commUNITY

Unity Church-Unitarian fosters transformation through a free and inclusive religious community that encourages lives of integrity, service, and joy.

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Evangelize Love

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 faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community.

> *As repairers of the breach, at work in the ruins of the world as we have known it, Unity Church must develop and preach a theology adequate for the night.*
>
> — Unity Executive Team Ends Interpretation, Summer 2025

> *…But I believe we are called to move through our days as if we are beloved of God, as if we all belong, we ourselves and everyone else, and every living thing. When I say, "You are beloved of God," I mean you are beloved OF COURSE. You just are.*
>
> — Rev. Victoria Safford from "Beloved"

What does it mean to be "repairers of the breach?" The phrase Unity's leadership used to try to understand what we are called to do and be in this moment comes from the prophet Isaiah, from the same passage that became the Unitarian Universalist hymn "We'll Build a Land." It is a hymn about building the promised land that *can be*, the beloved community built here, by us, working as the expression of love in the world.

Unity Church has known, for many years, that the life of faith is not contained within or among the walls and community of the church, but expands out into the surrounding world. The work that our congregants do, from volunteering with their local school to help students and parents stay safe this winter, to testifying at local hearings to the work of justice in the world, to showing up at protests singing together, are expressions of our collective ministry in the world. Church is not just what happens for an hour on Sunday morning, it is how we show up the other 167 hours a week.

In 2023, the Unitarian Universalist Association adopted new language to try to articulate what holds us together, as a tradition. For the first time we placed the word love at the center. Drawing on our Universalist roots, we proclaim that all are beloved (of course, Rev. Victoria Safford adds, you just are). Love is what animates our understanding of the worth and beloved-ness of each person, and the relational nature of love helps us to feel our interconnections. Love, as we ended last month in worship, is the motivating force behind our action in the world.

"Evangelize" is a challenging word for Unitarian Universalists. It conjures up images and memories of proselytizing, of the worst excesses of conservative Christianity. Evangelism as we understand it at Unity is less about convincing people of the righteousness of our theology than it is how we show up in the world. American Unitarianism was founded in 1819, in a sermon in Baltimore. It ends with an admonition from the preacher to the man being ordained: "You will remember, that good practice is the end of preaching, and will labor to make your people holy livers, rather than skillful disputants… My brother, may your life preach more loudly than your lips." This is how we evangelize, not through our lips but through our lives.

The world needs evangelizing love today. Hatred, suspicion, and anxiety have been our constant companions in 2026. We will not respond as a church by fueling the rage and division that are ever-present, but by stepping into the broken places of our communities proclaiming that, all belong, all beloved, without exception. When we do that, we will be repairers of the breach, singing:

We'll build a land where we bind up the broken.

We'll build a land where the captives go free,

where the oil of gladness dissolves all mourning.

Oh, we'll build a promised land that can be.

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair
On behalf of the Theme Team

Theme Resources

For further reflection on the theme Evangelize Love, please see this month's spiritual practice packet available online at unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.

Just Words

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister

I'm writing this article in mid-January, knowing that the situation we find ourselves in will almost certainly have changed by the time it is published. The first month of 2026 has been intense here in Minnesota, full of grief, rage, and uncertainty. A few hours ago I canceled a trip I've been looking forward to for a year, in order to stay in Minnesota through this moment of crisis.

I have served churches full-time, first as an intern, then a solo minister, then a minister on a team, since 2015. In my internship years, Freddie Gray was killed in Baltimore, Donald Trump was elected president for the first time, and the president of the Unitarian Universalist Association resigned. The two years felt like a semi-permanent state of crisis, when there was always more to do than human beings could keep up with.

Over the last ten years, that feeling of crisis has remained. From the late 2010s threats of war with North Korea, to COVID and the racial reckoning of 2020, to this month's catastrophic events in Minneapolis, my peers and I have rarely ended a congregational year saying, "Well, that was calmer than we thought it would be." But a permanent crisis is a contradiction: a crisis is a turning point, when stress in a system reaches a breaking point and something changes. The crises of the last decade have instead built on each other, each adding stress and diminishing our capacity to respond to the next.

This is the world we find ourselves in. It does not seem likely that the sense of permanent crisis will diminish in the next few months or years, so it is worth asking how we will make it through? A few options come to mind...

We can accommodate ourselves to the causes of the crisis, ignoring what is happening around us and retreating into safe enclaves of what privileges we can find or maintain. We can rage against the world around us, burning out as we burn down institutions and each other. Neither of these responses feels adequate to me.

What has grounded me, and continues to more every year, is leaning into my own faith. "Remember," an old boss told me once, "no matter what door you are called to walk through, the one who calls you goes with you." I have become increasingly comfortable over the last decade using the name God for that-which-calls, but I could just as easily name it "community at the highest level of reality and possibly where love and justice prevail," or the power of love in the world.

When we talk at Unity Church about our commitment to antiracism and spiritual practices being two sides of a double helix, I think this is the insight we are getting at: our capacity to respond to the crises of our time require us to dig deep into our ways of making meaning in the world. As we make meaning, as we discover in ourselves and the people around us how love shows up in human lives, we find ourselves better equipped to do the work of building a better world. I don't know what new crisis we will be tackling in February, but I hope this is how we continue to show up: as people of faith, showing up in love, in the world.

See you out there,

Oscar

In The Justice Database

In The Justice Database: Side With Love, Minnesota Resource Kit: ICE Out of Minnesota, January 2026

Find here calls to action, organizations, and more to help "Unitarian Universalists respond with fierce love and clear strategy."

Donate to Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf

Unity Church donated 3,579 pounds of food to our friends at Hallie Q. Brown in 2025!

Thank you for all your donations and support for our partner food shelf. During February, the food shelf needs paper towels, toilet paper, disinfectant wipes, all-purpose cleaner, shampoo and conditioner, body lotion, and hand and body soap. Nonperishable food and financial donations are also accepted: hallieqbrown.charityproud.org/donate.

SUNDAY SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Sunday Services

Sunday services are held at 9:00 and 11:15 a.m. The 9:00 a.m. service is also offered via livestream. Find the livestream links, sermon podcasts, and worship theme resources at unityunitarian.org/sunday-services.

February 1: *The Most Dangerous Word*

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair | Isaac Fried, Worship Associate

Is "evangelize" the most dangerous word in our themes this year? How do we grapple with it as Unitarians? Or is the danger hiding in plain sight, when we consider what is asked of us when we show up in love, in the world.

February 8: *Bite-Sized Good News*

Rev. Shay MacKay | Dick Buggs, Worship Associate

Join Rev. Shay and Dick Buggs for reflection on their personal experiences of sharing love — one conversation, one person, one moment at a time.

February 15: *The Power of Love*

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair | Betsy Hearn, Worship Associate

"In the fullness of time, even the devil will be redeemed." Our Universalist ancestors preached that love was the most powerful force in the world — that God's love for humanity transcended and triumphed over any human capacity for wrong. How does this heritage find expression today, as we confront the brokenness around us with love?

Story Sunday, February 22: *Love at the Center*

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair | Rev. Shay MacKay
Sarah Cledwyn, Worship Associate

In 2023, Unitarian Universalists decided to describe ourselves as a faith movement with love at the center. This Sunday, join members of Unity's ministry team in conversation as we consider how, three years after that decision, we understand love as an expression of our theology?

On Story Sundays, children in grades 1-8 begin in worship with the congregation in the Sanctuary. After the Story for All Ages, Rotation children (grades 1-5) proceed to their classrooms for religious education programming while middle school youth (grades 6-8) remain in the Sanctuary for the entire worship service.

Send an email to martha@unityunitarian.org if you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday service.

Offering Recipients

Each week, sixty percent of our Sunday offering is given to a community non-profit and forty percent supports the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church. Donations are gratefully accepted online at bit.ly/sundayoffering.

February 1

The Circle of Peace Movement touches countless lives by working to fulfill its mission to end violence and promote racial healing. The Circle of Peace Movement is a pathway to racial healing and peaceful communities, working to create a safe space where people come together on a regular basis to share a meal and engage in respectful conversation. Circle of Peace has hosted over 500 Monday meetings at Unity Church and this collection will support these weekly meals.

February 8

Makoce Ikikcupi, which means "land back" in Dakota, is an organization dedicated to the return of Dakota land and the revival of Dakota language and culture in Minnesota. They have created two traditional Dakota villages in Granite Falls and Mountain Lake, MN. This collection will underwrite its program of purchasing land and reviving Dakota culture.

February 15

Common Bond Housing envisions that every person has a dignified, affordable home that supports independence and advancement within a flourishing community. Skyline Tower, St. Paul's largest affordable housing community, is recovering from an electrical fire that triggered the release of sprinklers and shut down all building systems. This collection will support recovery efforts for the more than 500 Skyline families impacted by the fire.

February 22

Urban Roots operates as a youth development program and one of the largest youth employers on the East Side of Saint Paul. Urban Roots creates economic and educational opportunities for under-resourced, majority-BIPOC youth, preparing them for academic and professional success while addressing immediate community needs around fresh food access, the environment, and collective wellbeing. This collection will help pay their youth interns.

If you would like to nominate an organization to receive our Sunday offering, please visit unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering and complete the nomination form.

The Inseparable Ties Between Racial and Economic Justice

Beloved Community Communications Team

As part of Unity's Ends Statements — and our commitment to "understand the interconnected roots of oppression" — three newsletter articles from Rev. KP Hong (Oct 2024, Sept 2025, Dec 2025) examine how racial justice and economic justice are bound together within the structures of racial capitalism. To broaden this conversation, we invited several Unity Church members to offer brief "letters to the editor" in response. We asked them what insights or questions feel most pressing, and how those reflections shape their stance in the broader struggle for racial and economic justice. We are grateful for their thoughtful, lightly edited contributions, inviting us all to keep wrestling with the inseparable ties between racial and economic justice.

By and large diversity, equity and inclusion conversations and trainings have left out economic diversity.

For Unity to fully lean into antiracism, we must do the difficult work of tackling economic justice. There is economic diversity within the congregation, but we must acknowledge that, overall, the congregation is one of economic privilege.

Reparations are increasingly, and rightly so, a part of the discussion around racial and economic justice. While reparations are vital to racial and economic justice, it is a starting point, not an end point. If the current economic structures are left in place, mass inequality will continue.

This requires a much more arduous approach to economic justice. One that requires us to wholly examine our privilege, the comfort we have grown accustomed to, and challenges us in every sense of the word to ask what we are willing to give up for an antiracist society.

— Jennifer Bubke

With the new ends statement we encounter a first for Unity Church — a mandate to discuss economic justice.

Discussing economic justice should terrify you. "Be the change you want to see in the world." That means your economic model has to shift — your asset strategy has to be just. If you don't hear about economic justice and shutter a little for the health and wellbeing of your 401k then you're not taking this mandate seriously.

We (Unitarians) love a hard conversation. Digging into dangerous words is our jam. . . But shifting your retirement savings from the extractive stock market into regenerative and local investments is not a "difficult and transformative conversation." It's the practical application of our values in the world. It has consequences — to you — to your money.

Economic justice is terrifying — if you're committed.

— Jesse Williams

As a welfare worker 56 years ago, I was assigned to a no-go zone for the Boston Police who would not enter the area because of the danger. These "projects" have since been torn down and progress made but the root causes of economic inequality remain. How do we build an economically just society, one that cares for all? I still believe that real change must come from the ballot box. A guaranteed minimum income, access to child care, quality education, universal health care, and getting money out of politics are just a few issues to be addressed.

I am drawn to a concept in Judaism called *Tikkun Olam* which refers to the pursuit of social justice and the cultivating of godly qualities throughout the world and based on the belief that each person bears responsibility not only for their own moral, spiritual, and material welfare, but for the welfare of society at large.

— Jim Mulvey

I agree with that racism, capitalism and, relatedly, colonialism have operated together for centuries — with the social construction and legal imposition of "race" having devastating economic, political, and environmental consequences for othered individuals and communities.

Overlooking the centrality of capitalism to the creation and maintenance of racism means that many of us have mistakenly sought to address discrimination at an individual level ("liberal antiracism") rather than at the systemic level ("radical antiracism"). This mistake is not surprising because it appears less daunting to address an issue from an interpersonal instead of a structural standpoint. In addition, some of us have benefitted significantly from the capitalist system. My question is whether all of us are now willing to walk the walk — dismantling the systemic sources of racism — rather than solely talking the talk of diversity, equity, and inclusion. I remain convinced that anything less than systemic analysis and action, informed by individual and communal experience, will not build the beloved community we need and deserve.

— Justin Cummins

Continued on page 5...

BELOVED COMMUNITY NEWS

Beloved Community continued from page 4...

Your brief essay has provoked more thought than any other social commentary I've read this year... and raised more questions.

I would suggest that most governing systems have fallen somewhere into the middle of these opposites. By putting a ceiling on liberty, a limit to how rich or powerful you are allowed by law to become, governments have tried to use some resources to install a floor to keep the least wealthy members of the population from sinking too far into inequality, hence injustice: poverty and all that goes with it. So for most systems, whether more or less autocratic or democratic, the tension and the conflict arise from questions of how high we can allow the ceiling to rise? How low can we allow the floor to sink?

Added to all of the issues surrounding capitalism and racism, we face seeming determination to render our planet inhospitable and perhaps uninhabitable. Perhaps, having risen to dominate a complex and beautiful biosphere, we are destined to become footnotes to history, if anyone out there is recording the history of the planet Earth.

— Dutton Foster

UNITY CHURCH–UNITARIAN

integrity · service · joy

Interconnected Roots of Oppression

Understanding Racial Capitalism as Structure Behind Systemic Inequality

Wednesday Learning Series | February 18—March 25
7:10-8:40 p.m. | Parish Hall

Image: monthlyreview.org/articles/modern-u-s-racial-capitalism/

The abolition of slavery did not end systemic racism. The structures that made slavery possible — a political economy rooted in extraction, exploitation, and inequality — remain firmly in place. They were redesigned and repackaged to reproduce advantage and disadvantage with relentless precision. When we look beyond individual prejudice and turn our attention to the deeper architecture of racial capitalism, the machinery of interconnected oppressions comes sharply into view. As scholar-activist Ruth Wilson Gilmore makes unmistakably clear: "Capitalism requires inequality, and racism enshrines it... The capitalism we have inherited, constantly producing and reproducing itself, will continue to depend on racial practice and racial hierarchy, no matter what. This is another way of saying we can't undo racism without undoing capitalism."

This learning series invites us into dialogue circles where we share our lived experiences and questions, examine the deeper roots of injustice, and strengthen our understanding of the interconnected systems of oppression. Moving in parallel with the aims of ISAIAH's People's Agenda, we will imagine new possibilities and cultivate collective action toward genuine transformation.

This program series, grounded in dialogue circles, is primarily designed to be an in person experience. A remote option is available for the first session, and based on interest, additional online learning opportunities may be offered through Justice Learning Partners.

February 18: Foundations of Racial Capitalism (Parish Hall and Zoom)
February 25: Land, Ownership, and Housing Justice
March 4: Borders, Policing, and the Politics of Belonging
March 11: Finance, Debt, and the Cost of Inequality
March 18: Universal Care and the Struggle for Collective Well Being
March 25: Fossil Capitalism and Imagining New Futures

Do What You Can

Rev. Shay MacKay

In fall of 2014 I was a student at Starr King School for the Ministry and living in Berkeley, CA. Just before Thanksgiving riots and civil disturbances broke out in Oakland and surrounding cities following the decision of a Grand Jury in St. Louis to not charge Darren Wilson in the shooting death of black teenager Michael Brown.

Just five months later, the San Francisco Bay Area joined people all over the U.S. in protesting the death of Freddie Gray while in custody of the Baltimore police.

I was living just blocks away from People's Park, a symbol and site of radical political activism in the late 1960s, and taking classes grounded in Starr King's ECO pedagogy: Educating to Create Just and Sustainable Communities that Counter Oppressions.

I was fortunate enough to own a car and thus became one of the drivers on-call to bring blankets, soup, and water to the protesters. And to pick up friends and classmates from jails after they had been arrested. I was leading chapel and vigil services, helping with pet care, and offering emotional support to those going out into the streets. And still, I was ashamed and guilt-ridden for not being an "activist."

As someone fairly new to Unitarian Universalism, and new to civil disobedience in general (North Dakota was not a hotbed of political dissent when I was growing up), I had internalized, from somewhere, a very narrow definition of activism: boots on the ground, out in the streets, putting yourself in harm's way. It wasn't until I finally broke down and confessed to one of my professors that I wasn't doing enough that I was given the gift of a new definition, a more expansive and inclusive understanding of what it looks like to be an activist — that it takes all sorts of people, a variety of personalities and gifts and skills, to make social justice happen.

I still have trouble defending that new definition for myself and the guilt hasn't left me completely. Sometimes what's necessary is for me to really push against the boundaries of my comfort zones and put myself out on the streets, but overall I believe that our diversity makes us stronger — *and that includes the diversity in how we show up, how we support, how we utilize our gifts and talents in service to the larger good.*

Do not despair at your inability, *for whatever reason*, to be at the Capitol, on neighborhood patrols, or in Target parking lots.

Instead, do what you *can* do in support and solidarity with our neighbors.

And then come back here on Sunday morning and sit in the embrace of this community, be comforted and inspired, proud of what you have done, and recharged to go do even more.

Writing for Wellbeing Workshop

Saturday, February 14 | 9:00 a.m.-noon | Robbins Parlor
Registration: bit.ly/wellbework

Grief is one of the most challenging and emotionally painful experiences all of us face. In living with grief, we often experience a fragmentation of our self and our understanding of the world. Integration of loss requires not only the expression of grief and meaning-making, but also the rebuilding of identity. Writing for Wellbeing is an effective and powerful research-based method to empower us to integrate and transform our grief. All who are grieving, who have experienced loss and are struggling, who want to explore new and different ways of writing their stories, are welcome to join Rev. Shay in a morning of reflection, writing, and sharing.

Caregivers Support Group

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. Shay MacKay and Pastoral Care Team member Cynthia Orange for an informal support group for caregivers. Email shay@unityunitarian.org if you would like to participate.

Living With Grief Group

Third Tuesday of the month | 7:00-8:30 p.m.

A group for people living with grief and loss. All are welcome to come to discuss issues related to the grieving process. Email shay@unityunitarian.org if you would like to participate.

Congregational Care

Do you have a concern or celebration you wish to have shared in the Embracing Meditation during Sunday worship? Would you like to request a call from the Minister or a helping hand or listening ear of a Care Team member? Send an email to pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org.

Stay Connected

commUNITY is the monthly newsletter of Unity Church. Deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to the month of publication. Subscriptions to this monthly newsletter (digital and USPS) and our weekly e-news are available by contacting Martha at martha@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x105.

Access all the hyperlinks in the newsletter with this QR code.

Welcome Words

Philippa Anastos
Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant

When we try to evangelize love in any form — building community, nurturing family, strengthening relationships — we often see it as one more task to add to already full lives, with overflowing calendars, crowded inboxes, and minds stretched thin. This month, perhaps we can practice evangelizing love not by doing more, but by laying down what separates us from others: emotional armor, wariness, and preconceived judgments about others' intentions or beliefs. If you're unsure where to begin, try seeking out a newcomer each week after the service, for newcomers often help us see our community with fresh eyes and gently guide us in breaking down the barriers between ourselves and others.

Finding Yourself at Unity

Finding Yourself at Unity: For Visitors and Inquirers
Sundays | 10:15 a.m. | Center Room | Childcare available
Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time. If you have questions or would like one-on-one conversation about getting connected or about membership, contact Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant, philippa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110.

February classes include:

- February 1: Q&A with the Minister
- February 8: Community Outreach
- February 15: No session
- February 22: Faith Formation & Religious Education

Join the Welcome Team!

The Welcome Team is expanding! Every Sunday we greet new visitors and old friends, help individuals navigate the building, usher, collect the offering, and more. As our weekly numbers grow, more team members will help us greet at additional entrances and provide more guidance to newcomers. If you are interested in joining the Welcome Team, or in trying a shadowing shift, contact Philippa Anastos at philippa@unityunitarian.org.

Volunteer to Give Rides

We're looking for volunteers to give fellow community members rides. Your kindness and support will help others connect and participate. If you're able to assist, please consider volunteering today! To offer your help, please contact Philippa Anastos at philippa@unityunitarian.org.

New! Women's Coffee Circle

The Women in Retirement group is expanding to add an all-ages Women's Coffee Circle on alternate Saturdays! The group is open to all individuals who identify as a woman and offer the time to create a multigenerational community of joy, care and belonging. Meetings will be held the first and third Saturdays of the month, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., in the Center Room. Questions? Email Laurel L'Allier at lallierlaurel@gmail.com.

Fellowship Groups

Email Philippa at philippa@unityunitarian.org to get connected.

Afterthoughts: Sundays, 10:15 a.m., Middle School Room 021, to discuss the service

Caregivers Support Group: third Thursday of the month at noon, Zoom

Evergreen Quilters: second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Anderson Library, and fourth Saturday of the month, 10:00 a.m.-noon, off-site.

Families Living with Mental Health Challenges: third Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Zoom

Living With Grief Group: third Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Zoom

Men's Coffee Group: Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m., Center Room, for light-hearted conversation

Men's Conversation Group: Monday, February 2 and 16, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Zoom. Discuss a range of topics, offer support, and connect.

Men's Retirement Circle: Monday, February 9 and 23, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Robbins Parlor

New Look at the Bible meets the second Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m., at Unity Church

Textile Arts Group: first and third Friday of the month, 9:30-11:00 a.m., Crothers Room, bring your knitting, stitching, etc.

Unity Book Club: second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Zoom. Discussion on February 10: *Tom Lake* by Ann Patchett

Women's Coffee Circle: first and third Saturday of each month (February 7 and 21), 10:00-11:30 a.m., Center Room

Women in Retirement: second and fourth Thursday of each month, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Center Room

Young Adult Group (ages 18-35): every other Wednesday at 7:10 p.m., Center Room.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday gathers a multigenerational church community to nourish right and holy relationship among us and deepen our life of faith, grounded in spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural work. Each week we share:

- Meaningful time and nourishing food together (5:45)
- Multigenerational worship in Ames Chapel (6:45)
- Opportunities to play, learn, and practice (7:10)

February 4

Dinner: Chicken tinga, rice, cilantro-lime slaw, spicy brownies

Art Team Panel | Parish Hall
Join the Unity Church Art Team, Rev. Oscar Sinclair, and Executive Director Laura Park to explore how the ends of Unity Church are transformed through the lens of art into action. How has the Art Team's actions over the years made the church's ends live in the permanent collection and the revolving exhibits in Parish Hall? What challenges has the team engaged with in that work? Discover how one team has aligned its work for the church with the outcomes the ends identify, and what difference that has made.

Religious Education New Family Orientation | Gannett Room
Learn about Unity's religious education programs for children and youth. Email Nelson Moroukian at nelson@unityunitarian.org one week in advance if you plan to participate.

Cultivating the Sacred Well of Resilience | Anderson Library
Join educator Jackie Smith for a spring series designed to cultivate resilience and well-being in the lives of educators. Rooted in care, connection, and community, this course is ideal for anyone seeking greater clarity, balance, and sustainability in their work. Whether you're in your first years of teaching, mid-career, or approaching retirement, developing habits that support well-being — both at school and at home — can help sustain the joy and purpose of teaching in an increasingly complex world.

Five Theological Questions | Robbins Parlor
How do we live in the face of death and loss?
Be prepared to discuss the question in a small group format.

Somatic Yoga | Body Room
Experience a gentle, nervous system-informed yoga practice designed to help you pause, tune into yourself, and release tension stored in the body. The class is accessible to anyone comfortable sitting on the floor, bring a yoga mat, blanket, or blocks for added comfort. Led by Dr. Tamara Kraft, a somatic psychotherapist and holistic health coach.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room
Join Mayra Mendoza for beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Email mayraquitzia@hotmail.com by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday to ensure a lesson.

February 11

Dinner: Sloppy joes, macaroni & cheese, roasted broccoli, chocolate krinkle cookies

Evangelizing Love | Parish Hall
Join Unity's Executive Team for a session that includes readings and small-group discussion about this month's worship theme. How do we understand evangelism in a Unitarian Universalist context? What does it mean to evangelize a concept as all-encompassing as love? Is this task made clearer or more difficult by our current social climate? How do we not only live this evangelism in the wider world, but grapple with it internally?

Lectio Divina | Gannett Room & Zoom
Come experience the alchemy that occurs through focused reflection on an inspirational text. Many people find Lectio Divina sessions to be a time of rejuvenation and insight.

Young Adults Group | Center Room
A fun, reflective group working to build multifaith and multicultural community.

Winter Sowing | Art Room
Help the Act for the Earth Pollinator Team plant native seeds from our Seed Library into tubs and jugs to set outside to freeze and thaw and grow into seedlings in late spring for pollinator gardens. Dirt, tubs and jugs provided. Take some home with you for your own pollinator garden or to give away in early summer.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room
Join Mayra Mendoza for beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Email mayraquitzia@hotmail.com by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday to ensure a lesson.

February 18

Dinner: Chana masala, rice, raita, kachumber salad, cardamon cookies

Interconnected Roots of Oppression: Foundations of Racial Capitalism
Parish Hall & Zoom
This learning series invites us into dialogue circles where we share our lived experiences and questions, examine the deeper roots of injustice, and strengthen our understanding of the interconnected systems of oppression. See page five for more information.

Justice Learning Partners | Zoom
JLP is a program that matches two or more people to spend time together over 6-8 weeks taking a deeper dive into a social justice resource, such as a book, podcast, or video. This meeting is your opportunity to hear more about the program, about what is being offered this session, and to connect with others. Recognizing that oppressive systems are inextricably linked; as MLK said, "Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." No one can do everything but everyone can do something. This is but one step toward transforming ourselves into members of the beloved community, a.k.a. justice-seeking people.

Somatic Yoga | Body Room
This class is accessible to anyone comfortable sitting on the floor, bring a yoga mat, blanket, or blocks for added comfort. Led by Dr. Tamara Kraft, a somatic psychotherapist and holistic health coach.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room.
Email mayraquitzia@hotmail.com by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday to ensure a lesson.

February 25

Dinner: Fried chicken, coleslaw, African soul rice, rice krispie treats

Interconnected Roots of Oppression: Land, Ownership, and Housing | Parish Hall
This learning series invites us into dialogue circles where we share our lived experiences and questions, examine the deeper roots of injustice, and strengthen our understanding of the interconnected systems of oppression. See page five for more information.

Five Theological Questions | Robbins Parlor
How is the sacred present in and felt by each of us?
Be prepared to discuss the question in a large group format.

Young Adults Group | Center Room
A fun, reflective group working to build multifaith and multicultural community.

Hymn Sing | Robbins Parlor
At each session participants sing a hymn from our hymnals; discuss its music, text, history, and theology; and share personal reflections on the music and its meaning.

Somatic Yoga | Body Room
This class is accessible to anyone comfortable sitting on the floor, bring a yoga mat, blanket, or blocks for added comfort. Led by Dr. Tamara Kraft, a somatic psychotherapist and holistic health coach.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room.
Email mayraquitzia@hotmail.com by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday to ensure a lesson.

Our Creative Community

Art as gift, art as joy, art as spiritual practice. During February and March Unity's Art Team is delighted to exhibit art created by members of the Unity Church community. Take a bit of time to enjoy, appreciate, drink in and celebrate the many wonderful creative offerings of our creative community.

Stroll through our Parish Hall and check out the creative offerings from Unity folks. We have pottery, painting, photography, quilts, sculpture and more on display. Read the statements of our 43 participating artists to get to know them better. Rest in something beautiful. Nature and deep noticing inspired many of the works in this exhibit and participant Maura Williams draws our attention to the creative genius of nature. Participant Mary Kerres notes that art reminds her (in part) of connection to family and her Unity Church family.

In difficult and frightening times art often soothes our spirits and gifts us with new hope. Take a deep breath, give yourself a moment and let go some of the tensions of the day. Jason Kenley reflects, "... both the process and the final piece encourage reflection and help me focus my thoughts in a chaotic world that seems increasingly determined to distract and deter such reflection."

A great hearted *thank you* to those who have shared their creative works. May you be as inspired as participant Lorelee Wederstrom was by "love for this beauty, wherever my eyes can find it or my mind can imagine it."

Join the Art Team panel conversation at Wellspring Wednesday on February 4 (see page eight), and then meet and greet the February artists at a reception on Sunday, February 8, at 1:00 p.m.

Fulfilling Our Promise

Unity Church–Unitarian
AUCTION FUNDRAISER

Silent auction bidding begins March 1

$32,000 GOAL
Supports Unity's operating budget

SILENT AUCTION

Bubble Bliss Champagne Experience

Make auction donations by February 14!
Donations that offer opportunities to build community are especially welcome!

FOOD & DRINK

LIVE AUCTION

AFTER PARTY

Friday
March 6
2026

Doors Open
5:00 PM

Admission: $20 in advance | $25 at the door
Fun, fellowship, and exciting bidding.
Childcare available.

Scan this code to learn how to donate, purchase tickets, and volunteer.

unityunitarian.org/fundraiser

Strengthen Unity Church financially, communally, and joyfully, as we raise $32,000 for our 2026 operating budget.

Make a donation!

Donate online: bit.ly/ucuauction26
Donation deadline: February 14, 5:00 p.m.
Some ideas include:

- Time at a vacation home
- A gathering where you share your unique skill such as wine tasting, painting, crafting, cooking, or you name it
- A dinner, poetry reading, or special in-person event
- A behind-the-scenes tour somewhere special
- A once-a-month or one-time special treat such as pie, soup, cookies, or cake
- Gift cards to local businesses
- Entertainment and sports tickets
- Home furnishings, trinkets, and treasures

Everyone has something to offer! Don't have space to host in your home? You can host at the church! Contact Laura Park at laura@unityunitarian.org for help figuring out an item to donate.

Prefer to make a financial contribution? Please visit our Make a Gift page and select "Fundraiser Donation" from the drop-down menu, or visit the silent auction webpage and click "Make a Monetary Donation"

Attend the March 6 auction event in-person!

Purchase Tickets
Advance tickets: $20.00 | At-the-Door tickets: $25.00
Purchase your advance tickets — select item #1 in the auction catalog — for our silent and live auction on Friday, March 6, 5:00 p.m., at Unity Church. Admission price includes delicious appetizers and beverages, fun, fellowship, and exciting bidding. There's even an after-party as we wait to find out if we met our goal. Childcare available.

Bid early and often!

View the Catalog
View the catalog and be ready to start bidding Sunday, March 1, at 9:00 a.m.! Check back often as new items are added daily now through March 6. Bid from anywhere! You do not need to be present to bid on or win a silent auction item. Silent auction bidding ends on Friday, March 6, at 8:00 p.m.

Volunteer to help!

Sign up Online: bit.ly/auction26vol
We have many opportunities to pitch in, a little or a lot. Sign up to help with food, decoration, or technology Thursday, March 5, and Friday, March 6. Email Laura Park with questions at laura@unityunitarian.org.

Housing Justice Team: Project Home Needs Your Help

The renovated first floor of Project Home's new location is currently occupied by 29 families (97 people in total). When the second floor is ready, this number will double. Project Home provides emergency shelter as it finds permanent housing for families. Unity's Housing Justice Team is a community partner of Project Home and seeks to fill volunteer roles as they settle into their new building:

Front Desk Volunteers: Needed for shifts from 9:30am-1:30pm whenever you're available M-F. Tasks include checking in visitors, distributing mail, etc. Details and to sign up: bit.ly/phfrdesk

Winter Gear Project! Only 2 of the 29 Project Home families have not been adopted to receive much needed winter gear. Full details including what each family needs: bit.ly/phwarm

Volunteer drivers needed in February: Until a commercial kitchen is built, meals for families are created at Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet. Drivers are needed to pick up weekday lunch meals from there and drive them to the Bandana location. Details and sign up at bit.ly/phlunchdelv.

Gun Violence Prevention Team

During these profoundly disturbing times when gun violence nearly daily seems a matter to have to live as well as work to prevent, our Gun Violence Prevention Team is discerning ways in which we can best serve Unity Church. We feel that to continue reporting about the latest Minnesota legislative measures around gun violence — though important — might not be where our energy should be expended to the degree to which it has been in recent years. We are aware that increasingly many here at church have very personal stories about how they or those close to them have been impacted by acts of violence due to guns having fallen into the wrong hands, and we would like to hear these stories.

On Sunday, February 22, members of our team will staff a table in Parish Hall following both services where our intention will be to learn your stories. We feel by offering this opportunity, those affected by horrific incidents will have a place to be heard and to be held in community as we all strive to stay centered. We will ask that stories be summarized on cards we will provide, and those stories will be posted on a board at our table. Stories may certainly be written anonymously.

Moms Demand Action and Protect Minnesota are the two community organizations with which our team partners. From10:00 a.m. until noon on Tuesday, February 17, Moms Demand Action will hold a Welcome Back to the Capitol event. Also, at 9:00 a.m. on both Thursday, March 12, and Friday, March 13, these two devoted groups will hold rallies at the Capitol to meet state representatives outside the building (March 12) and gather inside the rotunda for presentations (March 13). If you are interested in attending and would like to carpool with friends from Unity Church, please contact Barbara Ford (brford839@gmail.com) or Bob Albrecht (Bob@BobAlbrechtRealEstate.com).

Please visit Unity's Gun Violence Prevention Team webpage to learn about how you can become involved in the critical work and conversations of our group. We meet every other third Thursday, 3:30-4:30 p.m., at church and via Zoom. Our next gathering will be on March 19.

Obama School Team

To support the families at Obama School either as a community observer or with mutual aid, please email Christine Sarkes at christinesarkes@gmail.org.

Planting Seeds of Justice

UUSC Partner Team

Krista Finstad Hanson and Clover Earl

The Unity Church UUSC Partner Team is working to deepen the connection between our congregation and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC).

The UUSC works to advance human rights around the world and at home in the US. A benefit of being a supporting member of the UUSC is receiving their "Rights Now" newsletter to be informed of their good work which we are supporting with our donations.

Their second newsletter for the end of the year had articles about the UUSC's work in Fiji, Ukraine, and fighting hate here at home. In response to escalating threats and hateful rhetoric in the U.S., the UUSC released $1.75 million for Community Protection Grants in 2025. These grants are for up to $30,000 each and have been distributed to more than 40 organizations.

Some of this money went to support the group called BorderLinks "to mobilize local deportation defense at the U.S.-Mexico border in response to mass deportations of undocumented and mixed-status migrants, asylum seekers, and queer and trans people."

In the newsletter's article about the UUSC's work in Ukraine, Myra Dahgaypaw wrote, "Committed people can create islands of hope that eventually become continents of change."

Will you help us build the capacity of the UUSC's important work in the world and here at home? Join us in renewing our congregation's connection to this vital service committee. Visit UUSC's website to learn more: uusc.org.

Sangha Practice

Tuesdays | 4:30-6:00 p.m.
Ames Chapel
At the heart of Buddhist practice is the commitment to awaken — to step into our doubts and predicaments and hear the roaring of life at the still point of a turning universe. Through weekly practice of meditation, we discover a clarity of mind attentive and accountable to each moment of life's flow, and touch the mystery of our original face. This group is open to anyone interested, no experience is necessary, and instructions will be provided. Email kp@unityunitarian.org to join the practice.

Lectio Divina

Second Wednesday and Fourth Tuesday of Each Month
7:10 p.m. | Zoom: bit.ly/lectioucu
Come experience the alchemy that occurs through focused reflection on an inspirational text. Many people find Lectio Divina sessions to be a time of rejuvenation and insight. Led by Shelley Butler and Lisa Wersal; facilitated by your own heart. Register once and attend as often as you are able.

Active Hope for the New Now Practice Gathering

Monday, February 9
7:00-8:30 p.m. | Robbins Parlor
The intention is not a discussion of the issue but to move through the Active Hope Spiral of grounding in gratitude, touching into feelings, seeing with new and ancient eyes, and gathering our capacities for action in response to this issue.

Congregational Spiritual Retreat with KP & Shay

Save the date: March 27-28, 2026
Mount Olivet Retreat Center
Day and overnight options are available.

Between Heaven and Earth: Embodied Practice Circle Resumes

Last fall's weekly Tai Ji practice will return in February under a new name and with a new meeting day and time. "Between Heaven and Earth," is a practice gathering for learning and sharing Tai Ji and Qigong, movement and stillness, poetry, song and silence.

Starting February 4, we'll meet on Wednesdays, 12:00-1:00 p.m., in the Foote Room. No registration or previous experience required. Come one time or weekly, or anything in between. Unity Church members Karen Hering and Kate Tucker will again be leading the group, teaching and sharing practices of guided Tai Ji movement rooted in Taoism — practices that awaken our awareness of energies within and around us, before and behind us, above and below us — energies that connect heaven and earth. Note: Our practices can be modified for sitting or standing. Wear comfortable clothing.

In a time when uncertainty, grief, anger and fear can disrupt our embodied awareness, our practices help bring us back into our bodies and help our emotions to flow. Together, in these challenging times, we make room for a sense of aliveness and joy.

WEAV: A 10-Week Online Ministry Program

Ten Mondays: February 9-April 20 (one week break on March 16)
7:00-8:30 p.m. CST | Zoom

What does it mean to do collective liberatory justice work? What models of justice organizing and sustainable community invite our commitment? How do we work together toward our common aims and in alignment with our Unitarian Universalist values?

WEAV is a curriculum designed for Unitarian Universalist congregations seeking to build a spiritual community engaged in counter-oppressive, sacred social change. Through this 10-week small group online ministry program, participants will learn a framework for how to engage in collective justice work in order to bridge the gap between our current reality and the ideals of the Beloved Community.

WEAV is an acronym:
W: Who are Unitarian Universalists?
E: Embodied Justice
A: Advocacy
V: Vision

Through this program, we practice together in order to learn how to do this work in our congregations and in the wider world. Questions that may be considered: How do we as a group move forward together to advance the Beloved Community? How do we engage in the difficult work within our community in order to do the work that is required in the world?

Please make a commitment as much as possible to attend every session for the ten weeks. Led by Seminarians Amy Brunell, Unity's Hallman Intern, and Katerina Garcia. Please RSVP to amy@unityunitarian.org for the Zoom link.

UNITY CHURCH – UNITARIAN
integrity · service · joy

No Easy Answers, No Quick Fixes

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

We are gathered right in one of those moments when assumptions crack and suddenly we are in a world we don't quite recognize. — Rev. Oscar, "Broken Open by Grief," January 11, 2026

Everyone out on the street bearing witness, documenting, protesting, and showing what love looks like in the face of authoritarian brutality: Thank You!

I'm writing today to tell you about Justice Learning Partners (JLP) at Unity Church. This program started as a Next Right Action, a direct response to George Floyd's killing; and here we are five years later re-introducing JLP after another senseless murder at the hands of law enforcement (if ICE can even be considered as such). No one can do everything, but most can do something. JLP is another way to engage in social justice; one way, and by no means the only way, to avoid the easy answers that would be our preference in times like these, in order to learn, ponder, discuss, connect, and go out to act with intention.

The next JLP session starts on Wednesday, February 18, at 7:10 p.m. on Zoom. Register in advance, and join us to learn more about the program, the vetted resources offered, and choose a book, podcast, or video. You will be matched with others and provided with a reading guide to take a deeper dive into that resource, following a well-developed process for reflection, discussion, and connection. Those in person at Unity that evening can join the Zoom meeting from the Gannett Room.

Each JLP session offers five or so resources. Two new books that we are offering this session are the UU Common Read title, *Social Change Now: A Guide for Reflection and Connection* by Deepa Iyer (Skinner House), and the Bush Foundation Book Club choice, *The Power of Bridging: How to Build a World Where We All Belong* by John A. Powell, activist and distinguished civil rights scholar.

Archives Team Seeks Volunteers for Photo Project

Pauline Eichten for the Archives Team (Pauline Eichten, Patt Kelly, Louise Merriam, Carol Miller, Betsy Moore, and Deb Woodburn) Email: archives@unityunitarian.org

The Archives Team needs your help. We are developing a project to arrange and index thousands of photographs from the collection, and we need some assistance.

The photos, mostly from the years 1970 to 2020, cover many topics. You will see pictures of staff and church members, events and programs, pilgrimages, religious education activities, the church building, worship services, and much, much more.

The tasks involved in this project include sorting the photos (they are already roughly arranged by subject category), identifying and discarding duplicates and other unneeded images, arranging the photos in albums, and indexing them. It's a big job!

No experience is needed beyond a desire to make the story of Unity's past more accessible. If this intrigues you, please reach out by emailing archives@unityunitarian.org. We look forward to working with you.

To whet your appetite, pictured here are examples of the kind of photos you might come across as you sort through the images in our collection.

The Chinese dragon was a tradition in the 1970s and 1980s that involved the children in the religious education program. They created the dragon and then carried it around the church during Chinese New Year. Do you remember this tradition?

Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa
Director of Music Ministries

This spring, Unity's Music Ministry will be working on *Considering Matthew Shepard* by Craig Hella Johnson, culminating in a full performance on Foote Music Sunday, May 3. In addition to that performance, excerpts from the work will be woven into worship services throughout the spring as we reflect together on its themes of compassion, justice, grief, and hope. *Considering Matthew Shepard* is a large-scale choral work created by composer Craig Hella Johnson and librettist Michael Dennis Browne. Both artists have deep roots in Minnesota, and the piece itself was born out of a long creative partnership grounded in shared values of community, empathy, and social responsibility. The work responds to the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man in Wyoming whose death became a catalyst for national conversations about hate crimes and LGBTQ+ dignity. Rather than telling the story as a linear narrative, the piece invites us into a deeper act of contemplation. The work draws on poetry, journal entries, interviews, scripture, and hymnody to ask not only what happened, but how we are called to respond.

One of the most powerful aspects of this work is its profound sense of humanity. The libretto gives voice to grief, anger, tenderness, and searching for answers, while Johnson's music holds those emotions with extraordinary care. *Considering Matthew Shepard* does not offer easy answers or tidy resolutions; instead, it creates space for lament, for honest confrontation with violence and hatred, and for the slow, necessary work of healing and transformation. It is music that feels especially at home at Unity Church, where worship can hold joy and sorrow side by side.

As the Music Ministry begins its journey with this powerful work, I would like to extend an invitation to everyone in the congregation to participate in our choirs. It is the perfect time to join, as we are in the beginning stages of a new work. This is music that challenges us, connects us, and reminds us why we sing together in the first place. Whether you are a longtime singer or someone considering joining for the first time, there is a place for you in our Music Ministry. I believe this project reflects the heart of our ministry: using music not only to inspire beauty, but to deepen our shared commitment to love, justice, and the inherent worth and dignity of every person, as we consider together what it means to respond to violence with compassion and to hatred with love.

To sing with a choir at Unity Church, please email Ahmed Azaldúa at ahmed@unityunitarian.org.

Border CrosSing Presents

Un Milagro de Fe

Un Milagro de Fe is more than a concert; it is a meditation on how faith in Latin America has always required extraordinary courage. Across centuries of colonization, displacement, erasure, and reinvention, our communities did not lose their faith–they transformed it. They reshaped it in their own image, blending ancestral traditions with imposed structures, and created something resilient, beautiful, and profoundly human. That act of spiritual survival is, in itself, a miracle.

I think of my Mexican grandparents rising at dawn every morning to sing and pray the Rosary together. Their lives had their share of hardship, yet their devotion gave them resilience and strength. They taught me that for many of us, faith is not an escape from reality–it is a daily act of bravery. It is resistance. It is liberation.

This program features three incredible pieces of music that are rarely performed in the United States: *Fiesta de San Juan*, *Misa Criolla*, and *Réquiem Osún*. In this music, faith becomes rhythm, language, memory, and ritual. Africa and Europe, the Andes and the Caribbean, Catholic saints and the Orishas of the African diaspora all speak together. In this music we are reminded that courage and faith have always walked hand in hand, and that the spiritual imagination of our peoples is the greatest miracle of the Americas. In *Fiesta de San Juan*, Afro-Venezuelan communities turn the trauma of enslavement into celebration, resilience, and rhythmic joy–a miracle born from courage. In *Misa Criolla*, entire nations finally claim their right to worship in their own language, affirming that their voices, their cultures, and their prayers matter. In *Réquiem Osún*, Catholic and Yoruba spirituality stand side by side, testifying that survival–cultural, spiritual, communal–is itself an act of bravery.

Un Milagro de Fe is a reflection on this truth: we continue to survive because our people dare to keep singing, praying, and imagining something better. Tickets and more at bordercrossingmn.org.

UNITY CHURCH–UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue | Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
Business Entrance: 732 Holly Avenue | Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-228-1456 | fax: 651-228-0927 | www.unityunitarian.org | unity@unityunitarian.org

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister
Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation
Laura Park, Executive Director
Marcia Hayes, Chair, Board of Trustees

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TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Travel to Bolivia with Mano a Mano
May 17–27, 2026

Information Session: Sunday, February 8
After services | Gannett Room

Join Rev. Oscar and Mano a Mano International for a trip to Bolivia! This trip will focus on water, food, health and education, with Rev. Oscar helping us connect the work of Mano a Mano to our Unitarian Universalist faith. The trip will help us to understand the interconnected roots of oppression and yoke ourselves to the demands, sacrifices, and hard work of antiracism, multiculturalism, and climate and economic justice. For more information, contact Ann Mabbott at amabbott@hamline.edu.

2026 Pilgrimage to Transylvania
July 31–August 13, 2026

Information Session: Sunday, March 15
12:45 p.m. | Robbins Parlor and Zoom

Join fellow Unity Church members on a summer pilgrimage led by Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair to the Unitarian homeland of Transylvania. Pilgrims will gather in Budapest, Hungary, and travel to historic sites where the Unitarian faith was debated and defined in the Reformation Age. Pilgrims will then spend six days living with families in the Unitarian village of Homoródszentpéter, with whom Unity has had a partner church relationship for three decades. For more information email unitypartnerchurch@gmail.com.