

commUNITY

Vol. 34, No. 4

Unity Church–Unitarian

December 2010

Wonder

The life of a congregation is a rich community tapestry of people, programs, ministries and worship. We lift up the patterns of this tapestry at Unity Church with the threads of monthly themes woven through our worship and programming. These themes deepen our understanding of our own faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community. We explore each theme in worship and in our newsletter; in covenant groups, guided writing sessions and Wednesday evening programming; and in our community outreach ministries, our literary journal and programs, and many other opportunities. The December theme is Wonder.

In the middle of the Ursa Major constellation – that well known dipper of stars ladling the darkness as it rotates through the night – there is an empty speck of sky on which the Hubble telescope sharpened its focus 15 years ago this month. To the naked eye, it is just another black point in the sky's surrounding blackness; but with the powerful magnification of Hubble's lenses, for ten days in 1995, the telescope recorded a series of remarkable photographs revealing so much more.

It was one of these photographs that philosopher Jacob Needleman ran across soon after on the cover of a magazine at an airport newsstand. He writes: "I was struck with wonder: a nearly microscopic point in an apparently empty patch of the night sky was here shown to be a window onto hundreds, thousands of stars, many certainly greater than our own sun, and, like our sun, pouring out unimaginable streams of life-creating energy. . . ." Needleman returned the magazine to the rack and left, only to stop in his tracks a few steps later, reconsidering what he had just seen. Returning to the magazine, then, and reading the description of the photograph inside, he

confirmed that what he had seen in the picture were not stars at all but whole galaxies. "Hundreds and thousands of galaxies never before known or seen inhabited that infinitesimal speck of empty sky, each galaxy itself containing billions of suns." Needleman writes, "I suddenly became very quiet inside."¹

Such is the experience of wonder – a deep silence that rises within when our eyes are opened wide by astonishment; a sense of awe that can bring us to a complete standstill, gaping to take in whatever veridical marvel we are witnessing in that moment.

Yet, as desirable as this experience can be, the magic of wonder cannot be forced. Perhaps at no time in the year is this clearer than in December's "season of wonder." Now, with the air filled with twinkle and bell song and with garland draped in festive fringes all around, we know the season wears styles both beautiful and bawdy. Surely we can be stirred to wonder. But, for a host of reasons, we might also find ourselves shrinking away from so much shine and song.

What do we do then, when wonder wanders away?

As Needleman's story reminds us, we may have to look again. We may have to slow down or stop altogether. We may need to reconsider, what is it we have just seen? What is it we are witnessing? A speck in the night sky? A child born in a barn? A wick still in flame days after the oil has been spent? Stories can burn bright with miracle and wonder; images can tell us tales of suns shining brightly over ten billion years ago. But often we must prepare ourselves to receive them.

Our task is to look and to listen. To step out of our frenzied pace so that wonder might find us. To make ourselves available and let ourselves linger at the edge of the unknown long enough that mystery might open our eyes to a wider, deeper view. And if our hearts are heavy, perhaps our task then, is to sit quietly with a single candle burning until the marvel of its gentle glow might ever so briefly lighten our load.

"Reverence the highest, have patience with the lowest," wrote the transcendentalist Margaret Fuller. "Are the stars too distant, pick up the pebble at thy feet and from it learn all."

So the pebbles and the stars await our gaze. And the stories of the season will unwind their tales, ancient and familiar. We are merely asked to go back and look again, with eyes and ears and hearts open, until the silence rises up within.

~ Karen Hering,
Consulting Literary Minister

¹Jacob Needleman, *A Sense of the Cosmos*, (Rhinebeck, NY: Monkfish Publishing House, 2003), ix.

Worship Theme Resources

BOOKS

Deep Play, a meditation on the human capacity for physical and spiritual play – and the sense of wonder found in our deep forms of play, by Diane Ackerman

Ecstatic Poems by Kabir, translated by Robert Bly

Small Wonder, essays by Barbara Kingsolver

Teaching a Stone to Talk, by Annie Dillard

Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind – Shunryu Suzuki (book)

Beauty, by John O'Donohue

Each Moment You're Alive Is a Gem, by Thich Nhat Hanh

FILM

Wall-E

Irrational love defeats life's programming.

JUST WORDS

Just Words

The other day a college student had the audacity to walk in front of my car without looking as I was on my way to a meeting. For a split second I seriously entertained the idea of hitting him. How dare he? I didn't want to be slowed down. Later as I was approaching a red light I let my foot off the gas so that my hybrid car might recharge. The driver of the car behind me grew furious even though I wasn't really slowing him down because of the red light. As the light turned green, I drove into the intersection only to have him speed in front of me, yelling words of compassion and love as he passed. No, this is not an article about driving. It is an article about patience, waiting and slowing down.

This season offers itself up to us as a season of waiting. The snow is about to fall, the light is already much diminished and we are invited to slow our pace a bit and wait. Wait for what, you might ask. Waiting for grace to enter into our lives, waiting for the wonder of the season to find us which it most assuredly can do if we allow it to. We do so by creating the time to stop and wait. I am not a patient person and never will be, but I am also trying to make room with intention for grace and the unbidden to enter into my life. It isn't easy but I wait in the darkness by candlelight waiting and sometimes I am rewarded. Grace? No, not yet at least. But what I have found so far is a slower heart beat, a deeper breath, a more acute awareness of our interconnectedness.

Our colleague Burton Carley tells the story of two brothers, Ryan and Kevin who fought one morning over who would get the cereal first at the breakfast table. Their mother interjected and asked them what Jesus would do in this situation. They knew the drill and responded, he would give the cereal to the other. The mother pleased with their response started to leave the kitchen only to hear Kevin turn to Ryan and say, "Ryan why don't you be Jesus this morning?"

Studies have shown that the average American grows impatient after a wait of 40 seconds. I am no exception, but I am trying to use moments of waiting as mini-sabbaths, a time to remember to breathe and pay attention. It isn't easy. But in this time of increasing darkness may we take time to welcome the wonder of attention and presence in any way that we can. Even at stoplights. You never know what you might see if you stop to pay attention.

—Janne Eller-Isaacs

Unity Tomorrow

On Saturday, November 20, the congregation was presented with three pre-design concepts for the future facilities of Unity Church. The concepts are currently on display in the Parish Hall. These are NOT final plans. Please stop by and take a look! Response cards are located next to the display for you to offer feedback about what excites and/or concerns you and also include a place for questions. The next opportunity for face-to-face dialogue about the pre-design concepts and process comes at our monthly input session on Sunday, December 12, at 12:30 p.m. Feedback is always accepted via e-mail at unitytomorrow@unityunitarian.org.



The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Francesca Lorelei Mastrud

Born one more redeemer

October 26, 2010

daughter of Heidi and Jay Mastrud

In Memoriam

Grace Vanderschaegen Hall

October 16, 1921 — October 24, 2010

Front Desk Volunteers

Would you like to come in to the church office for just one half day to try out being a front desk volunteer? Here is your opportunity. We are seeking people who know how important hospitality is in the life of Unity Church. You already "know and live" hospitality; we will teach you the rest. For more information or to schedule your half day, contact Julie Handberg at julieh@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x.110.

Flowers for Sunday Worship

If you would like to donate flowers for a Sunday, the following dates are available: January 2, 9, 23, 30, and February 13 and 20. Contact Julie Handberg at julieh@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x.110.

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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 online at www.unityunitarian.org.

December Worship Calendar

December 5

How Can This Be?

Rob Eller-Isaacs

Mary's question to the Angel still rings in our ears. How can this be? How could God possibly take human form? Beginning with the old story of the Annunciation, Rob and Worship Associate Katy Taylor will invite us in to wonder and to waiting.

December 12

The Divine Seed

Janne Eller-Isaacs

According to Quaker educator and theologian Parker Palmer, a divine seed was planted the day you were born. In this season of celebrating a miraculous birth Janne and Worship Associate Bob Steller will explore the meaning of divine birth in all of our lives.

December 19

No Room at the Inn



The whole church family will gather for the legendary carol sing (or at the 11:00 a.m. service the Carol Shout!). The service will include a "Los Posadas" ceremony as the children go from door to door asking for a place where Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus can stay the night.

December 26 • 10:00 a.m. ONLY

Faith Beyond Belief

Jason Seymour

Religion is the sense we make of life and death. Unitarian Universalism then, as we practice it, is perhaps best described as an organized, pastoral response to the compound joy and despair, elation and fear, that comes with living an impermanent life that is full of infinite ideas. Today, find your feet again on the rock of universal love as we draw upon Christian and Buddhist Scriptures to explore impermanence as a basis for healing, transformation and discernment.

December Offering Recipients

December 5: The Ronald Hubbs Center GED Scholarship Fund

The Ronald M. Hubbs Center is an adult education facility located in St. Paul's Frogtown-Midway communities. Students include single parents living on limited incomes, immigrants, refugees, those recently laid off or released from correctional facilities and others for whom the lack of a high school education has limited their ability to earn a living wage or pursue further education. For many students, the \$95 GED testing fee is often a hardship and an obstacle to their goals so one hundred percent of this donation will go to assisting students with the GED testing fee. Unity Church member Pam Ampferer is the GED Coordinator on staff at the Hubbs Center.

December 12: Support Our Schools (SOS)

Support Our Schools mission is to support public education in St. Paul by influencing district policies, building leadership capacity with a Candidate College for school board candidates and engaging the community in providing additional resources to help improve student achievement and close the achievement gap. SOS has helped build approximately 40 community partnerships between schools and faith communities, corporations, small businesses, nonprofits, higher education and other community members. In 2007, SOS helped Unity Church-Unitarian rekindle its long standing relationship with Webster School, now Obama Service Learning Elementary, located across the street from the church. Since then, 55 Unity Church volunteers have mentored 5th and 6th graders needing academic assistance and the support of another caring adult in their lives.

December 19: Heart of the Beast

The Heart of the Beast Puppet Theatre provides community theatre, produces original plays and commissioned spectacles, and teaches workshops in mask making and peacemaking throughout the Twin Cities area. This year marks the 35th anniversary of their beloved annual Minneapolis May Day Parade in Powderhorn Park. Many Unity Church children and adults have participated in performances, puppet making workshops and the parade.

December 26: Circle of Peace

Circle of Peace is a neighborhood grassroots organization of peacemakers committed to breaking the cycle of inner city youth violence. This circle was started by Russel Balenger, an employee of Amicus, Inc., a Rondo neighborhood resident and a grandfather to youth living in the community. The peace circle is composed of youth in trouble, parents, grandparents, family and community members that work with Totem Town to rehabilitate juvenile offenders by creating a different and more positive relationship. The Circle of Peace has great potential for impacting the community by creating a different, more positive relationship with parents, youth in trouble and community members. After only a few months of meeting in the Circle of Peace, a number of parents have welcomed their incarcerated youth back home. For over a year, the circle has met once a week at Unity Church and provides dinner hour meals and writing materials to all youth participants to develop their plans for success. The Unity Church Restorative Justice Ministry Team and its community partner, Amicus, both support this exciting new community effort.



Turn to page 7 for all the holiday worship information.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / ANTI-RACISM LEADERSHIP TEAM

Board of Trustees

Rob Fulton, Board Chair



I came to Unity Church some 15 years ago through serendipity. I was church hunting for myself and three sons. I wanted my sons, two of Asian heritage and the youngest, African American, to have a good religious education experience. The serendipity came when my oldest son, then in fifth grade was spending an overnight with a school friend. He came home that Sunday afternoon and said he really enjoyed going to the church school program of his friend. So, we visited Unity and have stayed. My plan was to be a "lurker" — a passive member sitting two-thirds of the way back on the right side. Good sermons, good music, simple liturgy, shake hands, pick up the boys and leave. And my children found that the diversity in the religious education program was comforting.

Well, the lurker status didn't last very long. First, there came the "ask" to teach in the religious education program. But, as a person who found their place in the basement, it was easy not to get involved in any of the issues that were going on in the church. The leaving of the longtime minister, the interim, and then the arrival ten years ago of the co-ministers were interesting, but not something I had much involvement with.

Sometime during those years I filled out a survey and said that I had talent in planning. That led to being asked to apply to be on the Board of Trustees. "Not me," I said. I didn't want to get involved any more than I was. The boys are grown with the youngest now in college. So, I came to church alone and enjoyed the worship and the fellowship, but still didn't seek to get more involved.

As I looked forward to my retirement this fall and the time that I would have to offer my services as a volunteer, I looked again and asked, "Why should I get more involved at Unity?" And my answer was "Why not!" So I applied to be on the Board of Trustees, was asked to participate in the *Unity Tomorrow* work group, and now will be serving as the chair of the Board.

We are coming into a time when all members will be asked to participate in a change process at Unity Church. We are looking at expanding our current site and identifying a second site that will provide us the opportunities to grow our outreach into a changing community. With congregation approval, we are defining a major capital campaign for the fall of 2011. As a former "lurker" I want to ask all of us to renew our enthusiasm for this church. When you next ask "Why?" Please respond with "Why not!"

Notes from the Anti-Racism Leadership Team

Pauline Eichten, ARLT member

The Anti-Racism Leadership Team (ARLT) recently completed its annual report, in keeping with one of our responsibilities defined in our charter.

- Assess and report annually to the Board of Trustees, the Executive Team, and the congregation on the progress being made in the journey toward becoming an actively anti-racist institution in covenant with communities of color.

(Copies of the report can be found on the website or by asking at the Church Office.)

As we have every year, we look at many aspects of church life and ask, is this advancing our mission of transforming Unity Church-Unitarian into an anti-racist institution?

You might ask, what does it mean to be anti-racist? How will we know if we get there? What does it mean to me personally? These are all good questions.

The thing about systemic racism is that, to many of us, it's invisible. And because it's invisible, some people think it doesn't exist anymore, that we're living in a "post-racial" world. We believe it still exists, that it's a spiritual issue that keeps us separated from one another, and each of us has a part to play in dismantling it.

What can I do, you ask. Pay attention. Ask yourself, how does race still play out in my life, my community, my world? What unconscious attitudes crop up in unexpected ways? What am I afraid of saying, and why? And continue to explore other perspectives — read a book, watch a movie, have a conversation.

It is through talking about racism that we can help each other figure it out. Each of us has been shaped by systemic racism. As we examine this shaping, we can actively work to dismantle its hold on our attitudes and behaviors. It's about "growing from the inside out" as one of our team members once said.

The hope is that we all have something to share, we're all eager to listen and to learn, we will all work together towards this dream of an anti-racist Unity Church-Unitarian. And that together we can help to build a truly inclusive "Beloved Community" in the world. However long it takes.

NOTE: We are looking for a few good men and women to join the team. If you are interested, contact Pauline Eichten at pfeichten@yahoo.com or Laura Smidzik at laura.smidzik@gmail.com.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY / HALLMAN MINISTERIAL INTERN

Wellspring Wednesday

Each Wednesday evening, everyone is invited to gather for a night at Unity Church. This is a time to engage in religious community, a time to cultivate our values and beliefs.

Schedule for the Evening

6:00 p.m. Dinner: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$18/family, and can be paid by cash or check.

6:45 p.m. Worship service in the Ames Chapel.

7:10 p.m. Programs follow worship. Childcare is available.

December 1

Amicus Study: Girls in the Juvenile Justice System

The Amicus Girls Study was developed by Amicus, a local nonprofit agency (and partner of Unity's Restorative Justice Ministry Team) working with offenders, ex-offenders and juveniles in the criminal justice system. This recently released report includes participation from over 220 individuals, including corrections and social work professionals, caregivers, women incarcerated at Minnesota Correctional Facility – Shakopee and the girls themselves. The Girls Study is a frontline overview of Minnesota's work with girls in the justice system. Join the staff and volunteers from AMICUS and learn more about the world in which we live. The Amicus Girls Study is available for download at www.amicususa.org or by calling Amicus at 612-348-8570.

Yoga with Jen Seymour • \$10 per class
Junior High Youth Group

An Introduction to the Enneagram with Katy Taylor

Are you a helper or an achiever? Are you an individualist or a challenger? Are you an investigator or an enthusiast? Are you a peacemaker? The Enneagram can help you find your way. The Enneagram of Personality is a fascinating experience. It is a psychological and spiritual exploration of personal typology and is presented in ways that allow that participant to discover and develop higher states of being, essence and enlightenment. This is an excellent opportunity for spiritual growth. Come hear Unity's own Katy Taylor as she takes us on a journey into a deeper understanding of ourselves.

December 8

What is our theology of the border? with Victoria Safford

The Twin Cities' own Rev. Victoria Safford, the senior minister at the White Bear Church, addressed the General Assembly of 2010 on the subject of social difference. She raised the question, "What is our theology of the border?" What does that border mean in Phoenix, in St. Paul or in our hearts and minds.

Yoga with Jen Seymour • \$10 per class
Junior High Youth Group

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: Wellspring Wednesday is on Winter Break beginning Wednesday, :
: December 15. It will return on Wednesday, January 12. :
.....



Jason Seymour

2010-11 Hallman Ministerial Intern

"In the beginner's mind, there are many possibilities, but in the expert's there are few." — Shunryu Suzuki

In Zen (Buddhism), there is a concept called "beginner's mind." It is the mind of compassion, the blank slate that lies beneath thoughts of identity and possession. Meditation allows for the release of these temporary, false ideas of duality and separateness... and, through patient practice, we may experience directly our beginner's mind as interconnected, compassionate, empty and serene.

Thoughts are not the enemy – they come to us all – but through practice we may learn mindfulness; we can cultivate awareness of our thought patterns; and, we can have direct experience of our selves as something deeper and larger.

Zazen is my practice; it has been for years. I have studied with teachers of varying ages and customs. Lately, I am finding wisdom in an unexpected source.

Many of you know that my wife, Jen, and I recently welcomed a son into our lives. Jonny is now just about five months old. Those first two or three months were really not easy for me. On top of a new job (here at Unity Church) and a cross-country move (from New Jersey to St. Paul)... I was trying on the very, VERY new role of Dad. Plus, all Jonny seemed to want those first few months was his mom. Sure, I could comfort him, soothe him... but I was never really what he wanted.

That all changed a month or two ago, when he became more curious, and more relational. He smiles when I come close now. His eyes go wide whenever I show him something new or make a stuffed animal talk to him. He absolutely LOVES to be held upside down. Lately, he has discovered the ability to relate through noises – no words yet – and he and I converse daily. Nothing is lost on us for not having words in common.

I think often about my son and his beginner's mind. I wonder... how does he make sense of the world around him without words? ... without pre-existing concepts and categories? To not be bound by convention, what freedom! But what limitations, as well. What was the content of his first dreams? Could he dream of a hippo or an ocean, even though he had seen neither?

Like the smiling Buddhas of art and lore, I am finding beginner's mind as a Buddhist... and also as a parent. All the world is creative to my son. Every day he creates the world anew for me. And I for him.

Whether through practice or family, or re-creating the world in young eyes, may happiness and new beginnings find you often this holiday season.

COMMUNITY / FELLOWSHIP / LEARNING

Fellowship Groups

These groups are open to all. Please contact the person listed with the group if you would like more information.

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, December 6 and 20, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

Unity Singles Group: Events TBA. Contact: Bonnie Reiland at bonniereiland@aol.com

A New Look at the Bible: Second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

Afterthoughts: Sundays after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

Unity Men's Group: Third Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Nels Otto at 651-484-4590

Unitots!: A playgroup for families with kids through preschool age. Fridays at 9:30 a.m. Contact: Michelle Hill at 651-264-0884

Grandparent Unitots!: A playgroup for grandparents and their grandkids. Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Contact: Ona Lentz at 651-222-8117

Unity Bridge Club: First Friday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Mary Barrett at 651-225-9708

Evergreen Quilt Group: Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760

Unity Book Club: Tuesday, December 14, at 7:00 p.m.

Job Transition Networking Group: Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Contact Rachel Holtzer, Facilitator at erholtzer@gmail.com

Job Transition/Networking Group

Meets every Monday • 9:30–11:30 a.m.

The Job Transition Networking Group was created to offer support, encouragement, information, and skill-building resources to Unity Church members who are unemployed or underemployed. Contact Rachel Holtzer, Facilitator at erholtzer@gmail.com.

Unity Sangha, A Weekly Meditation Community

Tuesdays • 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Find renewal and grounding each week in a supportive group setting. Strengthen a private practice by sitting in community. Zen meditation is an accessible spiritual practice that offers awareness, clarity and peace. People of all experience levels are welcome. Please arrive promptly; newcomers are encouraged to arrive 10 minutes early.

Welcome to Unity

Wednesday, December 8 • 7:10 – 8:30 p.m.

This class is geared to newcomers, visitors, and those seeking to learn more about Unitarian Universalists and Unity Church. *Welcome to Unity* covers the mission and vision of the church as well as the basics of historical and contemporary Unitarian Universalism. This class invites participants to reflect on their own faith journey and religious questions. Contact Julie Handberg at the Church Office to sign up.

U-Knitarians

Wednesday, December 15 • 7:00 p.m. • Center Room

Are you a knitter? Do you crochet? Love needlepoint or counted cross stitch? If you are a person who just has to have some needlework project going at all times, please come and join the U-Knitarians! We work on our projects and get to know one another. Beginners are welcome! Some of the knitters are making Caring Shawls for the Pastoral Care Team. Come and stitch with us!

Caregivers Group

Thursday, December 16 • Noon–2:00 p.m. • Third Thursday of the month

Are you a part-time or full-time caretaker of loved ones in your life? Do you need support in order to sustain the care you are giving? Join Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and Pastoral Care Team member Cynthia Orange for an informal support group for caregivers. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs if you would like to participate in this group.

New Group Forming: Living With Grief

Tuesday, December 21 • 7:00–9:00 p.m. • Third Tuesday of the month

On the third Tuesday of every month, Janne Eller-Isaacs will offer a group for people living with grief and loss. All are welcome to come to discuss issues related to the grieving process. Please let Janne know if you are interested in attending. Drop-ins welcome as well, but please contact the church office if you need childcare.

Unity Men's Group 2011

The Unity Men's Group is open to all men. The group meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are usually at the church unless otherwise announced. Meetings are structured but informal; everybody has an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Topics for January through May:

January • Transitions
February • Finding Purpose in Life
March • Dealing with Loss
April • Male Nurture
May • Fathers: Sharing stories



HOLIDAY WORSHIP AND CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Sunday, December 19

No Room at the Inn • Family Sunday

The whole church family will gather for the legendary carol sing (or at the 11:00 a.m. service the Carol Shout!). The service will include a “Los Posadas” ceremony as the children go from door to door asking for a place where Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus can stay the night.

Tuesday, December 21

Winter Solstice Celebration • 7:00 p.m. • Parish Hall

Come join this contemplative, family-friendly, participatory, Celtic-inspired ritual to mark the turning of the year as the darkness gives way to the growing light. This year we will also honor the full moon and the total lunar eclipse. This participatory ritual will include chanting, meditation, candle-lighting, singing, and cauldron jumping. Kids—bring animal masks and hand percussion (rattles, shakers, bells)! If you would like to participate as a ritual leader or in a facilitating capacity (greeter, set-up, etc.) for this December 21st ritual, or if you have any questions, please contact Katy at katy@katytaylor.com or (651) 291-8551.

Friday, 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. The service will include an invitation to join in communion.

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 age three 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 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 lying 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.

Sunday, January 2, 2011 • One service only at 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, January 9, 2011

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.

Christmas Pageant and Pageant Choir News



All families with children and youth who are or have been recently enrolled in Religious Education are invited to participate in the annual Unity Church Christmas pageant. Pageant information and registration materials have been e-mailed to families and are also available by contacting the Church Office. Registration must be returned by Sunday, December 5. 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):

Monday, December 6

Cast assignments are posted on church website.

Sunday, December 12

Pageant Costume Fitting

Costume fittings at 10:15 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. in the hallway outside of Ames Chapel.

Sunday, December 19

Pageant Adult Choir Rehearsal

10:00–11:00 a.m. in Robbins Parlor

Pageant Children's Choir Rehearsal

10:00–11:00 a.m. in Foote Room

Thursday, December 23

Pageant Dress Rehearsal

12:45–4:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 24

Pageant Performances

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

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

A New Year's Resolution with a Twist.

Most New Year's Resolutions revolve around us making a resolution to change ourselves in some way. We want to loose weight, stop smoking, eat healthy, read more, laugh heartily, live better. The Restorative Justice team would like you to consider a different kind of change; this year do something to change you and another.

Every month Amicus, our community outreach partner, has a gathering at Unity Unitarian to find and train One to One Volunteers to walk with men and women in prison. The commitment is one visit a month to see someone who may very well have no other visitors while incarcerated. You will have the support of the Amicus staff with years of experience in bringing Restorative Justice to those in prison. Your visits may be the single thread that helps weave these folks back into the fabric of community. The next meeting/training will be December 13 at Unity church. Contact Chris Doege or Lionel Buchanan at Amicus for more details by phone at 612-348-8570.

One prison visit a month too much in your busy life? How about one letter a month? The Restorative Justice team and Amicus will soon be launching a new initiative to provide community contact to inmates. You will be carefully matched with an inmate and asked to write one letter a month for a year. You will have the support of Amicus and the Restorative Justice team in this important community work. Watch for more details in January....and make a Resolution that helps you and someone you are yet to know. **Now there is a new twist on an old resolution!**

UUSC: What's Up?

from David Byfield and Marty Rossmann, Unity Church UUSC Representatives

UUSC Named William F. Schulz as new President and CEO. Schulz, former executive director of Amnesty International USA and former president of the UU Association, is an ordained UU minister. He is a sought after public speaker, appears frequently on radio and TV news and analysis shows, and is the author of several books.

A Guest at Your Table? (GAYT) It's not too late to join in the UUSC project to share with those in need this season of thanksgiving. Pick up a GAYT box and story book in the Parish Hall on Sundays. The box represents people with hopes and dreams who are involved in the daily struggle for human rights. At mealtime, read their stories and put gifts into the box to support these people and others like them. All GAYT boxes should be returned to the Parish Hall on Sundays on or before **January 9, 2011**. Your GAYT box can be returned with no name on it, or, if you wish, you can fill out the information and put enough money in the box to become a UUSC member.

Haiti Update: In the face of the hurricane, cholera and prolonged displacement, Haitians must be an integral part of their recovery. The Haiti Empowerment, Assistance, and Rebuilding (HEAR) act makes that a policy focus. The U.S. has contributed billions of dollars in emergency aid and pledged much more, but Congress has not yet passed the HEAR Act. This legislation sets policy priorities that will strengthen the voices of UUSC partners on the ground. Urge your representative to support the HEAR Act (H.R. 6021) now (in the lame-duck session) for a just Haitian recovery with increased protection and economic opportunities for vulnerable people.

Team members are needed. Be a little or a lot involved in UUSC activities such as: Participating in one per month UUSC conference calls; handing out Guest at Your Table boxes and stories; gathering and sharing information about UUSC projects, such as Haiti or Pakistan; or joining a UUSC "Just Works" project - a trip to Uganda!

UUSC Membership: Consider becoming a UUSC member as part of your reaching out and "beyond" effort. Membership costs are: \$10 Student/Youth; \$20 Senior; \$40 Individual Adult; and \$75 Two Adults. Join on-line at: uusc.org/contact_us. Click on "Join UUSC."

Contacts: David Byfield at 612-374-4786 or DBYF@aol.com or Marty Rossmann at 651-690-4370 or rossm001@umn.edu.

Holiday Tins Needed



The Summit University Living at Home Block Nurse Program (SULAH) is collecting holiday tins (used or new) to fill with treats and deliver to SULAH seniors in Summit University and Frogtown. Tins can be left in the "tin" box near the front desk on Sunday or brought to the SULAH office on the second floor of the church. Please help us spread some cheer to Unity's elderly neighbors. Thank you.

Evergreen Quilters Sale



Sunday, December 5 and 12

Come to see what's available at the Evergreen Quilters table in the Parish Hall after the morning services. Money raised from selling quilts and other fiber items is donated to: The Family Place, a day shelter for homeless families; Jeremiah House, a transitional housing program; and Sharing Komer food shelf.

Mano a Mano Craft Sale



Sunday, December 5

9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. • Cloister

New bags, hats and scarves! Purchases help support Bolivian artisans as well as Mano a Mano International.

Whole Farm Coop

Buy meat, cheese, produce and more from local, sustainable farms and pick it up at Unity Church! Order from www.wholefarmcoop.com or call 320-732-3023 by Wednesday, December 8. Orders will be delivered to Unity Church on Wednesday, December 15.

Evergreen Foodshelf

The third Sunday of every month is Evergreen Food Drive Sunday. Donations can be brought anytime and should be placed in the barrels located at both the Holly and Portland Avenue entrances. **December 19 suggested items: detergent (dish or clothing) and toilet paper.**

UNITY LIBRARIES / LITERARY MINISTRY



What's New at Unity Libraries?

Anderson Adult Library ♦ Bookstall ♦ Whitman Children's Library
Bookmobile ♦ Cairns Literary Journal

As the song goes: "Snow Snow Snow Snow Snow!" In other words, 'tis the season to be reading. A child on your lap? Even better. From small local press to *New York Times* bestsellers, The Bookstall has just the thing for you and the children in your life, or if we don't, we will order it for you.



But ***You're Wearing a Blue Shirt the Color of the Sky*** by Lucille Broderson with foreword by Michael Dennis Browne, is the first full-length book by this 94-years-young Minnesota poet. Lucille shares her thoughts on life, love, the passing seasons and her beloved North Shore environs in this collection of poems that spans more than a half-century of creativity.

The National Book Award-winning Jonathon Franzen's new book was nine years in the making. The highly anticipated ***Freedom*** has become highly acclaimed as well. Set in St. Paul and discussed in Rev. John Buehrens' sermon last month, *Freedom* has been described as "passionately imagined, psychologically exacting, and shrewdly satirical."

New in the Bookstall This Month: GIFT CERTIFICATES!

If you are looking for the perfect holiday, birthday, thank you or all-occasion gift, look no farther than the Unity Bookstall. You may now purchase a gift certificate for any amount, redeemable for great books or CDs in the Bookstall, and for books by special order. Great for adults AND children.

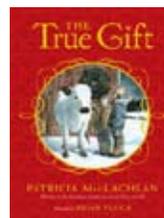
Coming in December, Cairns: *The Unity Church Journal of the Arts* Vol. 2

A collaboration of artists and writers, representative of Unity Church's intergenerational and inclusive community, come together to offer you an inspiring collection.

Books for Children

Snow by Cynthia Ryland and illustrated by the fabulous Minnesota author/illustrator Lauren Stringer, is said to have "both the grace and exuberance of this lovely collaboration featuring Rylant's evocative words and Stringer's entrancing paintings," (Booklist). The 2010 Minnesota Book Award-winning and Caldecott Honor book ***Red Sings from the Treetops: A Year in Colors*** by Joyce Sidman is a feast for all the senses. And from Newberry Medalist for ***Sarah, Plain and Tall*** is ***The True Gift: A Christmas Story***, a classic in the making about the real spirit of Christmas.

Proceeds from The Bookstall fund the Anderson Adult Library and the Whitman Children's Library, where you will find books, CDs, and DVDs for all ages. We welcome you to come and browse the books each Sunday as you enjoy your friends and coffee. There is room for everyone!



OPEN PAGE:

reflecting with pens in hand

These guided writing sessions, led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, are invitations to the creative spirit, opportunities to correspond with "the still, small voice within." No writing experience necessary. Check individual listings for location and registration requirements and fees.

Sunday, December 5

2:00–4:00 p.m. • Unity Church

Reflection Topic: Wonder

"I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing," wrote e.e. cummings, "than teach ten thousand stars how not to dance." As we enter the season of darkness and light, we reflect on the gift of wonder and how we keep it alive. The session is free and open to all. Registration not required, but an e-mail to karen@unityunitarian.org is requested.

The Awakened Heart:

Monthly OPEN PAGE Sessions

Tuesday Evening, 6:30–9:00 p.m.

December 7 • Topic: Incarnation

Location: Carondelet Center, 1890

Randolph Ave., St. Paul

For fees and registration visit:

www.wisdomwayscenter.org

OTHER PROGRAMMING

Voices Rising in the Darkness:

A Winter Solstice Celebration

Tuesday, December 21

7:00–8:30 p.m.

Leaders: Karen Hering, literary

minister, and Mary Preus, singer

Location: Carondelet Center

To register, visit:

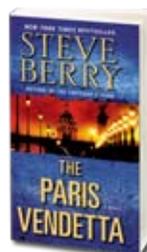
www.wisdomwayscenter.org

As May Sarton reminded us, "without darkness, nothing comes to birth, and without light, nothing flowers." Join us for a winter solstice celebration, on the evening winter begins and the Full Cold Moon, just emerged from a lunar eclipse the night before, rises in the sky. In a ritual celebrating darkness and light with song and poetry, we'll engage our voices in kindling hope on the cusp of winter.

Unity Church Book Club

The Unity Church Book Club will meet from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 14. The book they will be discussing is *The Paris Vendetta* by Steve Berry.

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



December Parish Hall Artists Fiber Edge

This group of fiber artists came together to create a visual flower garden. Starting with the same image—a snapshot taken by one of our members—each of our 14 members began interpreting the image in her personal style. Although everyone stayed within the boundaries of fiber/fiber technique, each artist used a variety of mediums to produce her work.

This traveling exhibition was an opportunity to challenge ourselves and to share our creative journey with others. As we created our individual pieces, we held in our hearts the restorative power of art and the importance of community in the healing process.

Fiber Edge is an artist collective whose mission is to challenge and encourage each of our member's unique expression of art as we explore together the creative edges of our imaginations. The group formed around Colorful Quilts, a textile shop owned by one of our members. (The shop closed in 2009.) Fourteen women who love everything textile and who worked, shopped, and took classes there wanted to continue these relationships, and **Fiber Edge** was born.

Group members are Susan Antell, Lee Bradford, Sophie Collier, Mary Holland, Tina Hughes, Rosemary Kessler, Karen Larsen, Nancy Mambi, Dorothy Mayer, Cyndi Kaye Meier, Susan Stein, Cindy Trainor, Julann Windsperger, and Wendie Zekowski.

Cookie and Wreath Sale

Please think of Unity's youth when readying your home for the holidays! Sales of Christmas cookies and wreaths benefit Tower Club, our high school youth group. Cookies will be available in the Parish Hall beginning Sunday, December 5. Wreaths are \$20 for plain wreaths, \$22 dollars for wreaths decorated by the youth. Our teens are grateful for your support.

Mitten Tree

The Mitten Tree is once again waiting in the downstairs hallway during the month of December to be decorated with warm hats, gloves, scarves and mittens! Find the tree at the intersection of the three hallways. Items will be given to the Barack and Michelle Obama School of Service Learning to distribute to students who need warm things to wear.

December 15 - "Santa Pause" Free Childcare

Unity families are invited to take advantage of this gift from the Junior High Youth Group - two and a half hours of free childcare so that parents can finish holiday tasks or just have a break. Santa Pause happens Wednesday, December 15, from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. Pizza dinner included. Crafts and games supervised by our 6th-8th graders and their parents. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Contact Christy@unityunitarian.org to sign your kids ages 6 months through 12 years up for this event.

Journey Guides Needed for Second Semester

At all three services, there are openings for Journey Guides to serve the church through ministry with our elementary school-aged children. This is the role for you if you've ever said, "R.E. sounds so cool that I wish I could go to classes!" The Journey Guide has no curricular responsibilities, but instead gets to know the group of children as a religious community. Journey Guides are the face of the church for our children. Guides attend with their class every R.E. Sunday (holidays off) from January 16 to May 15. Subs are available to cover Sundays when you can't be here. Contact Kerri at the Church Office for a job description and details.

Chalice Lighter Class Coming in January!

Is your 3rd - 6th grader interested in helping to lead worship as a Chalice Lighter? Kids who light our chalice each Sunday in Chapel and in the Sanctuary have learned about the Chalice's history and meaning during a two-session preparatory class with parents and ministers. Our next two-session Chalice Lighter program will take place on Friday, January 14 and 21. Pizza dinner included both sessions. One parent and child must attend both sessions. An investiture litany will take place during worship on Sunday, January 23. Contact Kerri in the Church Office to sign your family up for this exciting opportunity to serve the church.

Dates for your Family's Calendar

Wednesday, December 1 - New Family Orientation/Registration, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 5 - Regular R.E.

Wednesday, December 8 - Junior High Youth Group, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 12 - Regular R.E., Pageant Costume fittings; Intergenerational Caroling, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 15 - "Santa Pause" childcare event (no other Wellspring Wednesday programming)

Sunday, December 21 - Family Sunday, no R.E.

Friday, December 24 - Christmas Pageants, 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.; Family Candlelight service, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 26 - One service at 10:00 a.m., No R.E. - Special Kids' Activities

MUSIC MINISTRY

Voices of Winter: Annual Holiday Concert Carol Sing • Concert • Dessert Buffet! Saturday, December 11 • Sanctuary • Childcare will be available.

*Listen to the voices of winter the longest of nights
bright as the snow the darkest of days
clear as the wind we come singing winter's praise.
warm as the fire within*

(from *Voices of Winter* — Anne Hills)

Come and join with us as “we come singing winter’s praise” here at Unity Church. Below you will see several opportunities to enjoy as a listening and supportive audience member or as a contributing singer. Please enjoy these events as a time to invite friends and family to our welcoming and joyous community. We look forward to hearing and seeing you in this next month.

Schedule for the evening:

6:30 to 7:00 p.m. – Caroling: Come and sing Christmas carols and holiday songs with pianist Tom Bartsch, director Jeff Hess and members of our choirs

7:00 to 7:45 p.m. – Holiday Concert *Voices of Winter*: Enjoy seasonal music of great variety presented by our Children’s Choir, Unity Singers and Unity Choir

7:45 to 9:00 p.m. – Dessert Buffet: Please bring a favorite holiday dessert to share with everyone as we enjoy a chance to visit after the Holiday Concert

Intergenerational Grand Day of Caroling Sunday, December 12 from 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Designated as the International Day of Choral Singing by the International Federation of Choral Music, this day involves more than one million voices singing throughout the world in efforts to express ideas of peace and understanding; to join voices to be an active part of the process of world peace. It all begins in our own neighborhoods!

You can join in this effort by participating in our Intergenerational GRAND DAY OF CAROLING and sharing the love of this community with our neighbors through our coordination with SULAH, The Summit University Living at Home/Block Nurse Program, as well as some of the Unity Church members and friends who can’t get here to share the holidays. Bring family and friends and join us to sing joy into our extended community. Meet in the Parish Hall at 2:00 p.m. to find your designated group. All routes should be completed and returned to Unity Church no later than 3:30-4:00 p.m. Sign up at the “Caroling Table” in Parish Hall following services on December 6 for the caroling route you would like to join (walking route, carpool with Janne to Unity Church member’s care residence, or carpool to a neighborhood independent/assisted living residence).

Mila Vocal Ensemble Holiday Concert

Enjoy the stunning holiday harmonies of Eastern Europe at two concerts presented by Mila: Friday, December 10, 7:30 p.m. in the Ames Chapel, and Saturday, December 11, 7:30 p.m. in the Bigelow Chapel of United Theological Seminary. Tickets are \$10 (\$5 students, seniors and children). Visit www.milavocalensemble.com for details.

Macalester Concert Choir

The Macalester Concert Choir, Highland Camerata and Women’s Chamber Ensemble will perform their annual fall concert on Friday, December 3, at 8:00 p.m. in the Janet Wallace Concert Hall. A world premiere by the American Composer Randall Bauer titled *The Bridge of Love*. Eugene Rogers, director, Ruth Palmer and Anna McFall, accompanists. Admission is free.

Carmina Singers All are welcome!

Yes, this is your chance to do some ensemble singing during the holidays! We will rehearse from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m. on December 5 and December 19 in the Foote Room and sing during the 4:30 p.m. service on December 19. Childcare provided. Contact Ruth Palmer at the Church Office with your interest and any questions.

Christmas Pageant Adult Choir December 19 and December 24

Sing traditional carols during our over-90-year-old Christmas Pageant with members of Unity choirs and Unity friends returning to Minnesota for the holidays!

Sunday, December 19: Rehearsal from 10:00–11:00 a.m. in Robbins Parlor. This is required for anyone joining us for the first time.

Friday, December 24: Christmas Pageants at 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. Please plan to sing in both Pageants!

LOOKING AHEAD to 2011: Concerts with a Cause: Three Sundays at 3:00 p.m.

Come and hear wonderful musicians who are donating their time so that we might support an important cause that needs our help. A suggested donation of \$10.00 (or more) is appreciated. However, all concerts are free and open to the public. All are welcome!

Details on our “Cause” will be listed in the January *commUNITY*. Please invite friends and family to hear this wonderful music. Plan to stay for the 4:30 service and soup supper!

Sunday, January 23: Indande

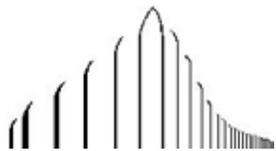
An ensemble of flute, oboe and piano!

Sunday, March 6: Pavia Winds

A woodwind quintet (including Sarah Carmack) joined by pianist Ruth Palmer

Sunday, March 27: Unity Singers

A program of favorites from years past and present.



UNITY CHURCH—UNITARIAN

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

The Gathering
is a one-day
women's spiritual retreat
celebrating each woman's voice
with
invitations for expression
for being heard
and for deep listening through
art
movement
writing
conversation
and contemplation.

Save the Date!
The Gathering

Third Annual Unity Church Women's Retreat

Saturday, January 29, 2011

Holiday Calendar

Sunday, December 5 ~

Mano a Mano Craft Sale • 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. • Page 8
Evergreen Quilters Annual Sale • Following Morning Services • Page 8
High School Wreath and Cookie Sale • Begins Today • Page 10

Friday, December 10 ~ Mila Holiday Concert • 7:30 p.m. • Page 11

Saturday, December 11 ~ *Voices of Winter*: Annual Holiday Concert • Page 11

Sunday, December 12 ~

Pageant Costume Fitting • 10:15 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. • Page 7
Intergenerational Grand Day of Caroling • 2:00–4:00 p.m. • Page 11
Evergreen Quilters Annual Sale • Following Morning Services • Page 8
High School Wreath and Cookie Sale • While Supplies Last • Page 10

Wednesday, December 15 ~ Santa Pause • 6:00–8:30 p.m. • Page 10

Sunday, December 19 ~

No Room at the Inn, Family Sunday • 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 4:30 p.m.
Pageant Adult Choir Rehearsal • 10:00 a.m. • Page 11
Pageant Children's Choir Rehearsal • 10:00 a.m. • Page 7
High School Wreath and Cookie Sale • While Supplies Last • Page 10

Thursday, December 21 ~ Winter Solstice Celebration • 7:00 p.m. • Page 7

Thursday, December 23 ~ Pageant Dress Rehearsals • 1:00–4:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 24 ~

Find A Stillness • 10:00 a.m. • Page 8
Christmas Pageant • 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. • Page 8
Lessons and Carols • 7:00 p.m. • Page 8
Lessons and Carols • 10:00 p.m. • Page 8



Look for the pine cone and find details on all the holiday offerings.