

## Sacrifice

“You know what a sacrifice fly is, right?” I must confess, despite having a sermon in the Baseball Hall of Fame, I never did learn the nuances which make baseball, for some, a deeply spiritual and theological game. So, Drew Danielson, Coordinator of Youth Ministries, explained, “A sacrifice fly means that a batter chooses to hit a fly ball to advance another runner who is on the field. It’s a sacrifice because the batter doesn’t get to advance *themselves*. They sacrifice their opportunity to make a run and to advance their own batting score. It has a personal cost to the one who hits the fly ball, but it’s the thing the team needs.”

The theme of sacrifice is a richly complex one. We often look at the root of a word to understand its origin, and in our case, sacrifice is derived from the Latin root word *sacre* or, to make sacred. I wondered then, does hitting a fly ball really rise to the level of sacrifice? How is this effort sacred? (For true baseball fans, the answer is obvious.)

The sacred part of sacrifice means that it costs us something. In ancient Israel, the greater the sacrifice, the greater the hoped-for reward. By giving up something that you think you need, or something you cherish dearly, you would “get” something in return. Sacrifice in Hebrew Scriptures was a devotional practice which could be interpreted as a *quid pro quo* relationship with Yahweh | God: “I give up something — and I get something in return...” Later on, the prophet Amos challenges the centuries old practice of sacrifice. Channeling Yahweh | God, he writes, “Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them...” Amos then proposes an alternative to the grain, flesh and blood sacrifices. He continues, “But

let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” What these scriptures suggest is that not all sacrifices are the equivalent. These scriptures ask their reader (and us) to dig deeper into the practice of sacrifice.

Sacrifice, in one definition from the dictionary, is about “giving up something valued for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy.” In this understanding, it is an act motivated from within — an offering of something cherished made willingly because we’ve named something or someone else as claiming our hearts more fully. It gives up something to make way for the currents of a greater river, for the ever-flowing stream of life and justice.

Within this definition, we are encouraged to think of sacrifice not as a duty that changes our circumstances or others — but more importantly *us*. One of the indicators of something becoming sacred is that it enacts a kind of moral transformation in the way we regard one another. Am I willing to sacrifice the benefits of white privilege so that all may live with greater equity and justice? Am I willing to give up the ease of using plastic with the hope of reducing the trillions of microplastics found in our water? Am I willing to give up my cherished individualism for a greater, more wholistic and resounding “we?” When we start asking ourselves these questions, the idea of sacrifice is not a far away or long-ago discipline. It’s a practice of the here and now.

We can’t explore this theme of sacrifice without acknowledging that dominant and capitalist culture has *demand*ed the sacrifices of those from historically marginalized communities. Women, people of color, poor people, LGBTIQ+ communities have all received messages that their identities,

needs, ambitions and desires should be sacrificed on the altar of efficiency and conformity. In an article on this theme, authored by Rev. Karen Hering, she quotes Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Co-Executive Director Darrick Jackson. Reflecting on this reality, Jackson wrote, “As a person of color who grew up working-class, sacrifice has had different ramifications for me than for someone white and middle-class. Often I was starting from a place of sacrifice, so adding another ranged from a deeper burden to ‘what’s one more thing.’” Then he added, “Now, I’m beginning to understand sacrifice differently. It does not have to be grounded in pain and suffering. What we are asked to do is create space for others to thrive. In our interconnected world, the ‘I’ needs to be in balance with ‘We.’” What are we each asked to do to create space for others’ thriving — and for our own? What must we give up to support the earth’s thriving — and the wellbeing of all who depend on it?

As we consider this month’s theme of sacrifice, think of the many ways in which you sacrifice your own needs for the good of another. Then consider the ways in which you have been asked to let go of something that’s important to you. How do you feel about both of these opportunities? Jot those thoughts down in a journal and revisit them at month’s end.

*By Rev. Kathleen Rolenz on behalf of this month’s theme team:  
Rev. Andrea Anastos, Drew Danielson,  
Rev. KP Hong; and referencing Rev.  
Karen Hering’s reflection on sacrifice.*

### Theme Resources

For further reflection on this theme please see this month’s Spiritual Practice Packet, available online at [unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html](http://unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html).

# IN THE MEANTIME



## In the Meantime: Reflections on the Interim

**Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Accredited Interim Senior Minister**

On one of the coldest and snowiest days last month, a member asked me, "Are you still glad you left Virginia?" I thought of my home in Virginia, where the forsythia bushes bloom early and where, by now, the magnolia trees are pushing out fat buds. I wonder if my rose bush survived the winter, and I may have missed the crocuses that I planted last fall entirely. And yet, even with that in mind, I answered without hesitation, "Yes."

I'm part of a group of colleagues who are professional interim ministers which requires most of us to move every couple of years. As an interim, I've been impressed with the "lifers," that is — members who were born and raised in the same place. This has been their church — or their family's church for decades. The ease at which they know the streets and shops, calling merchants by name, having regular routines that mark their year is enviable for those of us living the itinerant life.

Deciding to accept this invitation to serve as your interim did require some modest sacrifice of stability, of building relationships with my community, and of tending to my home and gardens. Yet, everything in our lives, in one way or another, requires us to give up something — not knowing if our sacrifice will make a difference. I witness my stepdaughter and son-in-law mindfully parenting their two-and-a-half-year-old daughters, addressing their tantrums with seemingly infinite patience. Will their restraint make a difference in the lives of those girls? I watch a member care for their spouse who is dying, laying aside their plans in order to be present for those last precious weeks — or days. I appreciate the ways in which so many of you have stepped up to volunteer, to teach or mentor our children, to prepare meals for Wellspring Wednesdays, to sing in a choir, to show up for worship. You are giving up some your time and energy for the benefit of others — and for your church.

I've been with you now for six months and while yes, I'm missing my home in Charlottesville, I know there are (or will be) flowers blooming here too. I'm watching this congregation come to life in ways that weren't evident to me when I first arrived. I'm witnessing the rhythms of your year, the markers and milestones of your traditions, and the rising energy of new and long-time members alike.

As we move ever closer to spring, I am reminded of "These Roses," a poem by Emerson...

*These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower, there is no more; in the leafless root, there is no less. Its nature is satisfied, and it satisfies nature, in all moments alike...*

I continue to be satisfied with the work we're doing together — and I hope you are too!

Faithfully yours,  
Kathleen

## Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for a summer Sunday worship service, or if you would like to volunteer as the Sunday flower coordinator, please contact Martha Tilton at 651-228-1456 x105 or [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org).

**commUNITY** is the newsletter of Unity Church–Unitarian. It is published monthly. 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/year.

Unity Church–Unitarian  
733 Portland Avenue, Saint Paul,  
Minnesota 55104  
651-228-1456  
[www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org)



# APRIL SERVICES

## Sunday Worship Services

Unity Church offers two in-person services each Sunday at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. (except where noted). The 9:00 a.m. service is offered via livestream.

### April 2: *The Lost Art of Sacrifice*

**Rev. Kathleen Rolenz // Worship Associate Jim Mulvey**

Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amx-z74WKkY>

In our culture of immediate gratification, sacrifice is not a popular concept. Originally a religious practice, it's been used and abused in ways that may render it irredeemable. Rev. Rolenz will argue that it's time to reinterpret sacrifice in a way that can be life-affirming. We'll recognize the beginning of Passover and Holy Week.

### Easter Family Sunday, April 9: *The Stiff Earth Bends*

**Rev. Kathleen Rolenz // Worship Associate Jen Welsh**

Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3RebASxWCo>

Life. Death. Resurrection. All reasons to sing Hallelujah. All reasons to look more closely at the ancient story of Jesus of Nazareth's eternal life, yielding new hope each time the story is told. Join us for this Family Sunday of story, music, song and celebration.

### April 16: *Giving 'til it Hurts: How Sacrifice Shapes Community*

**Rev. Karen Gustafson**

Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfAL4tRbplY>

Sacrifice is often portrayed as a transaction, the willingness of an individual to suffer for the benefit of a cause or group or another individual. How do those transactions get negotiated? Who gets to claim or define the outcome?

### Coming of Age Sunday, April 23: *Mouse Eats Cat Food*

**Rev. KP Hong // Drew Danielson**

Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8p81tQ3k2A>

Considering the array of practice spaces everywhere about us, from universities and laboratories to hospitals and stadiums to cathedrals and conservatories, we are practicing creatures getting only as far as practice carries us. What about spiritual practices, and congregational practices, through which lives of theological proportions are forged and integrity, service, and joy made real? 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. Coming of Age youth, mentors, and families will be present at the 11:00 a.m. service, while all services will include a collage of voices, with religious education staff and ministers leading in joyful celebration.

### April 30: *Whose Rights Are Sacrificed?*

**Rev. Kathleen Rolenz**

Livestream: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pTGriX\\_gc4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pTGriX_gc4)

"All are created equal... with certain unalienable rights..." but who is the "All?" And... are there some rights or individuals that are more important than others? If there is a tug of war of resources and money, who has the "right" to lay claim? Are there some rights which should be sacrificed for the greater good?

## Holy Week

### Maundy Thursday Service

**Thursday, April 6 • 7:00 p.m.  
Ames Chapel**

The word "Maundy" comes from the Latin word *mandatum* or commandment, which Jesus gave his disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you." This is a contemplative service which remembers Jesus on the last night of his earthly life by rituals of washing of feet and sharing communion. All are welcome.

### Good Friday Service

**Friday, April 7 • 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.

### Easter Family Sunday

***The Stiff Earth Bends*  
Sunday, April 9  
9:00 and 11:00 a.m.**

Life. Death. Resurrection. All reasons to sing Hallelujah. All reasons to look more closely at the ancient story of Jesus of Nazareth's eternal life, yielding new hope each time the story is told. Join us for this Family Sunday of story, music, song and celebration.

Offering recipients for April can be found on page 13.



## Hear the Hum

Mary Baremore, Trustee

The Unity Singers premiered a Catherine Dalton piece in March from a poem by Naomi Shihab Nye. In her beautiful poem "Shoulders," Shihab Nye writes that a man carries his sleeping son on his shoulder and hears his son's breath in his ear, hears the hum of his dream deep inside him.

Shihab Nye's poem continues, "...We're not going to be able to live in this world if we're not willing to do what he's doing with one another."

I reflect on this piece as the board considers how we serve you, our stakeholders. How do we at Unity Church, as people in covenantal relationship, tell each other our stories of who we are? How do those stories and the work of sharing them impact the ongoing work we do? How does what we share or not share with one another about who we are impact our relationships? What is our capacity for living in discomfort? Are we able to hear each other's breath and the hum of one another's dreams deep inside? These are some of the important questions that shape the deepening of connection and relationship that grounds us as a board and helps guide our work.

The board has shifted the flow of our monthly meetings to spend time together sharing, learning, and evolving in our commitment to work within Unity's Double Helix framework. Our work asks us to be vulnerable and openly share our discomfort with one another. We are committed to building relationships and listening to one another's dreams.

We have started the work of establishing a new Ministerial Search Team (MST) to call our next settled minister.

The board, with our newly formed communication and education committee, is determined to be in regular and transparent communication throughout the year long search. See the update on this page for more information about the process and timeline. Please reach out if you have questions.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the March Forth fundraiser. It was inspirational to see such a diverse number of offerings and to witness us step up to make it a success! The goal was \$40,000 and as of this writing we have crossed the \$30,000 threshold. Stay tuned for more information about Unity's first ever garage sale scheduled for this summer. For more details, please see the article on page 6 written by Barbara Hubbard.

Mark your calendars for the annual Heritage Society Dinner on Friday, May 5, from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Unity's Heritage Society is a group of church members and friends who have made a legacy gift to the church. If you're interested in joining the Heritage Society or just want to make an inquiry, please reach out to Barbara Hubbard at [barbara@unityunitarian.org](mailto:barbara@unityunitarian.org).

## Update on Ministerial Search Team Application Process and Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who took the time to submit nominations for the Ministerial Search Team (MST). More than 50 people were nominated and each nominee received an email asking if they were interested in applying and if so, asked to complete the application. The application was also available on Unity's website for voting members interested in serving on the MST. Applications will be accepted through March 30.

After the deadline, the board will review applications and determine a slate of candidates that will be shared, along with candidate bios, with the congregation in mid-April.

Unity's voting members will be able to vote online from April 30 through May 7, voting for up to five candidates. The top four candidates will be automatically appointed to the MST, and the board will select the final three candidates to round out the team.

All candidates will be notified by May 10 as to whether they will serve on the MST. The installation of the MST will take place during both services on Sunday, May 14. Ministerial Search Team members are expected to attend both services.

At the installation of the MST on May 14, the members will commit to the charge from the board ([bit.ly/boardcharge](http://bit.ly/boardcharge)), and the congregation will also receive a charge for their engagement in this important process to call a new settled minister. Your ongoing engagement in the process of assembling the MST and the search process is vitally important. This is an exciting time for the congregation, we are all in it together, and we each have a role to play.

### Unitarian Universalist Association

## General Assembly

Pittsburgh, PA, and Online  
June 21-25

Full virtual registration includes access to the General Assembly app, as well as all on-demand programming, live webinars, and live-streamed events. Registration rates go up after May 1, so if you plan to attend General Assembly, register soon: [www.uua.org/ga/registration](http://www.uua.org/ga/registration)! Watch for more information about the possibility of Unity Church hosting a watch party for selected events in the May newsletter.



# BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

## Seeds That Will One Day Grow

Erika Sanders, Beloved Community Communications Team

A few months ago, Pauline Eichten brought an opening reading to a meeting of the Beloved Community Communications Team. Although written by Bishop Ken Untener in 1979, it's often called the Oscar Romero prayer because it summarizes the ministry of Archbishop Romero.

*This is what we are about:  
We plant seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted,  
knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.  
We cannot do everything  
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
This enables us to do something,  
and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,  
a step along the way,  
an opportunity for God's grace to enter  
and do the rest.  
We may never see the end results,  
but that is the difference between the master builder  
and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders,  
ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.*

The members of our group were energized by the prayer, and by the reminder that we commit to the unknown potential of our work every time we take action to build Beloved Community.

We decided to share it with other Unity Church members and ask about their ability to continue their own antiracism work. How do they embrace the fact that it is work full of ambiguities with no set end-point?

Molly Flattum, a Welcome Team member and Spirit Play teacher, and Linda Kjerland, a member of the Congregational Care Team, weighed in.

**Erika:** When you read Romero's prayer, how did its words resonate with you, and with your activities at Unity Church?

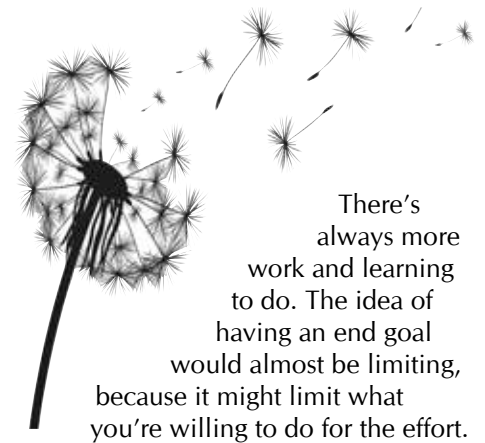
**Linda:** The prayer says it all about keeping at it. I need to continue to prime the pump. As a younger child, I visited my grandparent's farm. Prominent in the yard was a tall rusting hand pump — it produced the first trickles of water only after some effort.

I need to continually put yeast in my own dough. I need to listen and to befriend books that provoke, inform, and challenge me. Without repeated infusions, I can tuck in, miss calls for disturbance or misread my own emotions.

**Molly:** The prayer reminds me of how, on the Welcome Team, we give great attention to how we have little snippets of conversation with congregants and visitors on Sundays, and how we try to infuse those small moments with meaning. How do those quick interactions create a space that is welcoming for everyone? What does that space look and feel like when it is engaging in antiracism, or welcoming people with disabilities or other marginalized identities?

**Erika:** How do you grapple with the fact that this work has no point of completion or outcome?

**Molly:** That really resonated with me as a Spirit Play teacher and a parent. As a parent, not having an end-point isn't so scary, because we know that the work of growth is never-ending. Raising good humans is not about an end point, it is about ongoing action. It's about raising kids to never be silent. My daughter is a preschooler, and is noticing differences like who has glasses and who doesn't, and who uses a wheelchair and how they'll enter a building. We're normalizing conversations about difference and justice. Children hold me accountable.



**Erika:** In your Unity activities, do you find yourself employing the antidotes to white supremacy culture?

**Linda:** I'd like to take time with each characteristic, putting them into intentional discussions within the Congregational Care team as we endeavor to reflect, rethink, and expand *for whom and how* we show up. My reading on antiracism, including at Unity, has pushed my willingness to see, feel, and heed the indicators of white supremacy culture.

**Erika:** What does the use of the word "prophets" in the final line of the prayer mean to you? Do you see your work as prophetic?

**Molly:** Prophet is a word that lands awkwardly for me. For me, it is more a question of: we are here so temporarily, how do we create a lasting impact? The work we do has to be the hard work, and it has to be part of our daily lives. As a parent, the fact that I'm doing advocacy and justice work—not just for my own sake, but for my children and the whole community — is what makes this holy work. Children help me stay anchored in the moment and keep asking the question, "What's right in front of me?" It's about Romero's seed in the moment *and* the future.



# FUDRAISER AND BUDGET / FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

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## March Forth Fundraiser Report

*And the Story Behind the Numbers...*

**Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director**

Thank you to all who made our March Forth on March Fourth fundraiser a success! There were 161 wonderful items donated including tickets to entertainment and sports events; delectable food and drink; get-a-ways to the ocean, the desert and the North Shore; art (and art-making supplies); gatherings for poetry, music, rock-painting, backyard pools and waffles; lessons; sermons; radio shows and so much more! You really stepped up! Almost everything sold on March 4th, and our "Still Marching Forth" post-auction sale is taking care of the rest.

A giant thank you to "The Auctionettes" Shelley Butler, Barbi Byers, Jennifer Nedry and Sara Testen; our lead appetizer cooks Ray Wiedmeyer, Tom Zell and Rick Macpherson; our bartenders Dick Buggs and Beverly Heydinger; our auctioneer Ed Noreen; staff members Madeline Summers and Heidi Birkholz; and the many volunteers who proofed the catalogue, chopped the veggies, hung the art, handled IT, set up and tore down the event — and to all who participated!

Our fundraiser goal in the 2023 budget was \$40,000 and we netted \$30,000 from this event. That's great, but we're already making plans to fundraise the remaining \$10,000. This summer, we'll be holding a garage sale. As you're doing your spring cleaning, set aside the good stuff for our sale that will happen in late July or early August. Watch for details and let us know if you'd like to help!

Why is making our fundraiser goal important? The congregation approved the 2023 operating budget last November, which reflects our best laid plans for this year. It's a conservative budget in many ways. We reduced our pledge goal relative to previous years, but we still have a \$30,000 gap. Fundraisers, Religious Education fees, Sunday offering income, unrestricted gifts, and building income all play a part in ending the year with a balance budget. Another factor in the 2023 budget is that it relies on bequest money that will not be available in 2024.

On the expense side, we all know that the cost of everything is going up and this winter we've spent a significant amount on snow removal. The UUA has released new salary guidelines, and we are creating a multi-year plan to meet those goals and pay equitable wages to our staff. We are currently running the community outreach and facilities programs at inadequate staffing levels and encouraging more congregational participation in leadership and support.

This is also the last year of support previously allocated for the multicultural initiatives program that has brought us Team Dynamics, IDI work, artists in residence, and special music. It has always been the goal to incorporate these initiatives into our existing programs and to be able to pay for them from pledges and other sources of income.

As always, we want to give generously of our resources and spend those resources wisely. Another approach that you'll hear more about this year is the encouragement to rebalance our operating and capital pledges. That means giving the same total amount in our pledges (or more), but putting more emphasis on funding operating pledges. The congregation has been making capital pledges since 2015 to cover debt service on our long term note and to pay for acquisitions and repairs, and we've built some reserves over the years. We expect to have our long term mortgage paid off by 2026, so there is some room to rebalance our giving and to more fully fund the operating budget.

Unity Church is not in trouble financially. We have a strong financial position thanks to a congregation whose generosity over the years has created that financial strength. It is incumbent upon us to continue to make wise decisions that allow us to live out our mission and values in community with one another and in the world.

## Caring for our Sacred Spaces

**Heidi Birkholz, Facilities Maintenance Coordinator**

The first time I came to Unity Church was to attend services as a congregant. I sat in one of the pews in the Sanctuary and wept. I have often felt there is a "patina of prayers" in that space. Over the course of our longstanding history, the indelible intentions left by our ancestors have nurtured our sacred space.

Our facilities department understands this gift of sacred space, and we prioritize preparing space for our community members to live their values. This is a busy building that houses a wide variety of church programming in addition to many community rentals. While we have a dedicated facilities staff, we find there are times when many hands make the workload light. Here are a few examples of how you can help care for our sacred spaces:

- Help put away tables and chairs when asked (especially at Wellspring Wednesday);
- Take responsibility for your own meeting hospitality — if you are not familiar with the kitchen, reach out to facilities staff and we can give you a tour of best practices;
- If you're serving food at your meeting, have a plan for leftovers;
- Bring all food waste and dishes to the kitchen;
- Wash and put away all your dishes;
- Follow directions from facilities staff about how they would like the room left after your meeting or event has ended.

As a facilities staff, your expressions of gratitude are appreciated. We know the work we do is valued by the community, and we want to be partners with you in the ministry of caring for and maintaining our sacred spaces. If you have questions or would like more information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

# WELCOME NEWCOMERS / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS



## Welcome Words

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

Visiting Unity Church and getting to know us? Been here awhile and yearning for deeper connection? Let me know what questions I can answer about congregational life and the pathways you might explore to know the church better and deepen your life of faith and antiracist multicultural practice. Contact me at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

I look forward to getting to know you!

## Pathway to Membership Classes

The offerings below 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 at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

### Finding Yourself at Unity

**For visitors and inquirers; held Sundays at 10:15 a.m., in the Gannett Room and online via Zoom at [bit.ly/fyuonline](https://bit.ly/fyuonline).** Drop-ins welcome; childcare in the nursery.

Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time. Attend the sessions in any order, which include Unitarian Universalist History; Faith Formation for Children, Youth, and Adults; Congregational and Pastoral Care; Q & A with a Minister; Worship & the Liturgical Year; Social Justice & Community Outreach; Membership 101 & Congregational Life, and a Building Tour. This month's offerings:

- April 2: Community Outreach and Social Justice
- April 9: No class, Easter Sunday
- April 16: UU History
- April 23: Congregational and Pastoral Care
- April 30: Religious Education for Children, Youth and Adults

### Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

**Tuesday, April 11 • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**

- Develop personal practice to help you find and keep your balance.
- Develop the skills of intimacy that let you go deep quickly with strangers.
- Take 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 session, for people ready to become members, explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's need meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church. Let Laura Park know you're interested in participating or to ask questions. She can also arrange a private signing ceremony.

## Fellowship Groups

For more conversation about getting connected, contact Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).

**Afterthoughts** offers time following the 9:00 service to discuss the service.

**Caregivers Group** meets on the third Thursday of the month.

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

**Families Living with Mental Health Challenges** meets the first Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

**Kung Fu** meets Saturday mornings, 9:00-10:00 a.m., online via Zoom. Email [barney.kujawski@gmail.com](mailto:barney.kujawski@gmail.com) to receive the link.

**Living With Grief Group** meets on the third Tuesday of the month.

**Men's Coffee Group** meets every other Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. for light-hearted conversation.

**Men's Conversation Group** meets Monday, April 3 and 17, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Men's Retirement Circle:** Monday, April 10 and 24, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

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

**Recovery from White Conditioning** meets Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

**Textile Arts Group** meets online the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc.

**Unity Book Club** meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. April 11: *The President's Hat* by Antoine Laurain (Led by Walt Gordon). March 14: *Owls of the Eastern Ice* by Jonathan C. Slaght

**Women in Retirement** meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., in the Center Room. Social hour at noon!

**Young Adult Group** (ages 18-35) — all are welcome. Email [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org) for details.

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday gathers a multigenerational church community to nourish right and holy relationship among us and deepen our life of faith, grounded in spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural work. Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. in the Parish Hall, a short chapel service begins at 6:40 p.m. in Ames Chapel, and programs begin at 7:10 p.m. Details at [unityunitarian.org](https://unityunitarian.org)

## April 5

*Hungarian flavors inspired dinner: dilly meat and rice cabbage rolls, cucumber salad, noodles, poppy seed dessert*

### **Our Partner Church in Homorodszentpeter and Ukrainian Relief Efforts**

In-person in Robbins Parlor and online via Zoom: <https://bit.ly/pcukraine>  
Do you know that Unity Church has had a relationship with the Unitarian church in the village of Homorodszentpeter for over 20 years? Approximately 140 Unity pilgrims have traveled to the Unitarian homelands of Székely Land of Romania, and have forged enduring friendships. Come to learn about and share stories from this long standing relationship, find out how Unity Church and village support has been helping with Ukraine relief efforts, and even consider becoming a pilgrim yourself!

### **Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement**

In-person, Body Room  
Join Suzanne Burr for many or as few of the eight weeks (3/22 - 5/10) as your schedule allows. In a non-judgmental environment for organic learning, you will be guided through gentle movement explorations to build self-awareness. Slowing down, using less effort, and exploring small sensory distinctions allows us to learn more about ourselves, grow our capacity to pay attention, cultivate greater capacity for sensing and feeling, notice habits, and value rest. Dress comfortably, and bring a blanket to lie on and a small towel to use to lift your head.

### **Beginner Violin**

In-person, Choir Room  
Join Mayra Mendoza for beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Learn basic violin posture, note reading, and more! Questions? Email Mayra at [mayraquitzia@hotmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@hotmail.com).

## April 12

*Dinner: roasted chicken or vegan alternative, roasted veggies with fresh herbs, spring salad, dessert*

### **The Port Royal Experiment – And Us with Rev. Dr. Wayne Arnason**

In-person, Robbins Parlor

Registration: <https://bit.ly/uuportroyal>

The Port Royal Experiment was a “rehearsal for Reconstruction” in South Carolina during and after the Civil War that involved a fascinating cast of Unitarian characters, including Unity’s early minister William Channing Gannett. This first in a three-lecture series will introduce the experiment and focus on Gannett’s role at Port Royal. Many well-known Unitarians volunteered to go to the South Carolina Sea Islands in the first months of the Civil War to become teachers and managers of the thousands of newly freed black people still living on abandoned cotton plantations. These Unitarians’ stories, and their diverse relationships with the Gullah-Geechee people, provide us with insight into typical ways that white liberals have approached Black communities seeking to offer “help.”

Rev. Arnason is part of a team preparing the 2024 Minns Lectures on the Port Royal story. He is an author of books, essays, and articles on topics in UU history.

This session includes two follow up sessions at 7:00 p.m., on Tuesday, April 18, and 25, in the Foote Room. Registration is required for follow up sessions and a prerequisite to those sessions is either attending April 12 or viewing the recording of the program.

### **Lectio Divina**

Online via Zoom: [bit.ly/Lectio22-23](https://bit.ly/Lectio22-23)

Meet online to share in our ongoing offering of Lectio Divina. Following a centuries-old Benedictine spiritual practice of contemplative reading, a chosen poem is read aloud, as attendees are encouraged to lift up what they heard and how the poem spoke to them. A different poem at each session. A rich way to receive poetry’s gifts in a small group setting. Led by Lisa Wersal or Shelley Butler.

### **Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement with Suzanne Burr**

In-person, Body Room

See April 5 for details.

### **Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza**

In-person, Choir Room

See April 5 for details.

### **Wellspring Wednesday Dinner**

Dinner is prepared and served by our food ministry team, and the menus are posted with the programming for each week. The cost for dinner is \$8/adults, \$4/child (ages 5-12), \$2/child (ages 2-4), and \$20/family.

If you need financial assistance to cover the cost of dinner, please email Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org). If you would like to help prepare or serve a meal, or you plan to join us and need a special food preparation, email [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org).



# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

April 19

Dinner: chicken or chickpea mulligatawny over rice, roasted pepper salad, dessert (options for kids will be available)

## Honor the Treaties and Save the Earth

### Part 6 of the Truth Telling and Healing:

### Environmental and Indigenous Justice Series

In-person in Robbins Parlor and online via Zoom

Registration: [bit.ly/honorandsave](https://bit.ly/honorandsave)



The spiritual and cultural traditions of Ojibwe and Dakota people, rooted in a relationship to Earth and its living beings, is far different than the extractive, dominating relationship inherent in Western spiritual and cultural traditions.

In this session we will be guided by Indigenous wisdom to better understand the Ojibwe and Dakota spiritual relationship to the land, explore how our Western relationship to the land has produced the crisis we now face, and consider how honoring treaties allows space for Tribal Nations to honor — and help save — the earth in accordance with their traditions and knowledge.

## Antiracist Literacy Partners

Online via Zoom: [bit.ly/ucualp23](https://bit.ly/ucualp23)

What does it take to be racially literate, and engaged in antiracism as faith work or as a spiritual practice? This program, offered each quarter, will highlight useful books, podcasts, and videos in our ongoing practice of learning about systemic racism and the work of dismantling it. Participants report that their understanding of a resource increases exponentially when explored with a partner or a group. Come to choose a resource, sign up for a buddy or small group and make plans for your discussions. Resource/discussion guides provided. If you want to sign up but can't attend the meeting, or if you have questions, contact Becky Gonzalez-Campoy at [beckygc83@gmail.com](mailto:beckygc83@gmail.com).

## Board Game Night

In-person, Center Room

Open to everyone; **kids are welcome with their adult(s)!**

We'll have a variety of board games available for ages 10 and up that are easy to learn, or bring a favorite board game that you would like to play.

## Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement with Suzanne Burr

In-person, Body Room

See April 5 for details.

## Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza

In-person, Choir Room

See April 5 for details.

April 26

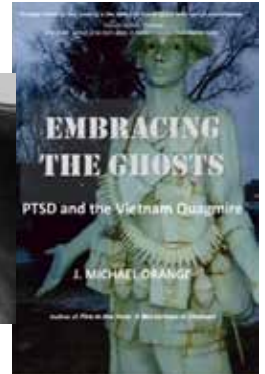
Dinner: TexMex cilantro rice bowls with chicken and roasted veggies, salad, dessert

## Book Reading with Author Michael Orange

### *Embracing the Ghosts: PTSD and the Vietnam Quagmire*

In-person in Parish Hall and online via Zoom:

[bit.ly/OrangeApr26](https://bit.ly/OrangeApr26)



Join congregant Michael Orange as he reads from his book *Embracing the Ghosts: PTSD and the Vietnam Quagmire*. Participants will hear the lessons he gleaned from the PTSD therapy he completed three decades after coming home from combat duty in Vietnam, and have an opportunity to engage in a discussion after the 30 minute presentation. Books will be available to purchase.

Psychotherapist and grief counselor Dianna Diers, a longtime friend of Unity Church, had this to say about his memoir, "Michael Orange presents a deeply-toned mosaic, a 're-remembering,' of exiled parts of the life and memory that brought him to psychotherapy, meditation, political activism, and elderhood. Met with much honesty, humility, courage, and compassion, the ghosts reveal their lessons to Michael and to us. It is not what or even who we are, but how we are with all of ourselves and one another that heals."

## Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement with Suzanne Burr

In-person, Body Room

See April 5 for details.

## Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza

In-person, Choir Room

See April 5 for details.

## Wellspring Wednesday Program Proposal

Is there a program or class you would like to see offered — or that you would like to offer — at an upcoming Wellspring Wednesday?

Submit a proposal: [unityunitarian.org/ww-proposal.html](https://unityunitarian.org/ww-proposal.html).

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Act for the Earth Team

### Earth Day 2023

Kathy Doege, Act for the Earth Community Outreach Ministry Team

I have been pondering Earth Day as small signs of spring approach.

What is Earth Day? I have long associated it with picking up trash and other tasks that practically work to help the environment in which we live. I looked into its origins and purpose and now see with greater clarity the enormity of the day. With resources from National Geographic, [earthday.org](http://earthday.org), and more, I found it described as the day celebrated to honor our earth and create awareness of the need to protect it. An annual celebration that honors the achievements of the environmental movement and raises awareness of the need to protect Earth's natural resources for future generations. I learned that it is widely recognized as the largest secular observance in the world, marked by more than a billion people every year as a day of action to change human behavior and create global, national, and local policy changes. As Margaret Mead said, "Earth Day is the first holy day which transcends all national borders..."

Creating awareness, honoring the earth, celebrating achievements, Holy day, secular observance, what a day filled with hope and action, education and celebration.

For me Earth Day represents an important Unitarian Universalist value. A principle that I am learning and understanding more and more through my work with the Act for the Earth team. This global work and celebration helps us live out our belief in the "interconnected web of all existence of which we are a part." Our individual actions deeply impact the world as a whole.

The earth, and all that is in it, is at the center of this day — but we are the catalysts which drive the day and movement forward. I feel strongly that despite our current environmental crisis, as we observe this day we

should keep hope alive. Leaning into our work to protect the earth as a spiritual practice will help to keep us filled with hope rather than being paralyzed by fear. Trying to connect to the strength and beauty of the planet and its people, remembering that as we go out into the world we will continue to work to respect, uphold, and partner with these beautiful forces.

The Act for the Earth Team is highlighting three opportunities for education, celebration, and practical engagement to Earth Day that are available to you through Unity Church. These are only a few of the ways you can observe this day and celebrate and protect the earth — most every city, school district, county, states, and many nations have abundant opportunities!

### Education

#### Truth Telling and Healing: Honor the Treaties and Save the Earth

Wednesday, April 19 • 7:10 p.m.  
In-person in Robbins Parlor and online via Zoom  
Registration: [bit.ly/honorandsave](http://bit.ly/honorandsave)

The spiritual and cultural traditions of Ojibwe and Dakota people, rooted in a relationship to Earth and its living beings, is far different than the extractive, dominating relationship inherent in Western spiritual and cultural traditions.

In this session we will be guided by Indigenous wisdom to better understand the Ojibwe and Dakota spiritual relationship to the land, explore how our Western relationship to the land has produced the crisis we now face, and consider how honoring treaties allows space for Tribal Nations to honor — and help save — the earth in accordance with their traditions and knowledge.



### Celebration

#### Voices for Climate Song Circle

Sunday, April 16 • 3:00-5:00 p.m.  
In-person, Foote Room

A fun event where *all* are welcome, including kids and families, singers and non-singers. We will sing simple songs to build community, all taught by ear — no need to read music or think of yourself as a "singer" to participate! Come meet others, sing together, and learn about how to take action for climate justice.

### Practical

#### Earth Day Trash Pick Up at Swede Hollow

The Saint Paul Parks and Recreation and Public Works 37th annual Citywide Spring Cleanup

Saturday, April 22 • 9:00-11:30 a.m.  
622 Beaumont Street (by Drewery Tunnel). Walk through the tunnel, sign in with the site host, Friends of Swede Hollow, and then look for the Unity Church Act for the Earth sign.

Join the Act for the Earth team as we clean up a stretch of Swede Hollow Park! Swede Hollow is located along the Phalen Creek corridor, a sacred Dakota waterway between the Mississippi River and what is now White Bear Lake. This is an opportunity to explore and honor this historic part of Saint Paul and work in community to restore the land. All ages welcome! Dress for the weather, wear sturdy shoes, bring garden gloves and a (refillable) water bottle. Garbage bags will be provided.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Gun Sense Team

### You Can Help Stop Gun Violence!

With the Minnesota Legislature in session, the Gun Sense Team is redoubling its efforts at reaching out to our representatives to pass reasonable gun legislation. You can help! Currently, there are three bills moving through the legislature that would increase gun safety and decrease the misuse and violent use of guns in our state:

SF1117/HF15 — Sometimes referred to as the “Red Flag” law, this law gives law enforcement and family members permission to petition a court to prohibit people from temporarily possessing firearms if they pose a significant danger to themselves or others by possessing a firearm.

SF1116/ HF14 — Criminal background checks requirement for all firearms transfers.

SF916/ HF396 — Firearm and ammunition storage requirements establishment; locking device inclusion in each firearm requirement; criminal penalties establishment.

What can *you* do, right now?

1. Find your Senators and Representatives: [gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/districts](https://gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/districts).
2. Call your Senators and Representatives and urge their support. Thank them if they already do!
3. Send your legislators a postcard referencing the above bills, and encourage their support. We will have postage-paid postcards at our table in the Parish Hall on April 2 and April 23 — or send your own!
4. Contact friends and relatives that live outside the metro area and ask them to urge their Senators and Representatives to support these bills.

For more information about Unity's Gun Sense Team, or to join a meeting, email [gun-sense-ministry@googlegroups.com](mailto:gun-sense-ministry@googlegroups.com).

## Affordable Housing Team

### Contribute to Stable Housing

#### 2023 Habitat for Humanity Project

Unity's Affordable Housing Team is co-sponsoring a Habitat for Humanity home construction work week this summer, as we have for many years. We will soon announce a specific week in June to help build a quality affordable home for a Habitat client in St. Paul. If you haven't participated before, we hope you'll give it a try! You can volunteer for one day or multiple days and all skill levels are needed. Questions? Please contact Chuck Griggs at [griggscb@msn.com](mailto:griggscb@msn.com).

#### Project Home

Project Home serves more than 25,000 meals at Provincial House each year, and they can use your help! Every Saturday and Sunday volunteers are needed to assist at meal times at Provincial House, located at 1880 Randolph Avenue in Saint Paul. For complete details and to sign up please visit [tinyurl.com/PHMealTeams](https://tinyurl.com/PHMealTeams). Questions? Contact Janice Gestner at [janicemgg@comcast.net](mailto:janicemgg@comcast.net).

#### Key Collection Success

Thank you to everyone who donated their spare keys during February and March. Together we collected more than 130 keys! Stay tuned to hear more about a clergy press conference where we will deliver to Met Council members the thousands of keys collected from churches all over the metro. We will urge them to develop a policy around their 8,000+ housing vouchers to distribute 30% of them as Project Based Vouchers (which would go to deeply affordable housing projects). This is in line with HUD recommendations.

## Obama School Team

### A Special Year at Obama Elementary (and you helped make it so!)

This is shaping up to be a very special year at Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary School, and so it should be — for it is the last year of the school in its current life. In June, the school will close for a complete renovation, and in two years, another school (currently named JJ Hill Montessori Magnet School) will move into the building and the Obama name will be restored to the newly remodeled building.

So far this year, scholars have been participating in special enrichment programs as an opportunity to engage with things happening in our community. Earlier this year, the younger grades went to a play at the Children's Theater. The older children attended a music performance at Orchestra Hall featuring a historical review of music of the African American tradition. The performance was preceded with a visit to the school by the show's musical host, T. Mychael Rambo, who gave the students a preview of the program. That preview was funded by contributions from church members and friends. This spring, scholars have a field trip to the Minnesota Zoo to look forward to, as well as a riverboat cruise. Great memories for the children, who will be attending other schools next year!

On Thursday, June 1, everyone is invited to celebrate the school's hundredth year. The community, alumni, and people from Unity Church are all invited to the carnival from 4:30–7:30 p.m. The event will include tours, bouncy houses and food trucks, an arcade of vintage video games, a cake walk, music, and more! Join the celebration of the school's hundred years of educating the children and youth of Saint Paul!



## Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries

Working to integrate music with worship at Unity Church has been quite intellectually stimulating

and interesting, to say the least. It is a liturgy that feels alive, flexible and capable of transformation. Music plays a fundamental role here and, in fact, many in our congregation consider music as their main spiritual practice. But what role does music exactly play in a religious service? A Sunday morning at Unity is not meant to be a concert or a recital; the music serves a spiritual function that works together with words and ritual to enable the act of worship. Music that doesn't serve a function in the service, or that doesn't serve its function well, tends to feel alien and disjointed, it can disconnect people from their experience: "alright folks, let us now pause what we're doing and for some reason listen to Ahmed play some classical music."

As we move through interim times and our worship service changes, I run up against many personal opinions (mine and the ministers' included) about the music in the service and how we interact with it. This is normal; music is highly subjective. Changing a person's musical preferences and opinions can be similar to trying to convince them that chocolate is better than vanilla, or that you should eat pizza with a knife and fork and not with your hands. Like food, music is so personal and influenced by so many factors that it is nearly impossible to please everyone or maintain some sort of objectivity without compromising the very things that make music and all art worthwhile. Fortunately, music tends to perform the same basic functions in religious ritual across cultures and time periods; Bach cantatas, Tibetan singing bowls, didgeridoos, Christian rock praise

bands, symphonic Mass settings... they all integrate with our experience of the holy in similar ways.

When I am considering music for a service I always ask, "What function does this music serve in worship?" If I don't have a good answer to that question, it's usually a better idea to cut that piece of music from the service entirely. Over time, I've categorized how music interacts with religious services into seven distinct roles:

- 1. Transitions, movement, and logistics.** This sort of music is about managing rhythm, timing, and attention: giving people a way to focus their attention while a minister moves from one side of the chancel to the other, filling the Sanctuary with soft background music that allows people to have one-on-one conversations without feeling self-conscious about disturbing a silent room, music that people can listen to while they line up to receive communion or while offering baskets are being passed around, music that plays while a wedding party processes down an aisle.
- 2. Communal connection.** This is music that enables people in the room to say "here I am" and "there you are" and "here we are" and "let's do this together." Congregational singing fits this category. Singing to greet each other or to greet the children, or to say goodbye. Perhaps ringing the bell to announce the beginning of worship or singing a chant to enter into prayer.
- 3. Commemoration** – This is music where we remember and exercise our collective memory of events, traditions, people, and culture. It is Christmas, so we sing Christmas carols. It is Easter, so we sing "Christ Is Risen Today" (and grumble about it over coffee afterward as good Unitarians). We commemorate Yom Kippur with "Kol Nidrei." We commemorate Merging of Waters with "Blue Boat Home." We sing a departed friend's favorite song at their memorial service to remember them and commemorate their passing.
- 4. Narrating and presenting a story.** This is music that helps bring a story to life; the "movie soundtrack" so to speak. It is one thing to talk about Jonah and the whale, it is another thing entirely to hear the story while also hearing the roar of the storm and Jonah's boat being rocked violently by the ocean.
- 5. Framing a story emotionally and creating the right space and atmosphere.** I'll often ask worship associates or ministers, "How do you want people to feel at this point in the service?" Music can help create an atmosphere that is meditative, creepy, or upbeat. This one is especially jarring when things go wrong; I have a vivid memory of playing a hilarious version of Monty Python's "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life" (whistling included) as the offertory of a service which was immediately followed by a worship associate solemnly speaking about her experience visiting the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site. Music can prepare a room to be more receptive to a certain experience or allow people the space to process a message. The moment of silence right after the prayer serves this function every Sunday.
- 6. Musical sermonizing.** These are instances when the music itself is the sermon. Where the lyrics of a song or the music itself are meant to convey a spiritual message rather than support a sermon.  
{continued on page 13 ⇨}

# OFFERING RECIPIENTS

## Music Notes

{continued from page 12}

Sometimes the music director has something to say about the day's theme, and there might be a piece of music that expresses it perfectly.

**7. Facilitating internal transformation through emotional connection and dramatic catharsis.** These are the moments that stay with you, the ones where you remember how the music made you feel. I think we can all point to an instance where something musical happened that made us feel pity or grief, that cracked something open, that comforted or uplifted. I try to find a moment or two in every worship service where the music might do this. This is, however, an elusive thing that can't be forced... just like a service wouldn't work if it were just a 75 minute sermon, and just like you can't have a satisfying meal where every course is wedding cake, it also doesn't work to have an entire worship service where every single moment of the music is meant to be profound, transformative, and cathartic.

You may have strong opinions on whether we applaud or don't applaud after the choir sings something particularly striking, or on whether people should stay seated or not while a postlude is being played... or whether a choir or a postlude should even be part of worship at all! Wouldn't it be great if we "danced more" in church, or if we had drums or organ more often? There are so many things to consider as our worship service evolves, and it's impossible to make everyone happy, but I hope that this gives everyone some insight into my music planning for each Sunday.

## Offering Recipients

Each week, seventy percent of our Sunday offering is given to a community non-profit and thirty percent supports the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church. Donations are gratefully accepted online at [bit.ly/sundayoffering](https://bit.ly/sundayoffering).

### April 2: Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota

Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM) aims to enhance opportunities for immigrants and refugees by providing statewide legal services to low-income clients regardless of nationality or legal status. Its three-pronged model — direct legal services, education, and advocacy — allows ILCM to comprehensively respond to and prevent immigration legal problems. ILCM is a local leader in the drive to promote compassionate and fair immigration reform. This collection will help ILCM clients secure legal status and overcome barriers to obtaining work authorization and citizenship. <https://www.ilcm.org/>

### April 9: Mano a Mano International Partners

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. Scores of Unity Church members and friends volunteer with Mano a Mano. <https://manoamano.org/>

### April 16: Ukrainian Relief Efforts

The offering on April 16 will support the Ukrainian relief efforts led by Unity's Partner Church in Homorodscentpeter, Romania. To learn more about our Partner Church and their work to help Ukrainians displaced by war, please attend their Wellspring Wednesday program on April 5. Details are on page 8.

### April 23: Act for the Earth Community Outreach Ministry Team

The mission of the Act for the Earth (AFE) Community Outreach Ministry Team is to engage the Unity Church community in action to stop climate change, species extinction, and environmental injustice by practical and systemic solutions, while grounding this work in our own spiritual and antiracist/justice stance. This collection will be used to maintain the green space and pollinator garden east of church and to support AFE's advocating for climate justice during the 2023 legislative session.

### April 30: Freedom School

Freedom School, held each summer in the Rondo education complex, is a free, six-week program for students in grades K-8. Freedom School provides nutritious meals, addresses pandemic learning loss in reading and math, and connects learning through lessons in community and personal responsibility, music, field trips, and fun. This collection will buy materials for the summer 2023 program. <https://www.spps.org/freedomschools>

To nominate an organization to receive the Sunday offering, visit [unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html](https://unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html) and complete the online nomination form.



## Pitter-Pattering Questions

[...like raindrops on the window, and little feet running through the house]

**Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation**

“All organizing is science fiction,” writes adrienne maree brown.

“We are bending the future, together, into something we have never experienced.” And so too the church, as an ancient and lasting form of organizing, is science fiction. Ecclesiology has always been an act of imaginative operation, of the genre many of our young readers know as speculative fiction. From *Dune* and *Brave New World* to *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *The Ministry for the Future*, a genre that questions normative assumptions about reality and challenges the materialist complacency that nothing exists beyond the phenomenal world. (Even science posits that all known forms of matter and energy make up roughly four percent of the universe, leaving the nature and properties of the remaining 96 percent to anybody’s guess.) Speculative fiction summons us into stories that depart from the “consensus reality” and imagines a different version beyond the empirical-material version, in pursuit of recovering awe and wonder and transcendence not yet revealed and enacted within history.

For we may have sacrificed more than we know of transcendence at the altar of modernity. As moderns, we tend to think of transcendence as synonymous with otherworldliness or the supernatural, and hence delusional. As moderns, we are familiar with the stab of skepticism at such naïve and sentimental notions of transcendence that reach outside or beyond the known world. Modernity has a strong bias against such transcendence that would contort our sense of plausibility, of referencing

realities outside the bounds of tested methods and tools for discovering and explaining all phenomena, natural and social. And so in our *immanent frame*, as termed by philosopher Charles Taylor, we can appreciate the media controversies around “thoughts and prayers” as efforts to make palatable a divine and transcendent source that no one actually believes will stop tragedies (only actions will, say the hard-nosed realists) but still a sentiment that provides comfort. “Thoughts” that signals a functional equivalence with “prayers,” and more respectful and inclusive of those who value thoughts, if not prayers, in our modern immanent frame. In the end, prayers sacrificed to thoughts.

But what if thoughts and prayers constitute a false equivalence, with the latter expressly daring transcendence in the manner of speculative fiction? What if transcendence has little to do with the otherworldly but with what resides in the depths and substratum of immanence we have yet to touch? Not an otherworldly transcendence but an immanent transcendence stirring, impending, and acting more deeply within our history than we have dared to imagine? What if *Source of Life* or *God or Buddha* or *Transcendent* by any other name is more than an echo of our own voice? If the modern liberal church is to claim transcendence from being sacrificed to the reductionisms of the immanent frame, how will we cultivate practices of ongoing revelation that animate and expand our being? That relations which bring life to the church are relations of revelation that can expand our social imaginary into a transcendent frame beyond the frameworks now worn and exhausted.

In his *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note*, the poet Imamu Amiri Baraka writes of such exhaustion, an absurdity and meaninglessness in a world bereft of transcendence. Even in gazing up to count the stars, it feels as if everything has come to naught. Nobody sings anymore:

*And then last night I tiptoed up  
To my daughter's room and heard her  
Talking to someone, and when I opened  
The door, there was no one there...  
Only she on her knees, peeking into  
Her own clasped hands*

Our children are creatures of transcendence, and we are summoned to be there, kneeling with them, peeking into clasped hands together. And what she finds within will make all the difference.

*Sharing questions that pitter-patter  
across our sacred journeys...*



## Coming of Age 2023

The entire congregation is warmly invited to witness the Coming of Age of this year’s ninth grade class on Saturday, April 22, 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.

# LIBRARY-BOOKSTALL / ART TEAM



## April Is the Literary-est Month: Café Unity, Michael Orange, National Poetry Month!

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

Even though April is National Poetry Month, I intentionally ignore T.S. Eliot each year at this time (though once you have heard his dry and deadpan reading of "The Waste Land," it is hard to get it out of your head, "April is the cruuuuelst month"). This April is anything but dry!

Here's how you can celebrate a beautifully literary month:

**Wellspring Wednesday, April 26: Michael Orange Reading from *Embracing the Ghosts: PTSD and the Vietnam Quagmire* — see Wellspring description on page 9.**

**The 15th Annual Café Unity Friday, April 28, 7:00 p.m. In-person at Unity Church and on Zoom, register here: [bit.ly/CafeUApr28](https://bit.ly/CafeUApr28)**

If you don't know it or have never been, the Library-Bookstall's annual coffeehouse features music of all kinds and original writing by the congregation. Something special happens when we gather to listen to each other — the stories and song become a collaboration between presenter and audience.

**Writers and musicians: sign up now to share your gifts and talents at Cafe Unity.** Space is limited, so contact us soon: [library@unityunitarian.org](mailto:library@unityunitarian.org).

**National Poetry Month in the Bookstall and Library *Living Nations, Living Words:***

***An Anthology of First Peoples Poetry***

This is perhaps the most significant poetry anthology of the last fifty years and is the corresponding anthology from Joy Harjo's signature project as Poet Laureate of the United States, 2019-2022. Published by the Library of Congress. In the Anderson Library (811 L) and the Bookstall.

Find much more poetry in the Anderson Library, view the catalog online at [librarycat.org/lib/UnityChurch](https://librarycat.org/lib/UnityChurch).

## In The Justice Database

[bit.ly/JusticeData](https://bit.ly/JusticeData)

**Living Nations, Living Words: A Map of First Peoples Poetry, created by Joy Harjo.**

An important online resource, click on the map to find Native Nations poets around the country with links to their work.



## April Parish Hall Artist

Angie Malin

[angiemalin.com](https://angiemalin.com)

I was born in Minnesota and currently live in Stillwater. Growing up my dream was to become an artist. As a kid I was quiet and art



gave me a way to be bolder in expressing myself. My early college studies focused on Fine Art but after a year I set this dream aside to pursue graphic art and eventually settled on a career in nursing. Working with people in this capacity was so rewarding and taught me what is important in life. Learning the value of each good day we are given led me back to my love of art and thirteen years ago I returned to my art study and began taking studio classes and workshops.

My preferred method is plein air painting, alla prima, which is painting from life in the open air, wet on wet. To start, large shapes are put down thinly followed by smaller shapes of color and light to guide the viewer through the painting. These small "on the spot paintings" usually have room for technical improvement but they are much more expressive and authentic to the place and time they were completed.

Painting outdoors provides the stage to express and share the peace I find in nature. There are subtle changes from day to day each season that can be so easily missed as we rush through busy days. Painting slows me down to appreciate and enjoy the beauty in each day. In sharing my work, I hope to bring a little bit of peace to the viewers day and evoke happy memories from their life.

Meet the artist on Sunday, April 2, after services.

## Seeking High Quality Artwork!

Unity Church celebrates diversity of all kinds — diversity in our culture as well as diversity of individual creativity.

Join the growing number of local artists who have successfully displayed their art in our Parish Hall. Get your application in today for a chance to exhibit starting this November.



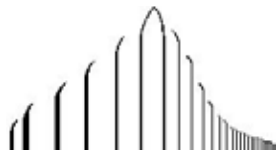
*Great exposure — hundreds of viewers!*

*Great sales potential — low commission!*

Application deadline: May 1

Application: [unityunitarian.org/artist-apply](https://unityunitarian.org/artist-apply)

Questions: [artteam@unityunitarian.org](mailto:artteam@unityunitarian.org)



# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
Business Entrance: 732 Holly Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-228-1456 • fax: 651-228-0927 • [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) • [unity@unityunitarian.org](mailto:unity@unityunitarian.org)

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## 2023 Chalice Camp at Unity Church

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

*We are!*

**Week 1: July 10-14**

**Week 2: July 17-21**

Chalice Camp is offered Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., for children and youth ages 5-18 (youth in grades 7-12 serve as junior counselors and counselors). Early bird registration discount ends May 1 so register today!

**Register online at:**  
[unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp.html](http://unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp.html)

The Library-Bookstall Team Invites You to the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual

## Cafe Unity

**Friday, April 28, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.**

**At Unity in the Parish Hall**

**& online via Zoom, register here: <https://bit.ly/CafeUApr28>**

Music! Original Writing! Food! Refreshments! Fellowship! FREE!

## April Food Shelf Donations

In February Unity Church members and friends donated 215 pounds of much needed food to Hallie Q. Brown food shelf. During the month of April, in addition to shelf stable food items, the food shelf is asking for donations of garbage bags, dish soap (24 or 32 oz. or less), dish pods, laundry soap (32 oz. or less), laundry pods and bleach (32 oz. or less).

If you would like to donate money for perishable food items you can visit [hallieqbrown.org](http://hallieqbrown.org).

