commUNITY

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

Vol. 49, No.11 | Unity Church–Unitarian | July 2026

Open to Transformation

Kat Sherman, Trustee

I spend a lot of time in the middle school classroom in Unity's lower level, having taught religious education there for over a decade now. I started in middle school when my daughter was in Spirit Play, hoping to never be in the same classroom with her on her Religious Education (RE) journey.

She read her credo at this year's Coming of Age ceremony, which means I'm coming to a decision point myself. Is it time for me to leave the lower level behind? One full childhood's worth of teaching in the same RE classroom is a good milestone to hit.

I'm not sure I want to, though. I have had so many fascinating conversations in that classroom. For instance, in this past spring's Technology and Religion class — the curriculum can never quite keep up with the pace of change — we talked about AI. Most of the middle-schoolers have, as my daughter calls it, "beef" with large-language model artificial intelligence — or at least the use of it for assignments.

They tell me that AI can help you write an essay but it can't help you understand the topic. Growth comes through the work, the struggle with your words and your research, not the completed infographic on epigenetics. As someone who has restarted this piece at least ~~four~~ five times now, I certainly hope they're right about the clarifying value of struggle.

This is actually a column about transformation.

When we as a church committed in our ends to "practice lifelong faith formation, grounded in Unitarian Universalist theology, that breaks us open and allows us to be transformed" we were saying something hopeful about the effects of wonder, engagement, and courageous action.

Break us open sounds like an all-at-once kind of thing — a sudden burst of fireworks or a lightning strike on our trunks.

Break us open also sounds like the horrible year just past, when we learned lessons about the many things outside our control. In December, our Building Beloved Community class talked about injustice and systemic racism and the start of Metro Surge. By the end of winter break, the only questions were: *Who can we help? What can we do? Where do we go next?* There was no shortcut, no way to avoid the struggle.

The thing about breaking open is that we're also really good at scarring over and forgetting the lesson, even without gen AI to help us. Once the crisis is past, it is tempting to think we can go back to "normal," to ignore that the old normal included the same injustice that created the crisis, and the new normal does as well.

The slow drip of hate and systemic oppression can transform our communities in devastating ways, meant to be ignored by those of us not on the receiving end of the acid. In order to be truly, lastingly, transformed, we need to keep ourselves open, engaged, seeing, and listening.

It's been my own faith being formed in the lower level over the last ten years, my own heart being broken open and transformed. No single RE class is going to produce an epiphany in anyone. But each class over the last decade, I have left with a little bit of *huh*, a challenge to my concepts of our church, a different light on what it means to be UU, a heart-tug of tenderness or hope. A drip of changes that have over the years built up to where I look back on the ten-years-ago me and realize I didn't know what the heck I was talking about. (I still might not.)

In May, I watched my daughter read her credo, affirming — as nearly all the now high-schoolers did — the importance to her theology of *community* — of holding it, protecting it, learning from it, growing in it. Over the years, through personal and communal losses and gains, sometimes slow and sometimes all at once, transformation had happened. They refused to give up their determination that they could and would create — in at least this small corner of the world — their own conditions for transformation jointly with each other.

In June, we had a State of the Church meeting where we asked each other what our hopes, dreams, and fears were for Unity. Our hearts are cracked, ready for transformation. The summer and the new program year will offer us so many opportunities for open-hearted engagement and courageous action.

I would invite you to ask yourself not only where you want Unity to be open to transformation, but where you do. Where do you want to be? Who do you want beside you? Where is the joy for you, and what is the clarifying struggle?

In the summer, Unity Church breaks itself open, and we explore. In church services we bring forward a variety of voices. Our children spend time in the garden, working and learning. Our spiritual work continues, as do the opportunities to join in our community and justice work.

Come with your cracked heart and join in.

Summer Theme: Transformation

Further reflection on the theme: unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.

Sunday Services

Summer Sunday services, from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, are held at 10:00 a.m., both in the Sanctuary and via livestream. Sundays in the Garden for children and youth is held during the 10:00 a.m. service.

July 5
The Grief of Nationalism
Rev. Shay MacKay
Sarah Cledwyn, Worship Associate
Political grief reflects the sorrow, pain and disruption experienced by individuals, families and communities when faced with loss or change due to political actions, events, policies and ideologies. It manifests itself in various forms, from personal feelings of despair and injustice to collective mourning observed during protests or commemorative events. Let's grieve together.

July 12
Transforming Our Relationships: Money
Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair
Ollie Stocker, Worship Associate

July 19
Transforming Our Relationships: Stuff
Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair
Estelle Brouwer and Mary Pickard, Worship Associates

July 26
Transforming Our Relationships: With Each Other
Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair
Anne Haley, Worship Associate

The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Carol Knapp Mahnke
October 8, 1951– June 16, 2026

Marjory Louise Dunlavy Christensen
October 4, 1931 – June 2, 2026

Merging of Waters
Sunday, September 13

Reminder to collect water this summer for our annual Merging of Waters ritual of reunion in September.

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.

July 5
Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light (MNIPL) partners with faith communities to address the climate crisis and advance environmental justice. Its work includes Indigenous justice, leadership development, education, advocacy, and supporting practical actions that help individuals and congregations reduce emissions and strengthen community resilience. MNIPL partners with Unity's Act for the Earth Team keeping our advocacy team informed about pending legislation and opportunities for collaborative engagement.

July 12
Moms Demand Action Minnesota is a partner of Unity's Gun Violence Prevention Team. Mom Demand Action groups are grassroots organizations in all 50 states and are affiliated with Everytown for Gun Safety. The all-volunteer St. Paul group works with local officials (St. Paul Police Department, City Council, Ramsey County Attorney, community groups) to advocate for laws that promote gun safety and responsible gun ownership. This offering will support summer community educational outreach events in St. Paul parks.

July 19
One in ten men experiences depression. Fear, shame, and a lack of understanding about depression prevents many from seeking help resulting in over 35,000 male suicides per year in the USA. The Face It Foundation, founded in 2009, aims to help men understand and recover from depression thereby reducing the rate of male suicide. Face It provides a variety of services to men, all free of charge, including support groups and retreats. Face It currently supports over 250 men in their struggles with depression.

July 26
Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative is a Twin Cities-based nonprofit uniting nearly 70 congregations to develop affordable housing and equitable housing policies. As Minnesota's largest provider of site-based supportive housing, they create permanent homes and provide vital wrap-around services such as employment coaching, health services, and partnerships with the YMCA for vulnerable populations. Due to recent federal funding cuts, congregational and community gifts ensure that services remain robust and available to young people. Unity Church member Heidi Goldman-Gray is President of Advancement and Communications at Beacon and Joanna Dornfeld serves on the Beacon Board.

Welcome Words

Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant

Often, summer brings transformation, but this year, I hope it brings us all healing and clarity. This community, both long-term congregants and newcomers, stood strong over the winter and we know there is more work to be done. We also know that the work cannot be done from a place of exhaustion and burnout, and that the way we mobilized this winter is not sustainable. Over the summer days of gardening, parks, festivals, and pools, may we all reconnect with those things that feed us so that we can continue to build beloved community!

Finding Yourself at Unity

Finding Yourself at Unity: For Visitors and Inquirers
Summer Sundays | 11:15 a.m. | Center Room
Drop-ins welcome | Childcare available in the nursery
Join the repeating five-session cycle at any time. Attend the sessions in any order, which include Faith Formation for Children, Youth, and Adults; Congregational and Pastoral Care; Q&A with a Minister; Social Justice and Community Outreach; and Membership 101 and Congregational Life. Weekly church emails include the session topic or find the session schedule at the Welcome Table in the main lobby or in Parish Hall, or email philippa@unityunitarian.org to receive Saturday morning email reminders.

July 5: No session (4th of July weekend)
July 12: Faith Formation and Religious Education
July 19: Q&A with the Minister
July 26: Pastoral Care

Summer Lectio Divina

Wednesday, July 8, and August 12 | Zoom
Is it poetry? Is it meditation? It's a bit of both — Lectio Divina! 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 you are able.

Sunday Brunch

Sunday, July 26 | After the service | Parish Hall
Pancakes with blueberry compote, chicken sausage, and plenty of coffee and conversation. Donations accepted.

Join us for a St. Paul Saints Game

Our annual St. Paul Saints outing is coming up! Join members and friends of the congregation at the ballpark on Friday, August 28, at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are $22 each. Email philippa@unityunitarian.org to reserve tickets.

Fellowship Groups

Email Philippa at philippa@unityunitarian.org to learn more and 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

Food Ministry: Help prepare a meal, clean the kitchen, bake pies, or do some canning and preserving. Contact Heidi Birkholz at heidi@unityunitarian.org.

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, July 6 and 20, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Zoom. Discuss a range of topics.

Men's Retirement Circle: Monday, July 13 and 27, 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

Sangha Practice: Tuesdays, 4:30-6:00 p.m., Ames Chapel. This group is open to anyone interested, no experience is necessary, instructions provided. Email kp@unityunitarian.org to join the practice.

The Singing Resistance: Thursdays, 6:30-7:15 p.m., Parish Hall. Learn songs of hope and resilience to sing with the larger Singing Resistance of the Twin Cities. This group is on break until September.

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

Unity Book Club: second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Zoom.
July 14: *An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s* by Doris Kearns Goodwin

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

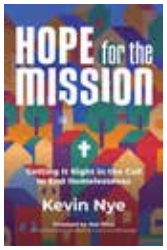
Women in Retirement: second and fourth Thursday of each month, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Center Room

Young Adult Group (ages 18-35): every other Wednesday at 7:10 p.m., Center Room. Email Rev. KP at kp@unityunitarian.org to be added to the email list.

Housing Justice Team

The Unity Church congregation has generously supported Project Home this year in many ways. Our community stepped up and donated many carloads of household items that will be shared with families as they move to more permanent housing. Church members helped open a library filled with wonderful new children's books. Volunteers will continue to help drive lunches to the new location until the new kitchen is installed, and many others have been available to help at the front desk and with clothing drives and special events such as the end of the school year party for children. Watch for more volunteer opportunities each month and join the work — and joy — of serving families in our community.

New Book Features the Work of Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative



Beacon is a major partner with Unity's Housing Justice Team. They are the focus of a chapter in author Kevin Nye's new book, *Hope for the Mission: Getting it Right in the Call to End Homelessness*. Nye critiques paternalistic models of shelter promoted by many U.S. churches. He then turns to examples of transformative, evidenced-based housing development and policy (featuring Beacon) which faith communities can consider for their work as advocates for housing justice.

Habitat for Humanity: Volunteer this month!

Unity's Housing Justice Team is co-sponsoring a Habitat for Humanity home construction work week July 13-17 in Roseville, MN. All skill levels are needed to help with this renovation of an existing home, and you can volunteer for one day or multiple days. Sign up today or in Parish Hall after Sunday service. If the day you want is full, check again later. Plans change and slots open. Questions? Email Chuck Griggs at griggscb@msn.com.

Check Out our Housing Justice Team! Want to see evidence-based solutions to the housing crisis? Check out one of our meetings on the second Tuesday of each month, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Email lauren.b.gunderson@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

Obama School Team

The 2025-26 school year was challenging for the school community in several ways. The Montessori Elementary School moved from a beloved old building into the newly renovated school across the street from the church. A new Middle School was created in the west tower to share the space. Operation Metro Surge affected the entire school community — staff, students, and families. Through it all, our Unity Church volunteers were a steady and calming presence, whether they were standing on the corners with whistles, shelving books in the library, distributing food packs to student backpacks on Fridays, or assisting students in the classrooms. What we provided cannot be measured, but we know we made a difference.

As we look forward to another year, we plan to continue with our support of the school community. In the fall, we'll be looking for additional volunteers so please give it some thought and watch for announcements about how to get involved.

A Big *Thank You* from the Evergreen Quilters

This past April we had our biennial quilt show and sale in Parish Hall and both were a huge success! Because of your generosity and support Evergreen Quilters were able to donate $1,893 to each of these three charities: Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf, Project Home and the Jeremiah Program. Thank you so much for all of your support over the years.

Act for the Earth

Outdoor Fun at Afton State Park

Saturday, July 18 | Registration
Come for a day of hiking, biking, swimming, a campfire, and even an overnight camping option is available!

Movie Night: *Meat Me Halfway*

Wednesday, July 22 | **Parish Hall Pizza at 5:30 p.m.** | **Movie at 6:00**
Join Unity's Act For the Earth Team for a viewing of *Meat Me Halfway*, followed by a facilitated conversation. We will offer vegetarian and vegan pizzas (with gluten free options) prior to the show (donations gratefully accepted). There are so many lenses through which to view our food choices. This film explores flexitarian eating, and is sure to spark a lively conversation.

Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf and Clothing Closet

In May, 352 pounds of food and household items were donated to Hallie Q. Brown. Thank you! For the month of July they are in need of toothpaste and toothbrushes, mouthwash, shampoo, conditioner, body wash and soap, and tissues. Non-perishable food is always welcome. Please, no dented cans or expired food. Financial contributions are gratefully accepted online at hallieqbrown.charityproud.org/donate.

In addition to the food shelf, Hallie Q. Brown, has a clothing closet and seeks donations of new or gently used clothing and shoes (for people of all genders and ages) as well as *new* undergarments for children of all ages. All items must be clean and in good condition. Drop-off at Hallie Q. Brown (270 N. Kent Street, St. Paul), Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Watercolor and Photography: July Parish Hall Artists

Jinjer Markley is an artist and illustrator with a background in science. She currently works freelance, illustrating picture books, posters, and whatever else she is commissioned to paint. She works mainly in watercolor, which is a weird and wonderful medium, perfect for a former scientist because it rewards close observation and experimentation. It also rewards thorough planning and preparation, so in 2019, Jinjer started making tiny little business card sized paintings in a practice she calls "Meditative Watercolor." There is something magical about the tiny size — too small to worry about wasting paper or paint, these tiny paintings became Jinjer's favorite way to take a break from her rigorously planned-out illustration work to remember the joys of playing with watercolor. Peace comes through releasing control of the finished project — starting completely unplanned and following what the paint itself seems to suggest. May you find a little shimmer of that connection to the divine clinging to each finished painting. She also teaches painting, drawing and color theory classes, including a "Meditative Watercolor" class (the next session begins July 11 at Wet Paint Artists Materials).

Bernard Friel (Bernie) is a serious birdwatcher. His first nature photography subject matter was local bird life. But a life changing event in 1969 expanded his photographic horizons. A serious heart attack at the age of 38 marked a significant change in his life. Out of fear and a concern for his family he undertook to develop a healthy lifestyle having no idea where it would take him but intending that it would prevent an early death. And it did for he is about to celebrate his 96th birthday. That healthy lifestyle led to a recreational life of backpacking, canoeing, rafting, kayaking, mountaineering, sailing and exploration where he photographed his surroundings and activities.

Bernie is primarily a nature photographer and is a charter and life member of the North American Nature Photography Association and served on its board and as its president. He is represented by two photo agencies who distribute his photographic work internationally and that work includes travel and architecture. Bernie's images have appeared in many magazines, calendars, and websites, and have been featured on the covers of National Wildlife and the National Geographic website.

He was born and grew up in St. Paul, MN, attended, J.J. Hill grade school, graduated from Central High School, and received his Law Degree from the University of Minnesota. He practiced law with the firm of Briggs and Morgan (now the TAFT firm) for 58 years, from which he is now retired.

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 and our weekly e-news are available by contacting Martha at martha@unityunitarian.org. Access all the hyperlinks in the newsletter with this QR code.

Planting Seeds of Justice

Krista Finstad Hanson
UUSC Partner Team

The Unity Church UUSC Partner Team is working to bring a connection back to Unity Church with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). The following text comes from the UUSC:

UUSC is continually investing in long-term partnerships that strengthen human rights movements and nurture the people leading them.

Recently, UUSC supporters helped fund "Haiti Rising" — a wellness retreat that brought together leaders from a number of UUSC's grassroots partner organizations in Haiti. At a time when many Haitian advocates, journalists, and organizers are working under extraordinary and oftentimes life-threatening pressure, UUSC's retreat created space for rest, reflection, and renewed connection.

This past Pride Month, UUSC, the UUA, and Trans Religious professional UUs Together (TRUUsT) invited members to put faith into action through a national public comment campaign. Together, we submitted unique public comments to the Department of Housing and Urban Development opposing a proposed rule that would strip safety protections from federally funded shelters for transgender, nonbinary, two-spirit, and intersex people.

In the words of UUSC partners Advocates for Trans Equality who are helping guide the vision for this campaign: Instead of allowing providers to care for those in need, the new rule would force providers to turn away members of the trans community who do not follow narrow definitions of gender.

For more information, check out the UUSC website.

Summer Reading, What's Your Pleasure?

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

What are all y'all wanting to read this summer? Memoir? Fiction? True stories/nonfiction? We've got something for everyone. Browse in The Bookstall for your next great read, and check out these and more new titles in Anderson Library.

Raising Hare: A Memoir by Chloe Dalton, illustrated by Denise Nestor. Vintage, 2026. Anderson Library: 599.32 D.
A fascinating meditation on freedom, trust, loss, and our relationship with the natural world, explored through the moving and remarkable story of one woman's rescue of a leveret/hare that Margaret Renkl (author of *The Comfort of Crows*) says is, "A perfect testimony to the transformative power of love." A New York Times Notable Book and on the best books of the year list of NPR, The Washington Post, Time, Scientific America, Boston Globe, and more.

Theo of Golden: A Novel by Allen Levi. Atria, 2025. Anderson Library: 813.6 L.
One spring morning, a stranger named Theo arrives in the small Southern city of Golden. He doesn't explain much about where he came from or why he's there — but when he visits the local coffeehouse, where pencil portraits of the people of Golden hang on the walls, he begins purchasing them, one at a time, and giving each portrait to the person depicted. In exchange, he asks only for the person's story. A story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen, *Theo of Golden* is an unforgettable novel about the power of generosity, the importance of connection, and the quiet miracles that happen when we choose kindness and wonder.

Days of Love and Rage: A Story of Ordinary People Forging a Revolution by Ana Gopal. Simon & Schuster, 2026. Anderson Library: 956.91 G.
In 2011, in a northern Syrian city, a small group of men and women began a movement that overthrew a brutal dictatorship. For the next eighteen months, many of the citizens of Manbij carried out one of the most remarkable experiments in democracy in modern times. From the Pulitzer and National Book Award finalist Anand Gopal. The New York Times Book Review calls *Days of Love and Rage*, a "masterpiece."

Maybe you have read or heard about an extraordinary or remarkable book lately? If so, let us know: library@unityunitarian.org. We're always grateful for book recommendations.

Happy Summer Reading!
See you in the Anderson Library and at The Bookstall.

Annual Reports Offer Snapshot of Church Life

Archives Team: Pauline Eichten, Aubrey Lodahl, Carol Miller, Betsy Moore, Deb Woodburn, and Louise Merriam in absentia

Recently, someone asked when the Art Committee started. The request came to the Archives Team in case we had any information about it. As it happened, one of our members had been at the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) going through annual reports from the 1960s. She was looking for more information about the housing relocation effort and noted this entry from the October 1960 annual report:

> *Development & Growth Division report notes development of plans for periodic art exhibits, particularly in the Center Room and Library. The board established an Art Committee that will start this fall.*

This was shortly after the Eliot Wing extension added the Center Room. In 1961 the Art Committee reported on the first art exhibit held in November. Artists featured were Jim Crane, Arthur Kerrick, Lorraine LeSueur, and Elsa Jemne. Jemne gave her painting from the exhibit, titled "Christmas Candles," to the church. A 1957 feature article in the St. Paul Pioneer Press highlighted this artwork, alongside the work of other regional artists. Unity Church no longer owns the painting.

Elsa Laubach Jemne (1888–1974) was a well-known Minnesota artist, muralist, and illustrator, noted for her work during the New Deal era. Many of her murals are in Minnesota locations. This one is in the Hutchinson post office.

She was a member of Unity Church and married to Magnus Jemne, who was the chapel architect in the early 1920s. He also designed hand-carved elements for the chancel. This woodwork was lost in the Sanctuary fire in 1963. An example of his work is on display in the Center Room.

Curious about what is in Unity's collection at MNHS? Visit the Finding Aid listing. To search within the listing, expand all and use 'ctrl + f' *(PC)* or 'cmd + f' *(Mac)*. MNHS has digitized many items; to see those items, enter 'digital' in the search field.

Music Notes

Jared Mikach, Choir Pianist

My relationship with religion and music has always been an interesting one. I was raised Catholic, but it was more of a cultural thing than us being devout, I have almost no recollection of music from masses, and we basically stopped practicing when we left my Catholic school after fourth grade. Through high school I played for random services at my friends' churches and for a Christian homeschool girls' choir, and then I went to a Lutheran school for college (St. Olaf), where I encountered Unitarianism for the first time. I somehow got connected to the Unitarian Church in Northfield and was hired to play for the choir and services. I had no idea what Unitarianism was, but I remember vividly my shock when at my first service the "sermon" was on the moral ethics of the death penalty. I came to that first service with some very pretty sounding, contemplative pieces to play, but they encouraged me to bring whatever I was working on in my study, or whatever was resonating with me the most at that time. While there, I brought pieces from Bartók's *Eight Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs*, to Nobuo Uematsu's Final Fantasy Piano Collections, and received nothing but insightful, open comments and questions from folks. Sharing music with that fellowship helped me to explore my own relationship with spirituality and music. Playing piano and listening to/sharing music has always been my way to connect with others and with deeper parts of myself. During some of my more dramatic moments of existential dread at Olaf, I would lay out on Old Main Hill in the wee hours of the night, staring up at the sky and blasting Huun-Huur-Tu (a Tuvan throat singing folk band), just contemplating.

Anyway, after graduating and moving up to the cities, I was back to playing for Christian denominations, mainly Baptist and Presbyterian. That freedom of musical expression that I had down in Northfield was stifled again; I was constantly asked to bring music that "sounded religious," somber music was only acceptable during Lent, selections should be joyful but not overly flashy, they should be either a melody or composer that people knew, etc. So many boxes I had to fit into, and all of this kind of coinciding with some personal exploration I had begun to connect more with my Latinidad and queerness. Needless to say, I was struggling to do this work. There was this great dissonance that I was feeling in learning what music I was the most connected to and compelled to share, and then not being able to share that at one of my jobs: with coming into my own as a queer Latino individual, and then feeling like I needed to hide that and present a certain way every Wednesday evening and Sunday morning.

In 2022 I left my church job and had fully intended to never return to that type of music making. However, when Ahmed reached out to me asking if I would consider working with him at Unity, it was an easy and immediate yes. I've always been adjacent to Unity Church. I've known Kathy Kraulik since my undergrad, I subbed for her a handful of times when Ruth was Director of Music and have known and worked with Ahmed since we met at the University of Minnesota. This first year at Unity has been busy, but really wonderful. Getting to do Britten's *Saint Nicholas* and *Considering Matthew Shepard* was incredibly engaging and impactful, the people have been warm and welcoming, and I feel that similar curiosity and freedom of musical expression as I did down in Northfield. I once again have the space to bring whatever music to worship that I deem fits the vibe of the service, and I hope that people have enjoyed my selections. It is a reprieve from the craziness of all the things I do to get to make and share music with Ahmed, the choirs, and everyone else. Since the Northfield fellowship, this is my first church job where I have really wanted the members to engage with my outside work as well. On June 12 I gave my first grant funded recital in my **Pianistico: An Art Song Exploration** series at First Universalist Church of Minneapolis; it was so heartwarming to see some Unity faces there, and I would love to see more at any events I have in the future! I'll be giving three more grant recitals at First Universalist on July 17, August 28, and October 16, as well as performing a baroque opera Drag show with An Opera Theatre and the Bach Society of Minnesota August 21-25. I'm very lucky get to make music for a living and getting to do it with communities like Unity Church makes me incredibly grateful.

Find details about and tickets for Jared's upcoming performances at his website: mikach.net.

Religious Education

OWL Facilitators Needed

Our Whole Lives is Unity's relationship, human sexuality, and identity program for 7-9 graders. The curriculum, created by the Unitarian Universalist Association and United Church of Christ, is a dialogue and fact-based course lead by trained volunteers. There is a local training in mid-August this year. Interested? Email Drew Danielson at drew@unityunitarian.org.

Children's Garden Maintenance

Wednesday, July 15 | 4:30-6:00 p.m.
Bring a pair of garden gloves and come enjoy gardening at church!

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
Rev. Shay MacKay, Minister of Congregational Care
Laura Park, Executive Director
Marcia Hayes, Chair, Board of Trustees

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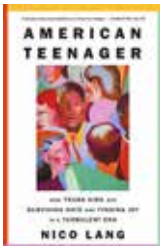
TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Book Reading with Nico Lang

Author of *American Teenager: How Trans Kids Are Surviving Hate and Finding Joy in a Turbulent Era*

Tuesday, July 14 | 6:30 p.m.
Parish Hall



Media coverage tends to sensationalize the fight over how trans kids should be allowed to live, but what is incredibly rare are the voices of the people at the heart of this debate: transgender and gender nonconforming kids themselves.

Come hear journalist Nico Lang, who spent a year traveling the country to document the lives of transgender, nonbinary, and genderfluid teens and their families.

Spiritual Deepening: UU Wellspring

Registration

UU Wellspring is a year-long program of spiritual deepening connected to the Six Sources of our living Unitarian Universalist faith tradition. Through reading and reflection, daily spiritual practice, spiritual companionship, and small group process that holds space to hear our deepest thoughts, the UU Wellspring Sources program is a deeply meaningful way to explore what Unitarian Universalism means to you and how you want your faith to guide your life and your work for justice. The program meets every two weeks and begins with an orientation on Saturday, August 22. Please register by August 9.

Questions? Email Philippa at philippa@unityunitarian.org.

In The Justice Database

The Wakan Típi Center is NOW OPEN! Named to honor the significance of Wakan Típi Cave as a Dakota sacred site, the mission of the Center is to serve as an intergenerational gathering place that honors Dakota sacred sites; includes an exhibit hall, classrooms, ceremony space, a community gathering area, a teaching kitchen, and teaching gardens to showcase and expand the value of the sanctuary as a place for cultural healing, life-long learning, and inspiration. Formerly known as the Lower Phalen Creek Project.