little child, sleep. — traditional

The words to this Austrian carol truly echo our desire for moments of peace and quiet through this often over-energized season. It is often through music that we can find these times of reflection. The very nature of extended time in sound, of words drawn into the filling of seconds, suspended in a time frame that far surpasses the normal length of speech gives opportunity for this pause — this inner tuning of self. Below I share one of my favorite passages from *Free Play: The Power of Improvisation in Life and the Arts* by Stephen Nachmanovitch:

"In tuning an instrument we are forced to obliterate outside noises and distractions: As the sound gets closer and closer to the pure vibration we are trying for, as the pitch moves up and down over a smaller and smaller range, we find body and mind progressively dropping away. We enter more and more deeply into the sound. We enter into a kind of trance state. This intensified listening is deep play — total immersion in the game. And once we pick up that instrument to play, our friends the audience will enter into a similar state of mind more readily in proportion to the care we have given to that process of tuning. What we discover, mysteriously, is that in tuning the instrument we tune the spirit."

One Voice Commemorates the 20th Anniversary of World AIDS Day

Many Lives, One Song: Hope for a World Beyond AIDS

One Voice & Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra
Hopkins High School Auditorium • 2400 Lindbergh Dr., Minnetonka
December 5 and 6, 2008, 7:30 p.m.

Presented jointly by One Voice and the Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra, the concerts feature a wide range of musical styles, ranging from choral and orchestral to gospel and folk.

A centerpiece of the concert is the world-premiere performance of *By the Fireside* by Christopher Gable, a composition that explores connections between issues of AIDS in North America and Africa.

Education is a powerful theme of the concerts as well; community AIDS partners will host informational tables at the performances. Community AIDS partners include: The African American AIDS Task Force, The Aliveness Project, Bridge Builders 4 Life, Minnesota AIDS Project, and Rural AIDS Action Network.



PARISH HALL ART / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

December Parish Hall Artists

Bill Nelson

Black and white photography has been a passion for me since my first Kodak Instamatic camera in the mid 1960's. As I have sought to hone my craft of traditional photography, I've found it to be a welcome retreat from the rigor and complexity of my career as a cinematographer.

Our trip to China allowed me to reflect on and engage in these traditional methods while seeking to capture China as it has been for thousands of years and as it is today.

The twelve images that I'm showing here were captured on film and printed full frame on gelatin silver fiber based paper.

Jane Weis

In the summer of 2007, our family traveled to China with Red Thread Tours to revisit our daughter Cora's homeland. The trip was incredible and our entire family benefited greatly from the experience. I knew I wanted to create paintings for an exhibit and so looked at China through those eyes.

I have been a regional artist for many years. I paint what's around me: flowers from my garden, roosters at the State Fair, still life in my studio, women, farmscapes, etc. This is the first time I've created an exhibit about 'somewhere else.' As I think about it, though, I realize that because of our tie to China through our youngest daughter, China has become part of my region, my second country, in fact. So my life as a regional artist continues. I'm honored to share the results of this latest adventure with you.



December 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.

U-Knitarians

...for those who enjoy knitting and crocheting
Fourth Wednesday of each month at Wellspring Wednesdays
Contact: Justin Schroeder at the Church Office

Men's Retirement Group

Monday, December 1, 15, 29 • 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Contact: Phil Morton, 952-934-3578

Unity Divorce/Transitions Group

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

Unity Singles Group

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

A New Look at the Bible

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

Afterthoughts

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

Mother-Daughter Middle School Book Club

Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the Month
Contact: Millie Adelsheim, millie@peapods.com

Unitots!

A group for families with kids through preschool age
Every Friday • 9:30 a.m.
Contact: Bridget Borell, 651-644-5618

Grandparent Unitots!

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

Unity Bridge Club

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

Evergreen Quilt Group

Tuesday, December 9 • 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, December 27 • 10:00 a.m.
Contact: Michelle Hill at 651-264-0884

Unity Book Clubs

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

Career Transitions Group

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

Goods & Services Auction

Saturday, December 6, 2008

6:00 –10:00 p.m.

\$15 advance/\$20 at the door

Purchase tickets online at www.unityunitarian.org

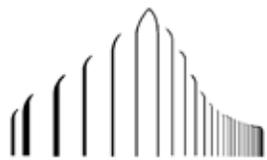
Join us for an evening of fundraising (and fun-raising!), including silent and live auctions, hearty hors d'oeuvres, sweet treats, and live entertainment

Over 300 auction items

- Gift Baskets • Great Gatherings • Professional Services
- Artwork • Handmade Crafts • Specialty Foods • Shopping Sprees • Vacation Getaways • Children's Toys • Antiques & Collectibles • Home & Garden • Gift Certificates

Need child care? Contact Christy Randall at the Church Office

Need a ride? Contact Barbara Hubbard at the Church Office



UNITY CHURCH—UNITARIAN

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