

FREEDOM

The life of a congregation is a rich community tapestry of people, programs, ministries and worship. We lift up the patterns of this tapestry at Unity Church with the threads of monthly themes woven through our worship and programming. These themes deepen our understanding of our own faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community.

Freedom rests at the paradoxical heart of our country. In 1775, American colonists created a “don’t tread on me” flag that proclaimed liberty or death in the fight against Great Britain, and that sense of prickly patriotism remains a vibrant — and malleable — part of American culture. Civil rights leaders organized “Freedom Summer” in 1965 in an effort to win basic voting rights. In his influential *Capitalism and Freedom*, economist Milton Friedman argues the free market created political freedom. Former President George W. Bush justified a 2004 invasion of Iraq with the slogan “freedom is on the march.” When quarterback Colin Kaepernick knelt on the sidelines to protest police brutality, his actions spurred a feverish debate about freedom of speech, with Kaepernick’s supporters and detractors both presenting themselves as defenders of American freedom. A constant yearning to be free pulsates through our history, shaping American identity itself.

Unitarian Universalists feel similarly passionate in their celebration of religious freedom. Our fourth principle makes a “free and responsible search for truth and meaning” an act of religious devotion. Our hymnal has an entire section on Freedom songs. In the hymn *As Tranquil Streams* (#145), we sing about “a freedom that reveres the past, but trusts the dawning future more.” This freedom reminds us that revelation is not sealed and that searching for deeper truths and prophetic answers is a part of our religious call.

Of course, that fourth principle has changed over the years, and it’s worth considering what that teaches us about our relationship to freedom. For example, a “free and responsible search” used to be *first* on the list, the starting point of UU principles. In 1985, it was demoted to the fourth spot, as the “inherent worth and dignity of all

people” became our first principle. The wording changed as well. When the Unitarians and the Universalists merged in 1961, we took a principled stand “to strengthen one another in a free and disciplined search for truth as the foundation of religious fellowship.” In its most recent formulation, the word disciplined disappeared. And instead of searching for “truth as the foundation of religious fellowship,” we seek out “truth and meaning” without a sense of relationship.

Yet individual freedom of thought can never alone sustain spiritual growth. Unitarian theologian James Luther Adams proclaimed that a free person’s faith required working in community, being part of a larger whole. “The free person will be unfree,” Adams said, “will be a victim of tyranny from within or from without, if his or her faith does not assume form, in both word and deed.” For Adams, freedom demands that “we yoke ourselves to each other because a commanding, sustaining, transforming reality finds its richest focus ... in free, cooperative efforts for the common good.” Most of us probably think of yokes as antithetical to freedom, evoking bondage and repression, not freedom and liberation. But Adams believed that individual freedom cannot bring liberation. Thinking ourselves to freedom is not the only way. Working together with others — and sometimes deferring to their ideas — helps us achieve our collective liberation.

Maybe the Easter story might help explain freedom in a fresh way. As Unitarians, Easter’s promise of the salvation of a risen Christ holds little sway, yet our history yokes us to this sacred day. So listen to the Rt. Rev. John Shelby Spong, an Episcopal bishop and theologian, who believes that Easter is best understood as an annual reminder to seek liberation for ourselves and

others. For Spong, Easter is the ultimate story of freedom, rather than a sacrificial redemption from sin.

In this telling, Jesus mattered because he lived a life of radical freedom, becoming “so frightening to those who are not free — and who cannot admit that they are not free — that they rise up in anger to destroy [him].” Jesus defied the cultural and social norms of his day, focusing on radical justice work even in the face of brutal imperial power. Remembering Jesus as an advocate for freedom and liberatory justice reminds us that what “human life needs is not a divine rescue. What we need is a life so open, so free, so whole, and so loving that when we experience that life, we are called into the reality of love.” In this telling of the Easter story, Spong reminds us, freedom means being open to love that transforms us and helps us transform our world.

*Hallman Ministerial Intern Kathryn Jay
with this month's theme team:
Drew Danielson, Janne Eller-Isaacs,
Rob Eller-Isaacs, and Lisa Friedman*

Freedom Theme Resources

BOOKS

Common Sense by Thomas Paine
(2018 reprint)

*Making All Black Lives Matter:
Reimagining Freedom in the
Twenty-First Century* by Barbara
Ransby (2018)

*Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou
Hamer: The Spirit of the Civil
Rights Movement* by Carole Boston
Weatherford (2015)

A Room of One's Own by Virginia
Woolf (1989 reprint)

MOVIES

13th: A Documentary (2016)
Free Solo (2018)

JUST WORDS / WHEEL OF LIFE

Just Words



A few days ago I was part of a small group that was led through a guided meditation. The leader began by asking us to close our eyes, slow our breath, and “go to that special place where you know you’re loved and safe and held by beauty.” I usually respond to such requests by traveling back in my mind to a huge, flat, granite stone on which Janne and I camped along the shore of Little Boulder Lake high in California’s Trinity Alps. But this time was distinctly different.

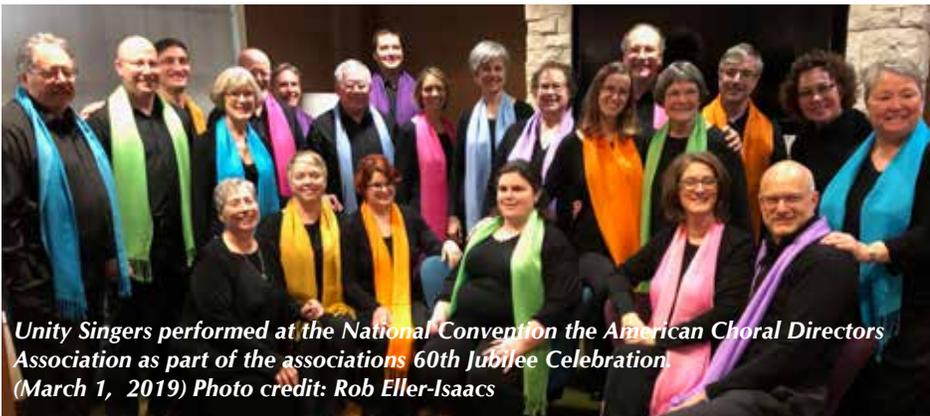
This time when asked to go to that special place I found myself in the remarkable circle of vision and trust that has been at our side throughout the recent search for a new Director of Music Ministries. Chaired by Brian Newhouse the committee included: Dawn Baker, Estelle Brouwer, Julia Brown, Don Brunnuell, Sally Foster, Steve Lewis, Lia Rivamonte and Jackie Smith. In my more than forty years of ministry only very rarely have I felt both as met and as challenged as I have been by the music director search committee.

“Go to that place you feel loved,” she said. And yes, that hard-working search committee grew to love one another and perhaps more significantly, their love for the church informed every conversation, every interview, and ultimately the recommendation they offered. “Go to that place you where you feel safe,” she said. These days at Unity Church we talk less about feeling safe than we do about being brave. But the two are intimately related. Only when we feel safe, only when the gathered circle is trustworthy can we be brave enough to be completely honest. The Search Team moved at the speed of trust. They were both brave and kind as we wrestled with contending priorities within a ministry treasured by the entire congregation. “Go to where you’re held by beauty,” she said. And I went right to that circle of folks who, like so many of you, hold beauty in highest regard.

Truly, Rumi’s words are ringing in my ears. “Let the beauty we love be what we do and we don’t have to do it alone.” It was as though the beauty of the music we make here infused the search process making it beautiful in and of itself. In the end ministry is all about giving it away, sharing leadership and love in ways that inspire and empower others to take it up and live it out. Now and again our work aligns with such beauty and precision it makes my heart catch. We couldn’t be more grateful both for the search and for its wonderfully successful conclusion.

As always,
Rob

Please turn to page five to read the announcement from Brian Newhouse, Chair of the Music Ministries Search Committee.



Unity Singers performed at the National Convention the American Choral Directors Association as part of the associations 60th Jubilee Celebration (March 1, 2019) Photo credit: Rob Eller-Isaacs

The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Clarice Swisher

April 7, 1933–February 24, 2019

Trudie Ellsworth

June 16, 1950–March 13, 2019

In Celebration

Juniper Kim Bosc

born one more redeemer

February 7, 2019

to parents

Sheila and Jamie Bosc

Andrea Johnson

Ordained into the

Unitarian Universalist Ministry

March 16, 2019

UUA General Assembly June 19-23, 2019 • Spokane, WA



General Assembly is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association. Anyone may attend! To serve as a delegate for Unity Church, please contact Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107.

commUNITY is the newsletter of Unity Church–Unitarian. It is published monthly, except the month of July. Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Subscriptions are free to those who make pledges to Unity Church and are available to others for \$30 per year.

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APRIL SERVICES / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Worship Services

Sunday worship services are held at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. except where noted. Religious Education for children and youth is offered at all three services. Sermon podcasts and archives are available online at www.unityunitarian.org.

April 7: *Crossing Over: The Middle Passage*

As we delve into the worship theme of freedom, we must acknowledge the legacy of its lack in our country's history. Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Maima Fant will explore the meaning of freedom in the light of the 400th anniversary of the first slave ship setting on American soil.

April 14: *The Reign of Mutual Respect*

When the Prince of Peace rode into Jerusalem many thousands gathered along the roadsides to welcome their new King. They wanted regime change. He wanted far more. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Susan Heuhn will help us frame Palm Sunday and the Holy Week that follows in light of our covenantal tradition.

Holy Week Worship Services

See page five for details.

April 21: *Practice Resurrection*

Easter Family Sunday services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. only. There will be no 4:30 service on Easter Sunday.

To practice resurrection is to know the agony which is part of being human and to rise up in compassion and yes, in joy despite it all. The whole church family will gather for our Easter celebration. You can expect marvelous music, inspired preaching, and a sustaining story for all ages.

On Family Sundays, children experience the entire worship together with their families in the Sanctuary. A children's message and activity books related to the stories and sermon help children to engage in the experience of worship. The nursery is open for children under three years of age.

April 28: *Coming of Age*

Coming of Age Sunday celebrates the signature year-long journey of our 9th grade youth, transitioning from the inherited faith of childhood to the adult journey of faith, and marked by youth sharing their statement of faith or credo. COA youth, mentors, and families will be present at the 4:30 p.m. service, while all services will include a collage of voices, with religious education staff and ministers leading in joyful celebration.

Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for Sunday worship, please contact Martha Tilton at 651-228-1456 x105 or martha@unityunitarian.org.

Offering Recipients

Each Sunday, thirty percent of the offering goes to support the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church and seventy percent is given to a chosen community non-profit recipient. Please make checks payable to Unity Church.

April 7: ComMUSICation

ComMUSICation offers high-quality, intensive music education opportunities that reflect the diversity of Frogtown, a St. Paul Promise neighborhood. This unique program uses singing as one tool to empower youth with lifelong skills that help build a feeling of community belonging and a commitment to service. ComMUSICation utilizes local artist partners to build a choral program encouraging family participation and community engagement. Today's collection will be used to provide transportation, purchase sheet music, and provide food for kids involved in this after school program. Unity's Brian Newhouse is a cheerleader for ComMUSICation.

April 14: Freedom School

St. Paul's Freedom School is a K-8 summer adventure with a primary outreach to students of color. This six-week program is housed at Capitol Hill Magnet School and Hazel Park Academy. In 2019 Freedom School will be one of six pilot sites nationwide for Hero Elementary sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and TPT. Hero Elementary is an expansive media initiative focused on improving school readiness in science and literacy. Today's collection will support the purchase of books featuring stories of people of color. In summer 2018, nearly 700 scholars completed Freedom School. Many Unity Church members are Freedom School volunteers.

April 21: Mano a Mano International Partners

Mano a Mano works to create partnerships with impoverished Bolivian communities to improve health and economic well-being by building medical clinics, schools, roads, and water reservoirs and providing medical and agricultural training. Today's collection will be used to support Mano a Mano's medical surplus program which collects medical supplies that would otherwise be thrown into Minnesota landfills, organizes these supplies, and ships them to Bolivia. Unity's Ray Wiedmeyer is the guiding light for this medical surplus mission.

April 28: Camp Tamarack

Camp Tamarack is a non-denominational overnight summer camp whose mission is to give urban children the opportunity to experience a rural environment and to learn positive life lessons. Tamarack provides a first-time camper experience in a safe and fun environment with opportunities to run, sing, canoe, swim, dance, play games, and build community. Tamarack is managed and run by an all-volunteer staff of high school and college students and long-time adult supporters. This summer Tamarack's weekly cost is \$220/week. (Minnesota average for overnight camps is \$750/week.) This offering will be used to keep the camper tuition affordable and assist with scholarships. Unity's Dick Buggs is a supporter of Camp Tamarack.

A New Chapter in Unity's Anti-Racism Work

Jennifer Tong, Board Chair



When I joined the Anti-Racism Leadership Team (ARLT) in the fall of 2016, I was curious about its history so I printed out and read every one of their annual reports to the Board of Trustees. Reading them was a bit like reading a post-modern novel. It wasn't a straight narrative arc of growth, or courage, or triumph. I could read the hard work, the frustration and confusion, and a few high points that helped move us closer to our goal. I felt such empathy for the players, cheering with them when some important recommendations were implemented, and shaking my head in dismay when despite everyone's best intentions some recommendations gathered dust year after year.

The group formed in 2003 with a fairly wide portfolio, but by early 2008 the team wrote to the Board that it was becoming a structure for institutional self-assessment in the Church. The same report notes that the ARLT and the Board worked together to develop a model that would support a joint working relationship, where the role of the ARLT would be to monitor and hold the Board accountable for the church's progress toward developing an anti-racist identity and the Board would build institutional capacity for this transformational process.

When I joined the ARLT I was told our primary purpose was to measure progress. Our group had lively discussions which I enjoyed, but they tended to wind up in the same place — we didn't have the position or authority to make anything happen, and we weren't sure what was supposed to be happening. What did our goal look like? How could we measure progress against a nebulous idea? I wondered why the Board didn't own this measurement work the way they did for other Ends. It seemed like by being outside the formal governance process the ARLT was effectively sidelined and had more difficulty being heard.

I found an answer in the annual reports. In 2011 the ARLT recommended the Board take back the responsibility for monitoring anti-racism at Unity Church, but "Board members expressed their reluctance to be solely responsible for monitoring anti-racism work given their lack of experience and training." So the ARLT soldiered on.

While it may feel like there's been little progress since then, in fact the environment has changed. We've updated our Ends statements twice, most recently last year with two Ends in particular which relate to the ARLT's work: Create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships, and create brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture. To help us move toward these Ends the Executive Team has hired a consulting firm, Team Dynamics, to help develop a strategy and some ways that we can measure progress.

At the end of 2018 the ARLT wrote to the Board "As the Board of Trustees observes, measures, and evaluates the implementation of all ends this task should be a Board of Trustees task. As a demonstration of commitment and dedication to these ends, and the larger mission of the church, which is to become a strong multicultural congregation, this task should be a priority."

The current Board agrees that this work belongs with the Board of Trustees and has voted to take it back. The Board is the governance body which is responsible for monitoring progress toward the Ends, and where this work rightfully belongs. We are looking forward to working with Team Dynamics as they help develop a plan of action, and are especially eager to learn more about ways to measure progress.

We are grateful to the many individuals who have spent time and effort on the ARLT throughout the years. Their work has demonstrated our values of open-hearted engagement and courageous action, and we are a better church because of their efforts. A celebration is being planned for this spring to honor and celebrate their work.

Join the Heritage Society

Leave a Legacy for Future Generations at Unity Church

A legacy gift is a designation from your estate to a charitable organization. Your "estate" is the sum of your assets, including property you own, insurance policies, retirement accounts, cash on hand, etc. There are many gift possibilities. Each of these gifts allows flexibility, though some requirements apply, and you always retain the right to amend your estate plans.

- A charitable bequest in your last will and testament can be a specific amount or a percentage of what remains after providing for your heirs
- A life insurance designation names Unity Church of St. Paul as owner or beneficiary of the policy
- Retirement plan assets name the church as a beneficiary of an IRA, 401(k), 403(b), profit sharing or other retirement plan
- Other types of legacy gifts include gift annuities, life-estate agreements, and charitable remainder trusts

By making a legacy gift to Unity Church you will be joining over 200 others who have committed to supporting the church into the future.

Our annual Heritage Society Dinner on Friday, May 10, is the church's way of thanking those individuals who



have made legacy gifts. This year's guest speaker is Joseph Haj, Artistic Director of the Guthrie Theater.

For more information about legacy gift possibilities, please contact Executive Director, Barbara Hubbard, at barbarah@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x116.

MUSIC MINISTRIES SEARCH / HOLY WEEK

Announcing Unity's Next Director of Music Ministries

Brian Newhouse, Director of Music Ministries Search Committee, Chair

The envelope please! (Drumroll...) After a year-long national search, **Ahmed Anzaldúa** has been chosen as Unity's next Director of Music Ministries. As Ruth Palmer retires this summer, Ahmed will begin.

Who is Ahmed?

Here's a brief summary of his bio: Ahmed Fernando Anzaldúa El Samkary is a Mexican conductor and pianist of Egyptian descent. He holds a Master of Music in Piano Performance and Choral Conducting from Western Michigan University, and will receive his Doctorate in Choral Conducting from the University of Minnesota this spring. Prior to his arrival in Minnesota, he served as Music Director at Oshtemo United Methodist Church in Kalamazoo, MI. Before his family moved to the United States, Ahmed was professor of piano and orchestra at the Chihuahua Conservatory of Music, and was a freelance pianist, singer, and conductor. He's the founder and artistic director of Border CrosSing, a Twin Cities-based organization whose mission is to integrate historically segregated audiences and musicians through choral music. He is also editor of the *Justice Choir Songbook*. Ahmed is married to Mayra Mendoza, currently a stay-at-home mom and a wonderful violin player and teacher. Their son, Ahmedito, is eight and he loves calculators and math.



Why Ahmed?

In the Director's job posting, we called for an exceptional musician who can build on our church's many musical strengths, especially in choral music. We explicitly referenced our new Ends Statements, which were echoed in last fall's congregational survey: "The Director will play a key role in Unity's ongoing transformation, as we actively work to become an anti-racist, multicultural spiritual home. The Director will help shape that expression in service to Unity's members and those who have yet to walk through our doors."

After vetting 43 applicants, conducting hour-long interviews with 10 first-round candidates, multiple interviews with three second-round candidates, and coordinating final-round auditions with Unity's three adults choirs, the Search Committee unanimously agreed that Ahmed is a strong fit for this position. What particularly excited us was how his life experience, career, and vision for the transformative power of music are in such clear alignment with our Ends.

I happened to see this first-hand even before we posted Unity's position, as he led Border CrosSing — a choir of some of Minnesota's finest singers — in their debut concert at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church on St. Paul's west side, rarely a site for choral concerts. He'd prepared the choir immaculately, and between numbers he turned to the audience and first in English, then in Spanish, gave them program notes — warm, insightful, with a touch of humor — and welcomed this new audience into the beauty and relevance of this music.

We witnessed this same approach in his Unity auditions. Fusing music into a larger mission is Ahmed's calling. Our music program aspires to do the same: to build the free and inclusive religious community of our mission statement. We have an exciting path opening up as Ahmed begins here.

Palm Sunday

The Reign of Mutual Respect

Sunday, April 14 • All three services
Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Susan Heuhn will help us frame Palm Sunday and the Holy Week that follows in light of our covenantal tradition.

Maunder Thursday Service

Thursday, April 18 • 7:00 p.m.

Ames Chapel

Please join us for a service of ritual and community, sharing in traditional holy week practices of Eucharist and Foot Washing. In the Memorialist tradition, we join to remember the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, which include welcoming all people to a meal of love, giving thanks for the gifts of life, and serving each other in humility.

Good Friday Service of Tenebrae

Friday, April 19 • 7:00 p.m.

Ames Chapel

A service of Tenebrae, or "shadows/darkness," is based on a twelfth-century liturgy of solemn observance and extended meditation on the passion of Christ. With candles extinguished after each reading and silent reflection, the increasing darkness on the evening of Good Friday invites worshipers to enter into the dramatic narrative of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion, and to reflect on God's steadfast love. The service concludes in darkness with worshipers leaving in silence, reflecting on Christ's death, and awaiting the coming resurrection. This service is offered in partnership with Above Every Name.

Easter Family Sunday

Practice Resurrection

Sunday, April 21

9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. ONLY

To practice resurrection is to know the agony which is part of being human and to rise up in compassion and yes, in joy despite it all. The whole church family will gather for our Easter celebration.

Hallman Ministerial Intern: Kathryn Jay



When I was a much younger person, I valued my freedom more than almost anything else. For example, when people I dated asked me about getting serious and settling down, I scoffed, pointing out that the word settle was right there in the phrase. Why would I want to settle for something?

Yes, I was a jerk (to pick a G-rated description of my behavior). But I also had a sense that being free, and free to make my own choices, was the most important part of being a healthy, happy individual.

Maybe I felt so strongly (and behaved so badly) because I lacked some major freedoms that other people took for granted. As a lesbian in 1980s Texas, I wasn't free to hold my partner's hand in public. And certainly no kissing! The threat of violence hung in the air and all personal displays of affection (ah, PDA) were risky. I knew I might be fired from my job if I came out, which had a chilling effect on my freedom of speech. Figuring out how to avoid talking about my personal life, even when I was asked directly, was critical to surviving. No mention of my current sweetie. No photos on my desk at work either. And, of course, as a lesbian, the freedom to marry was off the table. As a young person, it didn't even occur to me to ask for that right. It seemed impossible.

I've changed (thank goodness). These days, I don't believe my personal freedom defines my happiness. The open road and a clear escape plan aren't part of my story anymore. I know that I am bound up in a beautiful web of mutual responsibilities and obligations. These limit my choices, but enhance my emotional and spiritual well-being. K.P. Hong shared a Buddhist koan recently that resonated with me. "Why, when the universe is so vast, when the bell rings, do I put on my robe?" Why do I follow the rules, follow a schedule, follow along when I am free to explore the whole world? Sure, sometimes, I chafe against that bell, but I have also experienced a different kind of freedom because I follow its tolling.

Society has changed too (thank goodness). Gay people demanded and won all kinds of freedom, some legal, some harder to define. Most of the time, in most places, I am free to love. Hold hands walking down the street. Talk about my sweetie. Wear my wedding ring. Kiss goodbye in airports. Honestly, it still astonishes me sometimes. I know there is so much more to be done, but I am grateful for the expansiveness — the freedom — I feel.

I don't take it for granted, this freedom to be my authentic self. I know that plenty of people still don't feel it, especially my trans and nonbinary friends. The web of mutual responsibility of which I am a part obliges me to keep working, to expand the freedoms I have, to make sure everyone can feel free to be themselves.

Reframing #adulting

Ray Hommeyer, Unity Young Adult Group



Prevalent among young adults is the notion that becoming an adult is marked by success, also known as #adulting. Yet, our recent young adult conversations keep coming back to the inevitability of failure. How does admitting that we *will* make mistakes feel? Really. Right now, as you're reading this, where and how does the *inevitability of failure* land in your body? I feel an initial soft clenching and pulling backward under my diaphragm and in my throat (anxiety, disappointment), but my shoulders feel lighter and my head is more buoyant. And as I ease into the reality of making mistakes, there is a pervasive and expanding sense of... freedom!

I'm able to name my experience as freedom because of this community at Unity; because of the promise of forgiveness inherent in covenantal community. I clearly remember the first time I deliberately said, "I forgive you," in response to a sincere apology. Something happened. I could tell that the person who had apologized accepted my forgiveness as recognition of their fallibility, as grace. This response connected us and impacted me. To my surprise, I gained the possibility of receiving forgiveness myself. In this moment of granting grace to another, I found myself experiencing freedom from perfection. By being able to recognize someone else's inherent worth amidst their mistake and my frustration, I began to release the ideal that I never fail or disappoint. Not a disregard for responsibility or an indifference to pain, but permission to move away from self-improvement and towards interconnectedness.

As I begin to see failure as connection to others, I keep coming back to an Alden Nowlan quote shared in a young adult gathering last year: "The day the child realizes that all adults are imperfect, (she) becomes an adolescent; the day (she) forgives them, (she) becomes an adult; the day (she) forgives (herself), (she) becomes wise." How basic and yet revolutionary it is, to base the trajectory of adulthood on our capacity to forgive. And if forgiveness creates an opening to freedom, then freedom is free to be a practice we cultivate and nourish.

Unity Church Young Adult Group

Young Adults meet every other Thursday (March 14 and 28), from 7:00-9:00 p.m. (beforehand we gather for 6:30 p.m. for coffee/dessert "happy hour"). We are a fun, reflective group of people working to build multi-faith and multi-cultural community. We come together to ask questions that are consuming us, to practice sharing what is sacred, and to try to live consequential lives as we navigate the complexity of being an adult. Check out our YA blog by Meggie Exner at <https://stayingabeatlonger.com/>! To be added to the YA email list, please email kp@unityunitarian.org.

WELCOME WORDS

Welcome Words

Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement



Thank you for the warm welcome back from my winter sabbatical! The time for renewal was a true gift and I am energized to return to our shared ministry. I am especially grateful to Kathryn Jay, Madeline Summers, the Executive Team and many others who stepped up to take on extra tasks while I was away. If you are new to Unity this winter, I want to extend a personal welcome. I would be delighted to meet in person and get to know you better. There are many opportunities for involvement coming up this spring and summer, which are open to visitors and members alike. Let me know what calls to you, and I am glad to help you get connected. See you in church!

Pathway to Membership Classes

Sign up for Pathway to Membership classes at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement, at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107. She is also happy to meet with you personally to answer questions and to welcome you into the congregation. Childcare is available by request at least one week in advance.

Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Inquiry

Finding Yourself at Unity is offered on a regular basis on Sundays, from 10:20-11:15 a.m., in the Ames Chapel. These sessions can be attended in the order that works for you and will offer participants the opportunity to share part of their religious journey, to take a more in depth look at the history of Unity Church, to discuss the expectations and benefits of membership, and get to know the programs and ministries of the congregation. Childcare is available in the nursery.

April 7: Pastoral Care

April 14: Worship & the Liturgical Year

April 21: No class, Easter

April 28: Building Tour

Finding Yourself at Unity • All-Inclusive Session

Saturday, April 27 • 9:00 a.m.-noon

Have you been interested in Finding Yourself at Unity, but unable to attend on Sunday mornings? This half-day is designed to share information about Unitarian Universalism and Unity's ministries of Pastoral Care, Worship, Education and Outreach in a one session format. Childcare will be provided and families with young children are especially invited to attend.

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

Saturday, May 4 • 9:30-11:30 a.m.

This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and finding the place where the world's needs meet the gifts you have to offer. The class concludes with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book.

Mentoring at Unity: A Path to Deeper Connection

Unity Church has a mentor program available to all visitors and new members. A mentor serves as a guide and a resource in the congregation. They pledge to meet at least once a month face to face, and be available for ongoing questions and advice for at least six months. If you have questions, or would like to request a mentor, please stop by the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall on Sundays or email Rev. Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org.

Your UU Elevator Speech

**Mondays, April 29, May 6, May 13
7:00 p.m.—8:30 p.m.**

Do you ever wish you could explain Unitarian Universalism in the time it takes to ride an elevator? Would you like to increase your confidence in talking about your church and your faith? Would you like to learn and practice effective strategies with other UU's? Join us for this three-part class where we will write and practice our elevator speeches. Childcare is available by request. Sign up in the Parish Hall on Sundays or email Rev. Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org.



Food Shelf

1,000 Pound Challenge

In 2018, 763 pounds of food were donated to Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf by Unity Church members and friends. That's a lot of food. Our contributions supported about eight families for one month. Let's donate even more in 2019!

Bring a can of soup or other non-perishable items every time you come to church. Collection trunks are located by the church entrances. The challenge for 2019 is 1,000 pounds!

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun.

6:00 p.m.: Dinner in the Parish Hall! \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family.

6:50 p.m.: Intergenerational worship in the Ames Chapel

7:15 p.m.: Learning and Fellowship • *Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance.*

April 3

Dinner: TBA

Open Page Writing Session: Freedom

"Freedom is not something that anybody can be given," said James Baldwin. "Freedom is something that people take and people are as free as they want to be." How do we find and claim the freedom we each want and need? And what responsibilities accompany our freedom? How does true freedom ironically bind us to others? Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, Open Page writing session participants use teachings, stories, poetry, images, and objects to reflect on the monthly theme. RSVP to karen@unityunitarian.org

What's So Funny about Friendship?: Amicus and the Art of Relationship Building in the Justice System

Join Volunteers of America MN/WI Community Justice Director Chris Doege and others as they talk about the Amicus One to One volunteer program and how friendship can lead to safer, more hopeful communities.

Gun Safety for People Who Dislike Guns

Join us in discussion to learn the minimum you need to know about gun safety for when you encounter a firearm by intent or by accident. Unity's Gun Sense Ministry Team member Richard Birger will talk about basic firearms safety and some of the terminology one needs to know to speak intelligently with others about this vital issue.

Textile Arts

Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc.

New Family R.E. Orientation

For families new to Unity Church who would like to learn more about religious education for children and youth.

Tween Group (grades 5-7)

Meet in Ames Chapel at 6:45 p.m. for worship, then head to Jr. High classroom 21. Pick up is at 8:30 p.m.

Yoga with Elen Bahr: Meditative Movement

Gentle movement and yoga breathing techniques.

April 10

Dinner: TBA

Unity Singers Concert • 7:30 p.m. • Sanctuary

Yoga with Elen Bahr: Loving Kindness Meditation

This is a meditation of care, tenderness, loving kindness, friendship — a feeling of warmth for oneself and others.

Tween Group

April 17

Dinner: TBA

Two UUs Read Poetry for Earth Day

Two long-time friends, Kim Chapman and Jim Armstrong, have been sharing their experiences in nature and poetry for over thirty years. They will read their own poems with nature at the core, touching on culture and the personal — as well as favorite poems by Mary Oliver, William Stafford and Walt Whitman.

What You Can Do to Increase Clean Energy Use

Understanding Xcel Energy's plans for being carbon free by 2050 and researching the many options for using solar and wind power may seem daunting. This session will share information about clean energy, ways to reduce your household's energy consumption, how to improve energy efficiency, and available solar and wind options.

How to Embrace Change with Curiosity and Courage

Unity Church is on the cusp of a significant amount of change over the next few years, starting with Ruth Palmer's retirement in May 2019. Come to this interactive session facilitated by Unity Church member Clover Earl to discuss what your hopes and fears might be. And to learn a tool/skill, grounded in neuroscience, to support you in staying balanced during this period of significant transition.

Yoga with Elen Bahr: Vinyasa Flow

A class of faster and more rigorous movement. Flowing from pose to pose is coordinated with regulated inhales and exhales to strengthen muscles and build balance.

Textile Arts

Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc.

Tween Group

April 24

Dinner: Soul food cuisine of Rondo

Back to Rondo: A Celebration!

Please join Above Every Name as they celebrate "Back to Rondo," eight years of amazing ministry! Pastor Danny Givens had a vision of planting a "church for the people" in the historic black neighborhood of Rondo, with the hope of impacting change in his community. The celebration will feature the soul food cuisine of Rondo, music, storytelling, and more!

Yoga with Elen Bahr: Balancing the Chakras

Our life force spins and rotates within seven energetic wheels, the chakras. We will use movement, mudra (hand gestures) and chanting to activate the chakras to provide exactly the right amount of energy for every part of the body, mind and spirit.

2019 UNITY CHURCH MEN'S RETREAT



Saturday, April 13
8:00 AM – 6:30 PM • Unity Church

Stories!

Stories we tell each other.

Stories other people tell us or impose on us.

Come explore some of the many stories shaping our lives as self-identified men. Here is just a small sample of what you might hear about at the Unity Men's Retreat following the church themes of within, among, and beyond.

- How do we define ourselves with our work?
- How might we identify and work with shame?
- What stories enriched or harmed your childhood family and its relationships?
How about your current intimate relationships - partner, children, friends?
- When did you last cry?
- How do you respond to #MeToo?

We have three dynamic and interesting presenters telling us their stories and encouraging us to tell our own.

Javier Morillo • Political activist and Moth Radio Hour storyteller will share with us his ideas on how to tell our stories to ourselves and to others.

Mark Meier • Founder, Facelt Foundation, will be bringing us face to face with some of the issues that plague us as men — loneliness, depression, and how to talk with our family and friends when things aren't going well.

Tony Signorelli • Author, speaker, and serial entrepreneur will be leading a session exploring what it means to be a man out in the wider world.

Recognizing that gender is not binary, we welcome all individuals who self-identify as male.

Register online at www.unityunitarian.org/men.html!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Starting Our Green Sanctuary Journey

Meggie Exner, Sustainable Living Team

[I]s it a pleasure [...] to poison food-bearing lands and waters through pollution and then decide that these actions are harmless because the people they affect are African or Inuit or South Asian or poor or far away? No. It becomes impossible to see it that way when you look at the effects on the Earth and its peoples precious and beloved, full of worth and dignity [...] Let us not make change because of some future hell, lest we link acting faithfully to fear, rather than love; lest we link action to disaster, rather than reverence.

As UU ministers Manish Mishra-Marzetti and Jennifer Nordstrom point out in this passage from *Justice on Earth*, racial justice concerns are inextricably linked to environmental concerns. As a congregation, we often focus on dismantling white supremacy, and rightfully so. However, fewer of our conversations call for environmental justice, the field concerned with the ways in which environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized people and identifies how our environmental work can be used to promote social justice.

I am therefore excited that Unity Church has committed itself to becoming a UUA certified Green Sanctuary congregation, a process which takes an average of six years and demands full congregational engagement. To earn this certification, Unity will need to complete projects in four focus areas: worship and celebration, religious education, sustainable living, and environmental justice.

The requirements ensure that congregations address environmental issues by improving the efficiency of church facilities, changing congregants' lifestyle choices, engaging in intergenerational activities, and working in partnership with organizations advocating for marginalized groups in the community.

Six UU congregations in Minnesota have become accredited in the last five years, including White Bear UU Church, First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, and First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. Their success stories, as well as those featured on the Green Sanctuary website, are inspiring: a congregation helping establish a mixed-use land trust that protects low-income small business owners, congregations establishing UU young adult climate justice groups at local colleges, and congregations lobbying city councils for equitable and ambitious renewable energy policies.

We hope you join us in stepping into this important work.

To learn more about the Green Sanctuary Program and the Sustainable Living Team, please visit our table in the Parish Hall following the 9:00 and 11:00 services. The Sustainable Living Team meets the first Sunday of the month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. and the third Sunday from 10:15-11:00 a.m. All are welcome.

an inconvenient sequel
TRUTH TO POWER

Al Gore pursues the inspirational idea that the perils of climate change can be overcome by human ingenuity and passion.

Post-movie discussion facilitated by climate scientist Sam Potter

Friday, April 26
7:00 PM
Robbins Parlor

Gun Sense Update

Sue Conner, Unity's Gun Sense Ministry Team

Gun Sense spoke again with longtime parents (and teachers) Jackie and Dave Smith. We asked:

How do you talk to your children about guns in the homes of friends and relatives? Do you ask parents of friends if there are guns in their home?

Jackie and Dave:

When our kids were young and we were with them at gatherings and play dates, we had a pretty good idea of who had guns (mostly no one). When we lived in a rural community and our kids were going to play dates without us, I would ask the parents directly. "Do you have guns, and if so, where do you keep them?" As the kids grew, we had very direct conversations with them about what to do if they saw a gun or if a friend showed them a gun. We gave them scenarios, offered language they could use, and assured them that they could always fall back on Mom and Dad as the heavy to get away from a gun (or anything) that made them feel unsafe.

Gun Sense Ministry Team member Richard Birger will present *Gun Safety for People Who Dislike Guns* at Wellspring Wednesday on April 3 (see page for details).

The Minnesota House has passed two bills that our partner, Protect Minnesota considers to be sensible gun policy. The Senate now has an opportunity to do the same. We urge you to do what you can to influence members of the Minnesota Senate. Read about the bills at www.protectminnesota.org. To find your Minnesota State Senate District and your senator visit: <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

May Means Project Home: 150 Volunteers Needed

Ann Russell, Unity's Project Home Team



We have had an extraordinary winter. It began early, moved to epic cold and record setting wind chill, and is finishing with alternate melting and freezing bringing treacherous walking. While many of us are able to hunker down at home, we also acknowledge that it is a privilege not shared by some of our neighbors. Living in a vehicle, couch surfing, moving from house to house is not a sustainable solution, and for a family it is an enormous crisis. It can be hard to understand that stress and difficult to know how to help. Project Home is a small part of a better solution.

What is Project Home and how can you help?

Project Home engages area faith communities to provide emergency shelter space and volunteer support for Ramsey County families facing homelessness. Each night during the month of May, with the help of 150 volunteers, Unity Church hosts parents and children from The Family Place, an agency serving families who are temporarily without their own front door to close. It is an enormous challenge that church members and friends have met for over twelve years. **You can join us. Sign up online for an evening or overnight shift in May: <http://bit.ly/2019unityph>.**

What is The Family Place?

The Family Place, a St. Paul agency, works to bring humanity back to the way shelter systems operate. Its goal is to end repeated bouts of homelessness and generational homelessness through education and empowerment.

When a family is suddenly without a roof, Family Place guides children and their parents/caregivers from uncertainty to stability in the quest to find a home. Families receive the basics: three meals and a snack each day, shower, laundry, storage facilities, Montessori childcare, pick up and drop off for school-aged children, budgeting/savings program, and assistance accessing services. A family room offers a comfortable place for families to relax and share time together, use telephones and computers to search for housing and employment opportunities. It is very simply a welcoming, safe place for homeless families with children to stay during daytime hours.

Family Place has one goal... to work with a family until it has the resources, skills, and support to go beyond the basics. It provides families a comprehensive program model entitled Going Home that includes adult life skills, youth development and leadership program, The Lovejoy Community Garden in partnership with The Urban Farm and Garden Alliance, and a healthy meals program. Once a family finds suitable housing, The Family Place's Housing Program provides a move in basket with basic household cleaning supplies, bedding, dishes, and cookware along with a tool kit. Can we imagine St. Paul without The Family Place? The hundreds of families who are now safe certainly cannot.

Let's Work for Positive Results Together!

Nancy Heege, Unity's Obama School Ministry Team



Could you commit this month to assist the team doing outreach ministry to Obama Elementary School, in either of two simple ways?

1. Provide a \$60 Cub gift card to the family of an Obama scholar, to help the family feed their hungry children. Our team made a commitment to give gift cards to 75 families this school year, fall, winter, and spring. We have money enough for 55 cards for the May distribution, but we need money for about 19 more. Make a real difference to a family by sending a check made out to Unity Church or contribute online at <http://bit.ly/cubcard>.
2. Be part of a team of three people taking snacks to a teachers' meeting on either April 16 or May 14. Food suggestions and information for the team is provided ten days in advance. Snacks can be dropped off ahead of time if mid-afternoon set up is difficult for you. The teachers are so grateful when they walk in after shepherding the children onto the school buses, to see the refreshments available to them. We have one volunteer and need five more. Email Nancy Heege at nancyheege@cs.com to volunteer for a spring date or to volunteer for next year.

Watch future newsletters to find out about the team's upcoming efforts! We're excited to team up with a neighborhood grocery store making donations to nonprofits based on the number of receipts turned in, and we'll be applying for a grant from another neighborhood store to encourage staying healthy and nutrition education.



If it's April, then it's time for:

- **Café Unity: Poetry & Music Salon, and**
- **National Poetry Month**

Two of our favorite things happen in April: Unity's annual coffeehouse of music and original writing/Café Unity on Friday April 12, 2019, and the national celebration of poetry, all month long.

Find a great selection of poetry in the Bookstall, Anderson Library, and the Whitman Children's Library: by beloved poets Mary Oliver, Billy Collins, Jane Kenyon and more; great collections for adults and children; and Minnesota poets like James Armstrong, who will be reading with Kim Chapman at Unity Church on Wednesday, April 17, 2019. Come celebrate with us this month!

Open Page Writing Sessions

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, Open Page writing session participants use stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, and provided prompts, to reflect on the monthly theme. No writing experience is necessary. Bring something to write with and on; the rest will be provided! Free; RSVP requested to karen@unityunitarian.org.

Freedom • Wednesday, April 3 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

"Freedom is not something that anybody can be given," said James Baldwin. "Freedom is something that people take and people are as free as they want to be." How do we find and claim the freedom we each want and need? And what responsibilities accompany our freedom? How does true freedom ironically bind us to others?

Peace: inside and out • Wednesday, May 8 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

"Peace is people talking together with a heart in between them." So says a wise eight-year-old, reminding us that peace is less about the absence of conflict than our ability to respond to one another with engaged hearts engaged. This session explores the inner and outer dimensions of peace and how one affects the other.

Wisdom • Wednesday, June 5 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

"At the crossroads, Wisdom takes her stand." As we consider the crossroads of our own times, this writing session explores the proverbs Wisdom offers now as her stand and guidance. What proverbial wisdom, old and new, do we need today and where might we find it, worldwide and within?



A NEW History of Unity Church is Underway!

We Need Your Help!

From the Unity History Book Committee

Maybe you have heard around the Parish Hall that a group of us have been charged by our ministers with the daunting task of writing the history of the past 50 years or so of Unity Church history. William Channing Gannett wrote the first history, "The Story of Our Church" in 1879. We pick up where Ellie Otto's *The Story of Unity Church: 1872-1972* left off:

- Arthur Foote resigned, effective April 30, 1970
- Roy Phillips was called to Unity Church and installed on October 17, 1971

This is where you, the congregation, come in. A church history cannot be complete without the recollections and stories of the very people who make up the church. Feel free to contact us in regard to the question of the month or with any information or story you'd like us to know.

The Unity History Question of the Month: What can you tell us about the church life, activities, important events, projects, teams, religious education, music, and/or accomplishments of Unity Church during the ministry of Rev. Roy Phillips? We know that his ministry ended in a negotiated resignation (in lieu of being removed) and that the church is still healing in some respects from some events of the time, but we also know that Rev. Phillips touched many lives for the better as well; we intend to tell the whole story as best we can. We are especially interested to hear more about the first decade of his ministry in the 1970s.

If you have any information that might be useful to include in a new history of Unity Church from 1970 to the present, please contact us at ucuhistory@gmail.com Or leave a note addressed to the committee in the library mailbox in the Unity copy room. Thank you.

The Unity History Book Committee, 2018–present, includes Kathy Oakley, Chair; Pauline Eichten; Susan Foote; Eric Hendrickson; Dan Huelster; Carol Miller; and Shelley Butler.

CONTACT US: ucuhistory@gmail.com

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS / ART TEAM

Fellowship Groups

These 12-step groups meet at Unity Church: Al Anon meets Wednesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Science Room; Fresh Air AA meets Thursdays, 8:00-9:30 p.m., Anderson Library.

Afterthoughts offers time to discuss the service. This group meets after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact: Paul Gade, 651-771-7528.

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (April 18), noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Elders Circle: Meets the third Tuesday of the month (April 16), 1:00-3:00 p.m., Center Room.

Evergreen Quilters: The group meets the second Tuesday of the month (April 9), 7:00-9:00 p.m. (at Unity Church), and fourth Saturday of the month (April 27), 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (offsite). Contact: Peggy Wright, 651-698-2760

Families Living with Mental Health Challenges: A support group for families living with mental health challenges. Meets the first Saturday of each month (April 6), 9:30-11:30 a.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Living With Grief Group: For people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (April 16), 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, April 8 and 22, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Tom Zell, tomzell@me.com

National Alliance on Mental Illness support group for young adults with a mental illness meets the first and third Sunday (April 7 and 21) of each month, 6:30-8:00 p.m., COA/OWL room.

New Look at the Bible: Meets the second Thursday of the month (April 9) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade, 651-771-7528

Recovery from White Conditioning: Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m., Gannett Room. Contact: Dayna Kennedy, daynamelissa@icloud.com

Textile Arts Group: Meets the first and third Wednesday of each month (April 3 and 17), 7:00-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc. Contact: Linda Mandeville, lindamandeville41@gmail.com

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne, jack.hawthorne@comcast.net. April 9: *Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng, (led by Carol Humpage) (Fiction)

May 14: *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea* by Barbara Demick

June 11: *Grace and Grit* by Lilly Ledbetter

Women In Retirement: Meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month (April 11 and 25), 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Friedman, lisa@unityunitarian.org

Young Adult Group (ages 18-35) meets every other Thursday (April 11 and 25), 7:00-9:00 p.m. Meet at 6:30 for dessert and tea. Contact KP Hong, kp@unityunitarian.org

Zen Meditation: Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Ames Chapel. Instruction offered April 2 at 4:30 p.m. Contact KP Hong, kp@unityunitarian.org.

April Parish Hall Artist

Joan G. Cox

Joan G. Cox, the April Parish Hall artist, was born in Connecticut and grew up in Chicago, but has called the Twin Cities home since her graduation from the University of Minnesota, where she majored in French and Art History. She later took studio arts courses at the University and at Hamline University over a period of five years.

She has maintained a studio in the Dow Building in Saint Paul for three decades. At first, figures and landscapes accounted for much of her work, fed by sabbaticals in England, France, and Italy. Several commissions to design stained glass windows led her into abstraction and non-representational work. She likes to experiment with a variety of materials.

Joan has shown at galleries in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Florida, Santa Fe, and Denver, as well as at The Plains Museum in Fargo, the Duluth Art Museum, the DeVos Museum in Michigan, and abroad in France, Ireland, and Italy. In 2016, she received the First Place Prize for Painting at the Minnesota State Fair.

Here's what Joan says about her art:

Rarely do I start a piece with a visual goal. Painting, for me, is an intuitive process involving emotion, imagination, judgment, and serendipitous chance, each playing a role on a journey of discovery.

The pieces in the Parish Hall represent several series done over the last several years. Informed by the natural world, they are fed by the experience of working out-of-doors for nearly half the year: summers in a tent near a lake in the north woods of Minnesota, winters under a shelter on a barrier island in southwest Florida.

Unity's Art Team is now accepting applications for Parish Hall exhibits.

Application deadline is May 1.

www.unityunitarian.org/parish-hall-artists.html



MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Free Fall

Drew Danielson, Coordinator of Youth and Campus Ministries



I cannot fathom what my son Atticus is like at school; he must be able to function in some way other than the two modes in which I observe him. The first is fully engaged in an activity, usually physical and/or social. The second is on his back, tuned into screen based stimulation. Like most teenagers, he first attempts to ignore me when I try to pull him off the video feed but with my persistence he rolls his eyes and reluctantly interrupts his viewing. Tragic! I know that at school he can't be as immersively engaged as he is playing hockey or jostling with his puppy-pack of friends. And I think I know he can't be glued to the phone, so there must be a third state of being; I just don't see it.

He does on occasion tell me that the video watching desire is an addiction, a default mode that traps him whenever he is left to his own without a set plan or obligation. He has even asked for help from his mom and me. But we're not any better. Betsy reminds me we were trapped by television when we were kids, and our parents thought we wouldn't turn out OK. Not comforted by this, I tell her "but we did not turn out OK."

As kids of the 60's and 70's, we defaulted to the screen whenever we were bored or unmotivated with a little free time on our hands. And now, every day I relish an hour when nothing calls to me but Netflix or the Daily Show. As new parents, when we had a few free hours after work and tired from child care, we took the baby to movies and were amazed by how closely he watched the big screen, following Jack Nicholson's curling sneer through "About Schmidt." We did this to him. So I do not really want to go on a diatribe about the evils of social media or even the ubiquitous video feed. I'm more struck with the problem of free time, and the possibility we don't know what to do with it, and maybe with freedom in general.

If I asked any of our youth to talk to me about freedom, I think they would identify it as a beautiful American value — a *right*, actually — a purely good thing, the opposite of an evil thing like enslavement. I mean that's what I would say, right? As we are nearing the end of Coming of Age and kids are writing their faith credos, I am certain that they will name religious freedom as the most important and identifying principle of what UU's believe. We and they are free to reject what anyone else thinks or is trying to impose on them. We are free to direct our own lives.

But that means we really do have to direct our own lives. And rejecting what others have to say, or being cynical isn't actually doing that. Constructing my own belief system, the guide for how I will live my life, though certainly daunting, should be exciting, yes? Curiously, I find most of them to be aggressively ambivalent about it. This worries me, maybe because I see it in myself. The responsibility of my own freedom can feel overwhelming.

I liked last month's theme — surrender — better.

Coming of Age 2019!

The entire congregation is warmly invited to witness the Coming of Age of this year's ninth grade class on Saturday, April 27, at 2:30 p.m., in the Sanctuary.

Come and listen in amazement as our young people share their personal credos, bravely laying out the beliefs of their hearts and minds for all to hear.



Dedication of Older Children

Sunday, May 19

Families who would like their children, ages 4-12, to participate in our annual dedication should contact Michelle Mecey at michelle@unityunitarian.org.

This ritual, held during the 9:00 and 4:30 services on Sunday, May 19, provides the church an opportunity to commit itself to raising up children who have come into our community as "big kids." The children process to the chancel, receive a chalice and a certificate, and read a responsive litany of dedication with the congregation. This dedication is appropriate for elementary school aged kids in families who have joined Unity Church or who are on the pathway to membership.



Summer Camp at Unity Church 2019!

Are you ready for another summer of community, excitement and fun?

We are!

CHALICE CAMP
July 8–12 and July 22–26

CHALICE KIDS
July 15–19 and July 29–August 2

Register online at:
<http://bit.ly/chalicecamp2019>

MUSIC MINISTRY

Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries



... find the beginnings of light in everything and everyone.

— Mark Nepo

It was a year ago that I and my partner, Lorelee Wederstrom, signed up to participate in a Yearlong Journey of four intensive study weekends with poet-philosopher, Mark Nepo. Recognizing the apparent shift occurring in our lives as we approached the life transitions ahead, this seemed both an inspiring and sensible thing to do. For me, it was perfect timing! Over the year of this course, two weekends fell in my final season at Unity Church and two in the first year of my retirement. I have been pondering how to let go of a work, community, and people I love and to step into a free flowing time of gratitude and new discovery, let alone how to continue expressing these things. So, this was to be that thoughtful bridge to aid in "the process."

Alice Parker, one of our living musical legacies, composer, arranger and conductor, says "I think each one of us is a walking encyclopedia of all the sounds we've ever heard in our lives. What they call forth, the kind of communication they call forth is music." These words have been so present with me as I reflect on all the stories and life shared among the many singers at Unity Church. Our choirs are filled with "all the sounds we've ever heard in our lives." I am forever grateful for the astonishing gift received from each singer! And, it is clear to me that all these gifts and transitions are part of the next section to be composed in that music we call "life." Each "sound" is part of the next.

Now back to these weekends with Mark Nepo! Little did I know that the second weekend would occur at the end of the week in which the finalists for your new Director of Music completed auditions with each choir, when all the feedback was being evaluated by the Search Team and that our opening Nepo session would time almost exactly with the moments of final decision in this search process. How amazing for the weekend sessions to begin with these words... "find the beginnings of light in everything and everyone." What a freeing and exciting thought for all of us. Realizing that the treasure of every moment is not to hold it in place but to give it freedom to enrich and invite the possibility of the next new moment, I listened more deeply. And, things became even more poignant. Mark's opening lesson unfolded with the idea that life, like a plant, needs constant repotting; that, like a plant, we outgrow or break the "pot" of our identity so that our roots can spread and grow. Whoa! Was he talking about all of us at Unity? It certainly was a beautiful way to realize change and transition in life.

Somewhere along the line in these weekend sessions I was also struck by these lines from his poem "The Instant We Arc": "The light inside things wants to join the light inside other things, which is why we always build one more time than we tear down. It's why we reach for friends we've yet to meet." Well, change does sometimes feel like a tearing down, when actually it is part of the building up. This "being human stuff" can be so messy... but, actually, the glimmer of excitement grows as I look ahead for myself and for you. I have many discoveries to make and you have an amazingly talented and deeply wonderful person joining you as your new Director of Music, bringing a "walking encyclopedia" of unique life sounds which will awaken new experiences and music in you.

So, my friends, I am not "retiring"... I am "repotting"... and so are you, and you, and you. May we all be open and grateful for the stretching of our roots as they reach for nourishment, enabling that next new growth as "we reach for friends we've yet to meet." I look forward to hearing the continuing music of Unity Church for years to come!

Mark your calendars!

Unity Singers Concert

Wednesday, April 10

7:30 p.m.

Sanctuary

Arthur Foote Music Sunday

Sunday, May 5

9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 4:30 p.m.

Sanctuary

Unity Choir, Unity Singers,
Women's Ensemble, Children's Choir
Instrumentalists Laura Sewell,
Taichi Chen, Steve Lewis, and guest
soloist Ruth MacKenzie

Celebrate Ruth Palmer

Saturday, May 11, 2019

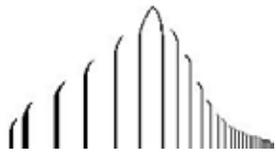
6:00-7:30 p.m. • Program

7:30-9:00 p.m. • Reception



Ruth Palmer and Dale Warland (2017)
Photo credit: Karyn Wrenshall

Mark your calendars for the evening of Saturday, May 11, when we will have the opportunity to celebrate our dear Ruth Palmer and the enormous impact she has had on our musical and spiritual lives. Jake Runestad and Dale Warland have each been commissioned to write a piece in honor of Ruth as she starts her retirement. These pieces will be premiered that evening, with a reception, including appetizers and dessert, following the concert.



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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**TIME SENSITIVE
MATERIAL**

Café Unity
Poetry & Music Salon

Friday, April 12, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Come Hear Original Writing & Great Music
at our 11th Annual Coffeehouse

Enjoy tea, wine, beer, snacks, treats,
& coffee (of course).

In the Unity Church Parish Hall

Free!
Bring Your Friends!
Everyone is
Welcome!

**WHAT'S MY
STORY?**

Unity Church Men's Retreat
Saturday, April 13
Turn to page 9 for details.

Celebrate Ruth Palmer Saturday, May 11, 2019

6:00-7:30 p.m. • Program
7:30-9:00 p.m. • Reception



*Ruth Palmer at Foote Music Sunday rehearsal, 2012.
Photo credit: Karyn Wrenshall*

Mark your calendars for the evening of Saturday, May 11, when we will have the opportunity to celebrate our dear Ruth Palmer and the enormous impact she has had on our musical and spiritual lives. Jake Runestad and Dale Warland have each been commissioned to write a piece in honor of Ruth as she starts her retirement. These pieces will be premiered that evening, with a reception, including appetizers and dessert, following the concert.