

## Compassion

*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.*

A friend was camping in the wilderness with an avid outdoorsperson, when one night as they sat by their campfire, they heard branches snapping and a large animal approaching from the wooded darkness behind them. As my friend prepared to flee, his companion rose and also ran — but straight *into* the woods, not away, moving directly and swiftly toward the unknown.

I think of this story when considering how differently each of us reacts not only to signs of danger but also to suffering, which can be a form of danger: some of us running or looking away, and others stepping in closer to compassionately assist or comfort, to witness or companion.

Moving away from suffering is an understandable response — to seek our own comfort or safety or both. But moving toward it, hearts not calloused but made tender by compassion, is the most basic requirement for relieving suffering. Being willing to suffer with one another — which is the definition of compassion — is the first step toward easing our own suffering and that of others. It is also key to our survival and our thriving.

Anthropologist Margaret Mead once noted that the first sign of civilization in any culture is neither a tool nor technology. Rather, she said, it is found in evidence of a healed femur. The longest bone in the human body takes a very long time to heal. She pointed out that an animal with a broken leg cannot survive, being incapable of escaping danger or finding food and water. So the discovery of a healed thigh bone in the remains of any early people means that someone stayed with the one who was injured, helping them and caring for them long enough for their recovery to be complete.

Compassion is the ability and willingness to move toward and stay with those who are suffering. People we know, people we don't know, other beings or even the earth. It raises some difficult questions, such as whose suffering am I willing to share and for how long? But as Lao Tzu insisted, it is closer to home and more straightforward than that. He named it as one of his teachings' three treasures: simplicity, patience, and compassion.

*Simple in actions and in thoughts,  
You return to the source of being.  
Patient with both friends and enemies,  
You accord with the way things are.  
Compassionate toward yourself,  
You reconcile all beings in the world.<sup>1</sup>*

Is it possible to be compassionate toward yourself? Is it possible to be compassionate toward anyone or anything else if you're not? Some say compassion begins in the tenderness that develops in our own injuries, and how we care for and carry them. In her poem, "Jerusalem," ([poetryfoundation.org](http://poetryfoundation.org)) Naomi Shihab Nye tells a story about her father as a boy being struck in the head by a rock. The injury created a place where his hair would not grow. Then she observes of all of us, "Each carries a tender spot: something our lives forgot to give us." And that tender spot, the poet suggests, can become a place "where hate won't grow." Call it kindness. Call it benevolence. Call it care. Call it compassion.

In this time of so many injuries and so much suffering, can we turn the tender spots in our own hearts and lives into places where hate won't grow? Where fear does not harden us? Where worry and anxiety won't take hold? Can we move compassionately toward our own suffering and that of

others, understanding how intertwined all suffering is? Is it possible that cultivating compassion for ourselves will create more compassion for others? And that letting ourselves be moved by compassion for others might be the best path we have for healing our own wounds?

Drawing near to suffering with our hearts open is not easy. But when we move closer, the tenderness that grows is a softening to rival the earth in spring. Fertile ground for compassion. A new season in which healing can take root. A fire to warm the heart and hands as we open both to ourselves and others. It is more than our human civilization that depends on this. The deep suffering of our earth and all beings on it awaits this awakening of the human heart. Are we willing to compassionately move closer to the suffering of the earth, to stay with it, to care for its recovery and participate in healing injuries we have caused?

*By Karen Hering on behalf of this month's theme team:  
Ahmed Anzaldúa, Drew Danielson,  
Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs,  
Ray Hommeyer, KP Hong,  
Ruth MacKenzie, and Laura Park*

<sup>1</sup> Tao Te Ching, #67, trans. Stephen Mitchell, NY: HarperCollins, 1988.

### Compassion Theme Resources

For further reflection on this theme, a variety of resources are listed in this month's Chalice Circle packet available at [www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html) and by request from [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org).

## Just Words



*Time, time, time,*

*See what's become of me*

*While I looked around for my possibilities.*

*I was so hard to please...*

The sky as I write is in fact “a hazy shade of winter.” These past few months have been a time for reflecting on our ministry with you. My early years in ministry were spent in congregations that had seen far better days. The first church I served had split ten years before I arrived. One month it had been a fast growing congregation of 350 souls. Two months later they were in free fall. The fight was over whether or not to offer Sanctuary to four AWOL Marines. The board said no. The congregation said yes. By the time I arrived they had been forced to sell their building. I was, they thought, their last best hope.

The second church I served, the church where Janne joined me in ministry, had been in steady decline for half a century. The old, broken down palace of a building was in a state of disrepair. Located in a bombed-out redevelopment district at the center of a very complicated city, few worshippers attended the place anymore. At the service of installation, a dear colleague known for his blunt eloquence, told me in front of the congregation and guests that I had accepted a call to yet another church that was looking for a hero. “It is okay that you are doing it once more. I wish you every blessing. But the next time you need to find a church that is strong enough to meet you strength for strength.” Eighteen years later Janne and I said yes to just such a church.

You know its name. In the first few years I was so hard to please. You were hard to please as well. I remember looking out from the pulpit seeing many of you sitting there in your accustomed pew, arms crossed over your chests, as if to say, “Go on, just try to touch me.” It wasn’t easy but my dear mentor was absolutely right. You knew how to be a church. You had known it for a hundred years. You had been through a rough patch. There were secrets that needed to be brought into the light. Old damaged bones that needed to be broken again and reset. Together we did what had to be done. And as time passed, mutual respect took hold. You uncrossed your arms and learned to clap on two and four. Janne and I soon came to know and love you. The first few years were anything but easy. As poet John Ciardi wrote in “The Gift”

*Slowly then the mouth opened at first a broth  
And then a medication, and then  
a diet, and all in time and the knitting mercies,  
the showing bones were buried back in flesh,  
and the miracle was finished.*

The truth is friends, we have healed and strengthened and sustained not only each other, not only Unity Church but so many others who have been touched by your ministry. At the end of May we will offer our final services as your Co-Senior Ministers. Then we will be on our way back west and you will stay and risk it all again as you welcome a new day.

As always,  
Rob Eller-Isaacs

## The Wheel of Life

### In Celebration

Ken and Ellen Green celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in March.

## Honoring, Celebrating and Saying Goodbye

*Mark your calendar with these opportunities to honor, celebrate, and say goodbye to, Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs. Details to follow.*

April 18: Special Meeting of the Congregation (virtual, see page 4)

May 16: Litany of Relinquishment during Sunday worship (livestream)

May 22: Bring a flower to church to place in the Flower Communion arch. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy visiting outdoors with Rob and Janne, celebrating and saying goodbye (in person).

May 23: Flower Communion Sunday service at 10:00 a.m., is the Eller-Isaacs's final worship service as Senior Co-Ministers (livestream). A virtual farewell celebration will be held at 2:00 p.m. (livestream).

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# APRIL SERVICES / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

## April Services and Coffee Hour

While our building remains closed, multigenerational Sunday Services are being live-streamed from the Sanctuary at 10:00 a.m., followed by a virtual coffee hour on Zoom. Details and links, including access to past services, are available online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org).

### April 4: Practice Resurrection: The Road to Emmaus

Livestream: <https://youtu.be/8ZYNNrjB-vM>

Traditionally, Christians in Unitarian Universalism follow Jesus and his teachings rather than find atonement through his resurrection. Revs. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs and KP Hong will explore the work of the disciples left behind in the wake of Jesus's shocking death. Their shock turned to a different understanding as they came to see that he was still among them. As Easter returns, the question once again turns to how we awaken to the holy around us and how we allow it to inspire us to acts of new life.

### April 11: The Radical Equality of Lives

Livestream: <https://youtu.be/oEM0ZnV3egY>

Philosopher Judith Butler distills compassion down to its essence when she uses the term, "the radical equality of lives." When and how will we learn how dangerous and truly tragic it can be when we fall into thinking some people's lives are more valuable than the lives of others? Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Shelley Butler will wrestle with the existential questions that rise out of such seductive assumptions.

### April 18: Compassion's Call

Livestream: <https://youtu.be/vV4NI8UXgMo>

For many of us, the last person for whom we easily feel compassion toward is ourselves. Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Jake Rueter will engage with the implications of a world where self-compassion is a goal.

### April 25: Beloved on the Earth

Livestream: <https://youtu.be/rE-LmBC6QOQ>

"And did you get what you wanted from this life?" asks Raymond Carver in his last published poem, "Late Fragments." On this Coming of Age Sunday, come listen closely as we share a collage drawn from the words of the ones we call the Agers. This year Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs will preach and Drew Danielson and Rev. KP Hong will share in the offering of this long cherished tradition.

## Maundy Thursday Service

Thursday, April 1 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Register: <http://bit.ly/uumaundythursday>

Revs. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs will offer a Zoom based reflection on Maundy Thursday, complete with candles, lamentations, and virtual communion as we remember the Last Supper together.

## 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. Donations are gratefully accepted online at <https://bit.ly/sundayoffering>. Offering checks, payable to Unity Church, should be sent "Attn. Song Thao."

### April 4: Mano a Mano

Mano a Mano works to create partnerships with impoverished Bolivian communities to improve health and economic wellbeing by building medical clinics, schools, roads, and water reservoirs and providing medical and agricultural training. This 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 Church member Ray Wiedmeyer is the guiding light for this medical surplus mission.

### April 11: Minnesota Tool Library (MTL)

Minnesota Tool Library is a volunteer driven community whose mission is to cultivate a more resilient and equitable community and reduce waste by empowering residents with access to tools, training, and workspace for DIY projects. This collection will support MTL's Space to Learn, a community project that has provided over 600 households with student desks for kids in grades K-6 who are learning at home. This outreach is being replicated nationwide. A host of Unity Church members have been involved in building and distributing desks to families in the metro area.

### April 18: Women's Advocates

Women's Advocates accompanies victims/survivors in their determination to break the cycle of domestic violence. It provides a continuum of safety including extensive prevention and education outreach, emergency shelter and advocacy services for victims fleeing violence, as well as wrap-around assistance for survivors after they leave temporary shelter. This collection is earmarked for rent assistance for domestic violence survivors and their children. Unity Church member Estelle Brouwer is the executive director of Women's Advocates in St. Paul.

### April 25: Border CrosSing

Border CrosSing envisions fundamental changes in music culture with the aim that concerts, audiences, and performers reflect the cultural realities in which they live. Toward this end, Border CrosSing provides opportunities for people from different cultures to know each other in new ways through its multi-lingual Bridge Concert Series. In just three years, this multicultural adventure has made a significant impact on the metro concert scene. This collection will help fund concert programs and online offerings. Ahmed Anzaldúa, Unity's Director of Music Ministries, is Border CrosSing's founder and director.

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES / MINISTERIAL SEARCH TEAM



## Transition Is Hard

Jess Landgraf, Trustee

“Transition is hard.” This sentence was a common refrain in my childhood and throughout my career as an outdoor educator. We said it to each other to remind ourselves to prepare the group we

were with for upcoming transitions, to hold the day’s plans out loud so we shared some of the decision making power, and to have compassion for the different readiness levels of the group members. Currently, the primary moments I say or think “transition is hard” are in the company of friends’ toddlers — they remind me of holding compassion for self and each other, especially around transitions.

We as a congregation are on the cusp of another step in our church’s transition — transition that is hard. We all know that Rob and Janne will be retiring in May. This month, the Board of Trustees are convening a congregational meeting on April 18 for voting members to consider designating the Revs. Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs as our Ministers Emeritus/ Emerita upon their retirement. Later events (see page 2) will sprinkle opportunities to engage in formal farewells, as we transition from their leadership into an interim minister’s leadership starting August 2021. I commend previous boards for being open about the transition decisions and steps. I see compassion for all parties involved woven into the process of saying goodbye well.

Across the congregation, we have people at varying levels of readiness for our ministerial transition. Some likely want to jump wholly into the future of what Unity can become under fresh ideas. And some are likely grieving the loss of leadership we know and love so well. Of course, there are folks broadening the spectrum of readiness beyond which I can know. For all, we hold compassion, for we are covenanted together as members of Unity Church. Transition is hard, and there is and will be a diversity of reactions to this transition. We are embarking on transition together, with one step on April 18 in considering minister emerita/emergitus designation. Please join the board, in the transition, in holding compassion for each other, and at our congregational meeting.

## Special Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, April 18 • 1:00 p.m. • Zoom

All voting members of the congregation are invited to a special congregational meeting to consider a resolution to grant Emeritus and Emerita status to Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs upon their retirement. Watch for details and the full resolution in a forthcoming communication.

*From the Unitarian Universalist Association: The title Minister Emeritus or Minister Emerita is granted to honor long and meritorious service to a congregation where the minister has given devoted and competent ministerial leadership.*

## Greetings from the Ministerial Search Team

Marg Walker, Ministerial Search Team

The Ministerial Search Team, appointed by the board and congregation last fall, has begun the work that will result in the selection of new minister(s) in the spring of 2022.

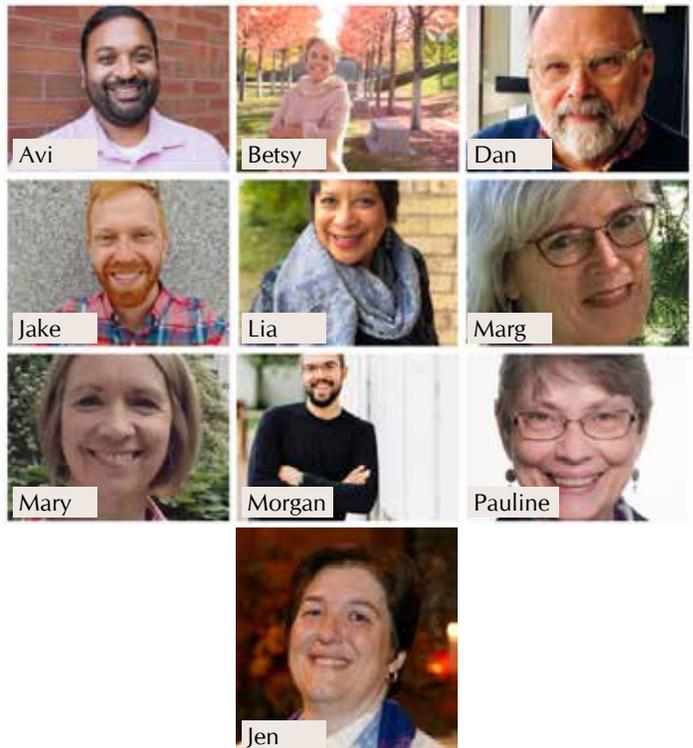
Over the first weekend of March, we held a virtual retreat facilitated by our UUA Transition Coach, Jen Crow. We got to know each other and examined the roles and tasks ahead. We also reviewed our group profile from the Intercultural Development Inventory, and discussed how the IDI can guide our efforts as a team. And we began to form a covenant that will be at the heart of our work on behalf of this congregation and Unitarian Universalism.

There will be many opportunities for your engagement and input in the coming months. We are committed to representing you with honesty, care, and respect.

Thank you for placing your trust in us as we embark on this time of great change, possibility, and potential.

## Ministerial Search Team

Our co-chairs are Avi Viswanathan and Betsy Hearn. The team is pictured below: Avi Viswanathan, Betsy Hearn, Dan Huelster, Jake Rueter, Lia Rivamonte, Marg Walker, Mary Baremore, Morgan France-Ramirez, Pauline Eichten, and Jen Crow.



# BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

## Antiracism Films, Organizations, Projects, Books, and Podcasts You Should Know About

### Beloved Community Communications Team

There is just so much information and so many people writing, reporting, creating, and talking about race in this country, some of it spurred by the killing of George Floyd in May of 2020. But where to start? The Beloved Community Communications Team wants to help. We try to keep abreast of resources that can help us individually and collectively raise awareness of antiracism, provide support for a variety of people, and deepen our thinking as we work toward equity for all. Here are a few that have come across our desk recently and are worth your time.

#### The BIPOC Project

[thebipocproject.org](http://thebipocproject.org)



#### A Black, Indigenous, & People of Color Movement

An organization dedicated to building “authentic and lasting solidarity among Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)” through support, resources, and workshops in order to advance racial justice.

***Growing Up on the Block Where George Floyd Was Killed: A Family Reckons with Police Violence*** by Ed Ou, Daniella Silva, Will N. Miller, and Niram Hasty. NBC News, March 4, 2021. [nbcnews.com](http://nbcnews.com)

This very emotional 32-minute film starts with the point of view of an 11-year-old boy who lives across the street from Cup Foods and his father who tries to help him come to terms with not only what happened last May but the legacy of police violence against Black men in Minnesota; one of their family members is a Minneapolis Police officer. The film also showcases Families Supporting Families Against Police Violence, a local support group for family survivors.

#### Mapping George Floyd & Anti-Racist Street Art

[georgefloydstreetart.omeka.net](http://georgefloydstreetart.omeka.net)



A crowdsourced national database project including tags, graffiti, murals, stickers, and installations on walls, pavement, and signs, created by the Urban Art Mapping Research Project at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. Street art is often ephemeral but has the potential to respond to crisis and start a dialogue in public spaces, reaching a large audience, and definitely worth viewing and appreciating. “Black Trans Lives Shine” (above) was created by Koffee\_Creative.

***The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*** by Heather McGhee. One World, 2021.

A much anticipated and well-received work looking at the racial divide and racial inequality in the U.S. that is based on a zero-sum game fallacy and that impedes our economic growth.



That divide includes the prevalent white belief that when things get better for Black people, it is at the expense of white people (zero sum) while Black people tend to think the opposite (not zero sum). McGhee explains how we got here, the historical hierarchy that America was built upon, and then shows the cost of that hierarchy today. Solidarity is the answer; we all do better when we all do better, or we prosper by the sum of all of us.

***Nice White Parents***. 2020. Produced by the New York Times and Serial, podcast, [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)

Chana Joffe-Walt (producer for “This American Life”) reports on the past 60 years of white parents and public schools, which can be characterized as separate and unequal. What’s wrong with our public schools, despite desegregation and school reform that focused on the Black and brown kids that the schools were failing, is what the series argues is the most powerful force in public schools: white parents. Five parts. Joffe-Walt’s reading list and a series discussion guide are available on the New York Times website.



***Mediocre: The Dangerous Legacy of White Male America*** by Ijeoma Oluo. Seal Press, 2020.

From the author of the widely praised examination of race in America, *So You Want to Talk About Race*. In *Mediocre*, Oluo continues an examination of racial oppression in the United States, created and sustained by white, male mediocrity; white men who assume that they are innately superior by virtue of being white. We continue to support the assumption of superiority that forces women, people of color, the disabled, and sexual minorities to work much harder than white men to be successful. We will be able to change only when we see that this system is built on our own complicity. We need a different template for navigating the world, one that does not ask us to automatically accept the superiority of white men.

Thank you to Louise Merriam and Ron Prievé of Unity’s Library-Bookstall Team for contributing to this article.

Find more resources in Unity’s Justice Database at <https://bit.ly/JusticeData>. If you are interested in delving deeper, consider the Antiracism Literacy Partner program on April 21. Details are on page 7.

# WELCOME NEWCOMERS / STAYING CONNECTED



## Welcome Words

**Laura Park, Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality**

We recently held a virtual building tour for our Finding Yourself at Unity class and every single person in the Zoom room had yet to walk into the physical building. I am so grateful for all the ways church newcomers have tried out new modes of engagement this past year, even when sometimes they have to admit it just can't work for them. It's the attempt I honor, the act of faith in and hope for a future we can still imagine together in the midst of steep challenges. As the possibility opens that some of our old ways of being together might return before too much longer, may we remember to keep this resilience, this curiosity, this willingness to try something new as we build congregational life together. If you're willing to try new modes of engagement with us, my virtual door is always open for conversation, information, and consideration of the pathways to deeper connection to the life of the church.

## Pathway to Membership Classes

These offerings invite you to explore a deeper connection to Unity Church and the commitments and opportunities of membership. If you have questions or would like one-on-one conversation about getting connected or about membership, please contact Laura Park, Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality, [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

### Finding Yourself at Unity • Sundays • 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Finding Yourself at Unity includes eight classes that you can attend in any order to better understand how Unity Church supports our faith journeys, our work to build Beloved Community, and our efforts to bless the world. Sunday morning emails include the class topic and a Zoom link to get connected.

- April 4: Unitarian Universalist History
- April 11: Pastoral Care
- April 18: Q&A with the Minister
- April 25: Virtual Building Tour

### Committing to Unity • Thursday, April 29

- *Develop a personal practice to help you find and keep your balance.*
- *Develop the skills of small-group intimacy that allow you to go deep quickly with strangers.*
- *Use the compassion that rises from doing the first two and use it to bless the world.*

This is how Unity Church talks about its expectations of membership. Does the invitation into this ongoing work resonate with you? Are you ready to make the membership commitment? This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church!

## Ongoing Group Meetings

**Afterthoughts** offers time to discuss the service. Contact Paul Gade, 651-253-1493

**Caregivers Group** meets on the third Thursday of the month. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Connecting with Ourselves and Others: Relationships and Sexuality** meets Thursday, April 29, 7:00-8:30 p.m., on the topic compassion: <http://bit.ly/connectingselfandother>. Contact Mike Huber, [mikehuberece@gmail.com](mailto:mikehuberece@gmail.com)

**Evergreen Quilters:** This quilting group meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month. Contact Peggy Wright, 651-698-2760

**Families Living with Mental Health Challenges** meets the first Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Five Animal Kung Fu** meets Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Contact Barney Kujawski, [barney.kujawski@gmail.com](mailto:barney.kujawski@gmail.com)

**Living With Grief Group** meets on the third Tuesday of the month. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Men's Breakfast Group** meets on Saturday mornings at 8:30 a.m. Contact Tom Zell, [tomzell@me.com](mailto:tomzell@me.com)

**Men's Coffee Group** meets every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. for light-hearted conversation. Contact Tom Zell, [tomzell@me.com](mailto:tomzell@me.com)

**Men's Conversation Group** meets Monday, April 5 and 19, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., to discuss a wide range of topics. Contact Terry McDanel, [tmcdanel@gmail.com](mailto:tmcdanel@gmail.com)

**Men's Retirement Circle:** Monday, April 12 and 26, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Tom Zell, [tomzell@me.com](mailto:tomzell@me.com)

**Music Ministry:** All choirs are meeting and singing virtually. Contact Ahmed Anzaldúa, [ahmed@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ahmed@unityunitarian.org).

**New Look at the Bible** meets the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade, 651-253-1493

**Recovery from White Conditioning** meets Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Contact Dayna Kennedy, [daynamelissa@icloud.com](mailto:daynamelissa@icloud.com)

**Single Parenthood Support Group** meets every other Wednesday, April 14 and 28, from 7:00-8:00 p.m. Contact Laura Park, [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org)

**Textile Arts Group** meets every other Wednesday, April 14 and 28, from 7:15-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc. Contact Johanna Stammeier-Toole, [johanna2le@gmail.com](mailto:johanna2le@gmail.com)

**Unity Book Club** meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne, [jack.hawthorne@centurylink.net](mailto:jack.hawthorne@centurylink.net). On April 13 the group will discuss *Eighty Days: Nellie Bly and Elizabeth Bisland's History Making Race Around the World* by Matthew Goodman

**Women In Retirement** meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Laura Park, [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org)

**Young Adult Group (ages 18-35):** To join the YA email list, email [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org).

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Unity Church's Wellspring Wednesday has long been a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun. While the church building remains closed due to the pandemic, we continue to gather online for programming. If you haven't yet participated in an online program using Zoom, church staff can help you get started. Unless otherwise noted, you can use the registration link right up until the program starts to participate.

April 7 • 7:00-8:30 PM

## Compassionate Caring in the Time of COVID and Other Unforeseen Calamities

Register: <http://bit.ly/caringincovid>

In her book *Take Good Care*, Cynthia Orange talks about "lightning strikes" — those unforeseen times that can redefine our sense of normal. The role of the caregiver can be stressful enough during "normal" times; the challenge of caring for self and others is magnified one hundred-fold during a global pandemic.



Join Cynthia in exploring ways to cultivate a foundation of compassionate care that will support us in those times when lightning strikes. Cynthia is an author, editor, writing consultant, and co-facilitator of Unity's Caregivers Group with Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs.

April 14 • 7:00-8:30 PM

## Racism Is Killing the Planet

Register: <http://bit.ly/racismkillingplanet>

Unity's Act for the Earth Team invites you to explore the intersection of racial and environmental justice. As environmentalist Hop Hopkins has noted, "You can't have climate change without sacrifice zones, and you can't have sacrifice zones without disposable people, and you can't have disposable people without racism . . . We'll never stop climate change without ending white supremacy." Come hear from panelists including church member Adri Arquin, a Central High junior and City of St. Paul youth representative who focuses on environmental justice, and Delaney Russell, who has devoted her work to antiracism and sustainability at the Sierra Club and the Just Solar Coalition. Participants are encouraged to read the team's newsletter article on page 11 and the Hopkins article at [sierraclub.org/sierra/racism-killing-planet](http://sierraclub.org/sierra/racism-killing-planet).

## Move Honestly (Fearlessly)

Register: <http://bit.ly/movehonestly>

"I don't know exactly what a prayer is. I do know how to pay attention..." You may recognize the line from Mary Oliver's famous poem. Many think paying attention is just with our minds, but there is a reason praying has a bodily position. Let's explore whole-body attention. Join artist-in-residence Marcus Young 楊國 and friends Imagine Joy and Laura Levinson as they lead us in movement that is attending, praying, loving. With joyful embodied behavior "you will love again the stranger who was your self," as writer Derek Walcott reminds us. This event continues a six-month presentation of the movement practice Don't You Feel It Too? Everyone is welcome, especially those who may be movement-shy.

April 21 • 7:00-8:30 PM

## Antiracism Literacy Partners: A Next Right Action

Register: <http://bit.ly/ALPApr21>

Whether you attended previous sessions or are just checking it out now, this program is an easy entry into finding antiracism books, podcasts, and videos, as well as discussion partners for talking about them. Come to choose a resource, sign up for a buddy or small group, and receive discussion guidelines. This program is part of Unity's Finding Our Next Right Action efforts. Questions? Contact [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org).

## Open Page Writing about Compassion: A Kind of Fire

Register: <http://bit.ly/openpagecompassion>

"Compassion is a kind of fire — it disturbs, it surprises, it ignites, it burns, it sears, and it warms," wrote Matthew Fox. "[I]t especially warms and melts cold hearts, cold structures, frozen minds, and self-satisfied lifestyles." As the April sun thaws the ground in the upper Midwest, this guided writing session led by Rev. Karen Hering invites writers and nonwriters alike to consider and write about the softening influence of compassion in our hearts and lives.

April 28 • 7:00-8:30 PM

## Conversations from the Seat

Registration link: <http://bit.ly/fromtheseat>

For those drawn to everyday meditation or who have found the meditation seat valuable during the pandemic, join Rev. KP Hong in this opportunity to connect and share conversation about practice. From guidance in seated awareness — zazen, to bringing attention and appreciation to everyday ordinary activities, to facing the difficult koans of our historical moment, come for this opportunity to share questions, experiences, and support to steady and deepen regular practice. Moment by moment, effort after effort, practice that touches compassion and wisdom.

## Storytime with Peter Ross (and Meet the Author)

Register: <http://bit.ly/PeterRossApr28>

Grab your kids — ages four to seven — before bedtime and gather round for storytime with Unity author-illustrator Peter Ross, as he reads and shares his new book, *Uh-Oh We've Got Birds!* Puffins in the kitchen! Ducks in the bath! Young Oliver is in for an adventure when he discovers his house is teeming with loveable, wild birds. With a little help and a little magic, he just might figure out how to move them all back outdoors where they belong. Following storytime, Peter will stick around to talk to the adults about writing, illustrating, and publishing a new children's book.

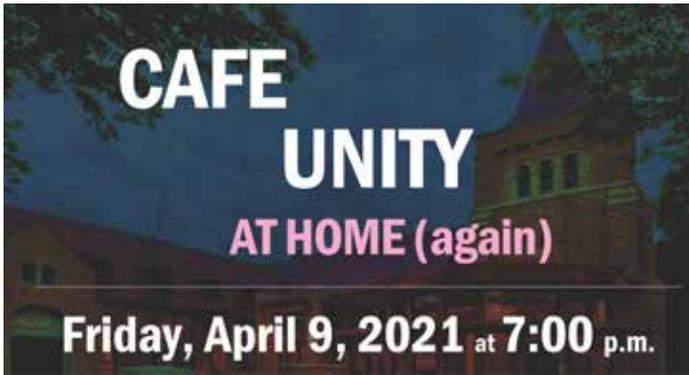


# LIBRARY AND BOOKSTALL TEAM / UNITY BOOK CLUB



## The Library-Bookstall Team

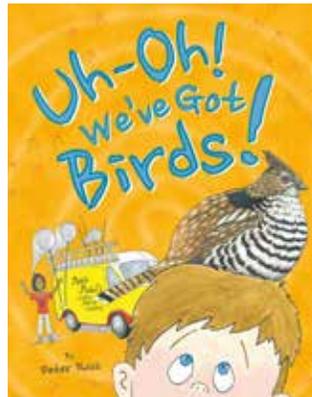
Zooming through April with Cafe Unity and Storytime



What can I tell you about **Cafe Unity at Home (again)**? You should come to it, obviously. Karen Hering will host and several of our fabulous Unity Church poets, writers, and musicians are signed up to read and play for you. There are still a few spots available so contact us to sign up by April 7: [library@unityunitarian.org](mailto:library@unityunitarian.org). And for sure, register to attend: <https://bit.ly/CafeUnityArp9>.

## Calling all kids and parents to a special storytime with Peter!

*Uh-Oh, We've Got Birds* is a super-fun new storybook about a young boy who comes home to find all kinds of birds in his house — what's a kid to do? He calls for help from Magic Mabel's Critter Moving Company. In the meantime, birds are having fun all over Oliver's house swimming in the tub, eating his food, singing to the record player, and even hiding in the artwork.



So, gather round your screen! Unity's own Peter Ross will be reading his new book in a virtual storytime on **Wednesday, April 28, at 7:00 p.m.** — great for kids ages 4 to 94. After storytime (kids may want to be excused), Peter will talk about writing, illustrating, and publishing a children's book. Register here: <https://bit.ly/PeterRossApr28>

## In the Justice Database: *Story Pirates: Black Lives Matter*

The mission at Story Pirates is to celebrate the words of kids to show them that their stories matter, that everyone's stories matter. <https://bit.ly/JusticeData>

## Profile of Unity Church Book Club

Begun over 13 years ago, members of the Unity Church Book Club have now read over 150 books together. Meeting every other month, and alternating between fiction and non-fiction selections, participants find inspiration to read, invitation to a wide variety of topics they would not have otherwise considered, and thoughtful partners to discuss the new ideas and fresh feelings the books bring out for them.

Active members rotate selecting the books. Anyone is welcome to participate in any book discussion that interests them. Jack Hawthorne keeps the book club email list and sends reminders of chosen books and meeting times. Send him a note at [jack.hawthorne@centurylink.net](mailto:jack.hawthorne@centurylink.net) to get on the list.

Members actively engage with the books they read. A recent book on Swede Hollow prompted members to take photos and make maps of this area in St Paul where newly arrived immigrants settled and lived a hardscrabble life between the 1850s and 1957. In the meeting itself, participants shared their own experiences of living in Swede Hollow, and with immigration in general.

Discussions occasionally include a local author. The best-attended author gathering featured Melvin Carter, Jr., reading selections from his book *Diesel Heart*, along with family members sharing songs and stories related to the book.



Active members warmly welcome everyone to expand their perspective in the Unity Church book club. Some quotes from current participants:

*My consciousness has expanded from being a part of the Unity Book Club and I recommend the club to anyone interested in experiencing "spiritual" growth and expansions of awareness that can arise from reading a book and sharing what one has learned from that book with others.*

*Book Club offers interesting conversation, interesting book choices made by each of us. I wouldn't miss it.*

*... our meetings are informative, exciting and dynamic. We start with a short go-round reflection on the current book, and we are often surprised by where the discussion leads us.*

# MUSIC MINISTRY / ARTIST IN RESIDENCE



## Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa  
Director of Music Ministries

"We give thanks. We give thanks for being. We give thanks for being together."

The full quote:

"Dear God of Galaxies, we give thanks for being. We give thanks for being here. We give thanks for being here together,

riders on the Earth today, brothers and sisters in a bright loveliness in an eternal cold. With others, brothers, sisters, we all know now that we are truly, truly brothers and sisters."

It's not entirely clear where this prayer, beloved by many in the Unitarian Universalist church, first originates. The full quote has been attributed to Buckminster Fuller, supposedly inspired by the first images of Earth from space. However, it doesn't sound anything like Fuller, and it appears that it is not by him at all (at least according to the people at the Buckminster Fuller organization).

The main reason for my interest in proper attribution for this text is related to this year's Foote Music Sunday service. We commissioned composer Elizabeth Alexander, who happens to be a member of our congregation, to write a musical setting of this text, both as a hymn and as a choral anthem. Before she could start, it was necessary to do some research to figure out the text's author, whose identity remains a mystery.

Why this text?

Ultimately, the program for this year's Foote Music Sunday service is about giving thanks for still being here, and giving thanks for everything we have been able to do to be together over the last year: masks and distance, resourcefulness and careful planning, learning many new skills, and Zoom — yes, we will give thanks for and celebrate Zoom, an incredible piece of technology that has become indispensable to so many of us. This year we have dreamed up so many ways to be together, to worship together, and to make music together. Choirs somehow continued to sing, carols were still shouted, and a children's musical still took place in outer space. And as we celebrate and give thanks, we'll also look to the gradual reawakening of our communal connections as more of us are vaccinated each day and we work together to reach a point where we can all be *physically* together.

My experience with pandemic life has been a roller coaster, a constant whiplash between emotional highs and lows; it's been overwhelming, to say the least. Compassion, especially for myself, has been in short supply. Even a simple question like "how are you all doing?" feels loaded... when I answer "we're okay," it's clear that the word "okay" is doing a lot of work in that sentence. Practicing gratitude, focusing on the essential, and keeping things simple has kept me going over the last year, getting me through the lows of the emotional roller coaster and putting things in perspective when the world is overwhelming. I can't think of a more perfect text for our time. I am so very excited to present Elizabeth's musical setting of it at this year's Foote Music Sunday and know that it will be a wonderful gift to our community and to Unitarian Universalist music.

## Sing with a Unity Choir

Unity's choirs (adult *and* children) are meeting virtually every week! In addition to learning new music, we are also meeting to sing familiar songs and maintain our connection to each other and to the church. All newcomers are welcome! If you are interested, contact Ahmed at [ahmed@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ahmed@unityunitarian.org).

## Marcus Young 楊墨 Artist-in-Residence Events

### Move Honestly (Fearlessly)

Wednesday April 14 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Register: <http://bit.ly/movehonestly>

"I don't know exactly what a prayer is. I do know how to pay attention..." You may recognize the line from Mary Oliver's famous poem. Many think paying attention is just with our minds, but there is a reason praying has a bodily position. Let's explore whole-body attention. Join artist-in-residence Marcus Young 楊墨 and friends Imagine Joy and Laura Levinson as they lead us in movement that is attending, praying, loving. With joyful embodied behavior "you will love again the stranger who was your self," as writer Derek Walcott reminds us. This event continues a six-month presentation of the movement practice Don't You Feel It Too? Everyone is welcome, especially those who may be movement-shy.

### What is the Meaning of This? Behavior and Spirit

Wednesday, May 5 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Register: <http://bit.ly/behaviorandspirit>

Marcus Young 楊墨 approached his residency with Unity Church very differently from a typical artist engagement. The last six months, together, we have explored how "art is not separate." The artist and the participant are not that different from each other. How we make and how we perceive are not two separate things. Art and life can be inspiringly intertwined. Join Marcus and members of Unity's Artist in Residence Team in a reflection of the last six months of collaboration. What did we make with our dancing on Zoom and sharing of our favorite songs? What was transformed by altering how we attended Foote Music Sunday? What is the meaning of this behavior, and where do we go from here?



## Slip Sliding Away

**Drew Danielson, Coordinator of Youth and Campus Ministries**

In an era when many of us are frequently considering whether we really need to wear pants during an important Zoom meeting, it isn't surprising to know a lot of principles have been relaxed. Who isn't getting up a little later, or allowing mealtimes to fluctuate, or increasing screen hours? No biggie. But as the pandemic shutdown continues, what more substantial rules or values will we be tempted to let slide? Do I really need to keep the house clean when literally no one but these messy slob I live with has been inside of it for a year? Maybe online shopping isn't really killing local retail and if it is what can I do? I need these awesome leggings and coordinated facemasks! Do I really need to interact with people in this neighborhood? Maybe everyone is fine, I mean they all have Netflix, right?

The past month's Tower Club (Unity's high school youth group) discussions have, as I think back on them now, come from the recognition that a lot feels like it has "slipped" during our pandemic isolation. We spent a Sunday afternoon admitting to each other some of the hypocrisies we have allowed ourselves, from wasting water to being overly competitive, continually bullying each other for sport to letting ourselves buy in to gender bias. Letting ourselves freely act as capitalist pawns.

No one felt great about those admissions, so the next time we met we considered what we really wish was the right response to these ills. Ray and I asked everyone to say "What if?" How would we conduct ourselves ideally? What if we and everyone else acted with the guidance of our highest principles? At first, the high school-ers gave simplistic answers, like "we'd be better about using resources" or "we'd all try to be nicer." We pushed them to really visualize how things could be, ideally. One high school youth asked, "What, are we talking utopian visions here?" "Yes."

"Well then I guess people would actually care about the people they meet and even don't meet. We'd think about the effect of all our words and actions on everyone else."

"We would never put women in objectified positions, we just wouldn't allow half the population to wake up every day feeling like they have to market themselves to men," said two more.

"We would be compassionate in everything we do," added another.

They blow me away every time they do this, and I gotta tell you they do it consistently. They start reciting Unitarian Universalist Principles, not because they figured out that was what they were being asked, but because they realize those are the values they hold to be true and dear. I really should not have been surprised that the youth brought our discussions back around to a fervent hope for more and deeper compassion. That their answer to watching and even allowing themselves and others to let so many principles slide in our isolation, was to come together and emphasize a shared goal. That they named compassion a guiding value a week before I even knew it was the next month's theme, well, that was scary. And quite reassuring.

## Gun Sense Team Update

**Sue Conner, Gun Sense Team**

The Gun Sense Ministry Team works to facilitate Unity Church members in becoming more active in the process of dialogue and creation of policies aimed at mitigating gun violence and the resulting fear in Minnesota. The congregation was very active during the last legislative biennium but, unfortunately, the two bills that we were supporting did not pass. The issues of gun violence and inadequate policies to mitigate it are still with us, and the November Minnesota election results will make our work more challenging.

Unity's Gun Sense Team, along with Protect Minnesota, Moms Demand Action, and Everytown for Gun Safety, is keeping our focus on passing sensible gun laws. In Minnesota there are two bills that we are working to pass. The House Extreme Risk Protection Order and the Senate Criminal Background Check for Firearms Transfer have both been introduced at the legislature. At the same time, there have been 13 pro-gun bills introduced including Stand Your Ground and Right to Carry without a Permit. You can read all the bills at [www.revisor.mn.gov/bills](http://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills).

Jim Davnie, Unity Church member and Representative from MN House District 63A, predicts that there will probably not be hearings on any of the bills this spring. Please continue to lobby your legislators by communicating your thoughts on the need for sensible gun laws. Send an email, make a phone call, or drop a postcard in the mail. You can also lobby anyone you know who lives in an area represented by legislators who are currently unsupportive of these bills.

Stay informed by following and supporting Protect Minnesota at <https://protectmn.org>.

## Coming of Age Ceremony and Service

**Saturday, April 24, and Sunday, April 25, 2021**

*You're invited! Watch for details!*

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## Act for the Earth, Ensure Justice

Clairece Cook, Act for the Earth Team

To fight against environmental degradation, species extinction, climate change, you have to fight for environmental justice.

When thinking about environmental work we are asked to shift our view from an anthropocentric (human-centered worldview) to an ecocentric worldview where other species and our planet hold moral value. However, what this fails to recognize is that what we currently consider to be an anthropocentric worldview does not actually encompass all people.

The society that we participate in is set up to treat impacts on marginalized groups as externalities — a cost outside of and not to be counted in the transaction between us and nature. The erasure of these impacts and the marginalizing of some voices is what allows us to harm our environment.

To quote Hop Hopkins, the Sierra Club's Director of Organizational Transformation, in his article "Racism is Killing the Planet," "you can't have climate change without sacrifice zones, and you can't have sacrifice zones without disposable people, and you can't have disposable people without racism."

This phenomenon of disposable people encompasses all marginalized groups and is the basis of our society. It is almost always underprivileged communities that have to deal with environmental hazards in their workplaces and neighborhoods (pesticides, air pollution, water contamination, superfund sites, and flood zones).

These people are disposable and we participate in a system that treats them as such.

So before we move to an ecocentric view I believe that we must first recognize that our anthropocentric view is really a privilegecentric view and that until we move to a view that truly encompasses everyone we will never be able to save the planet.

To put this in terms of our faith, it is impossible to live by our seventh principle of respecting the interdependent web of all existence if we have not fulfilled our first principle — recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

With that said, this process will not be easy. For those of us at this church with privilege, we will have to come to terms with the fact that we participate and benefit from the systematic sacrifice of human lives. Although uncomfortable, this is no excuse not to move forward. What makes up a person's character and the character of our congregation is whether or not we put effort towards dismantling this system. Even though it will be messy and we will fail at times, what matters is a continuous and intentional effort forward.

To join an Act for the Earth action team, contact:

Stop Climate Change: Priscilla Morton, [prismorton@comcast.net](mailto:prismorton@comcast.net)

Stop Extinction: Anna Newton, [asnewton3@gmail.com](mailto:asnewton3@gmail.com)

Ensure Justice: Jean Hammink, [jhammink@earthlink.net](mailto:jhammink@earthlink.net)

## April Act for the Earth Programs

### Installing Solar at Your Home: Presentation and Q&A

Saturday, April 10 • 10:00-11:00 a.m. • Register: <http://bit.ly/solarqanda>

Learn about how Solar United Neighbors and the Twin Cities Region Solar Co-op can help you go solar. The solar co-op (free to join) is neighbors coming together to get the best price and service from a solar installer, tap into the expertise at Solar United Neighbors, and to support each other through the process. More info at [www.solarunitedneighbors.org/twincities](http://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/twincities).

### Racism Is Killing the Planet

Wednesday, April 14 • 7:00-8:30 p.m. • Details on page 7.

## Emerging Indigenous Justice Team

### Meeting in April!

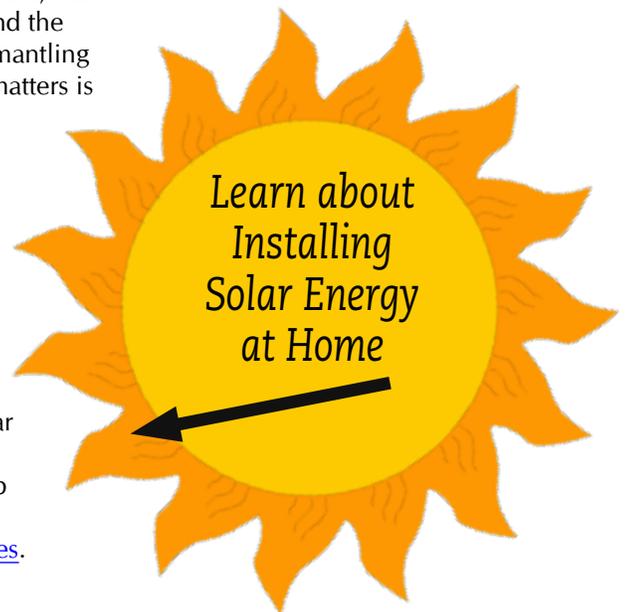
**Sunday, April 11 • 3:00-4:30 p.m.**

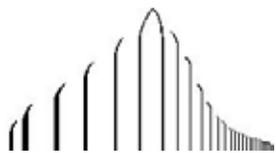
Register: <http://bit.ly/newministryteam>

All those interested in Indigenous Justice are invited to a Zoom update, screening and discussion on Sunday, April 11, 3:00 -4:30 p.m.

Following last fall's worship and programming with the Rev. Jim Bear Jacobs, a core group of Unity members has focused on this issue with the goal of developing a new Community Outreach Ministry Team.

The gathering will include an update from the core group; a screening of "We the People," a brief TED Talk by Mark Charles, member of the Navajo nation and U.S. citizen; and small group discussion. We welcome everyone's participation in moving this new Unity Church effort forward.





# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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CLOVER EARL, CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REV. JANNE ELLER-ISAACS, CO-MINISTER  
REV. ROB ELLER-ISAACS, CO-MINISTER  
REV. KP HONG, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
BARBARA HUBBARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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## Artist-in-Residence

### Marcus Young 楊墨

Information about upcoming programs is available on page 9. A congregation playlist developed from "Listening with Love" will inspire Foote Sunday service, and participants in sessions with Marcus may be invited to participate in an additional session on Foote Music Sunday.



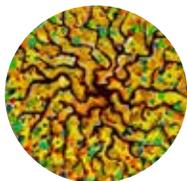
## Centered, Balanced and Rooted

Tuesday, April 20 • 10:30–11:30 a.m.

Register: <http://bit.ly/qigongbodysoul>

### Centered, Balanced and Rooted

*being in the moment using  
breath, posture and gravity  
to bring harmony to our lives*



Join Qigong teacher Lisa Schlingerman online in guided movements, stretches and meditation, entering the present moment with rootedness and harmony. No experience necessary. Everything can be done standing or sitting. All are welcome in this monthly online Qigong session, offered every Third Tuesday through May 18.



Wednesday, April 21 • 5:00 p.m.

Register: <http://bit.ly/cookalongpasta>

This will be a live interactive cooking class with Tomkin Coleman over Zoom. This class will feature pasta carbonara and cacio e pepe. Along with a tasty meal and fellowship, participants will receive a hand-delivered goodie bag of items to help complete the meal. Register early as supplies are limited! Your recipe packet will be sent by email one week before the event. There will be a few items to add to your weekly grocery shopping. Gluten-Free, vegan, and dairy-free options will be available. Don't want to cook? You are welcome to tune in to watch, learn, and hang out with other food enthusiasts.