

## Calling

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

What is your calling in life? And what does it mean to be “called” to one thing and not another? It’s no coincidence that the theme for the month of April is calling as Unity Church embarks upon the process of calling their next senior minister. Yet the language of calling is not one that is familiar to many outside the religious and spiritual setting. In the secular world, you interview an applicant and you either hire them or you don’t. Employers generally don’t ask “why are you called to this job at this time?” Answering the call to ministry in general, and to a church in particular, is more often associated with religious institutions.

Likely, the roots of this in Western culture go back to several biblical stories. Young Samuel kept hearing God’s voice, thinking it was his mentor Eli calling him out of a deep sleep. Finally, Eli realizes that Samuel is being called by the divine and tells him to say, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” (1 Samuel 3). After an earthquake and fire and wind, the prophet Elijah hears God’s voice in the form of a still, small voice. (1 Kings 19: 12-12). And of course, we can’t forget Moses, hearing the voice of Yahweh who tells him he should do exactly what he doesn’t want to do — go back to Egypt and set the Hebrew people free. So for those who have a relationship with God, there are texts to support the idea of being “divinely called.”

In our faith tradition, we interpret the word calling to be a strong inner impulse towards a particular course of action. It is a pull toward something that you may not be sure you are qualified to do, but need to explore

anyway. Usually, it is an insistent conviction that doesn’t easily go away. With discernment and engaging in one’s own spiritual reflection and practice, the calling becomes clearer. What emerges is the sense “this is what I was meant to be and to do with my life.” Listening to that voice inside can also help discern what it is you’re *not* supposed to do. It is a practice of discernment; of listening deeply to what is stirring and moving inside of you — and then asking a trusted mentor, minister, spiritual advisor to help you discern what is or isn’t right for you. Are you called to be a parent? A teacher? A woodworker? An artist? A calling doesn’t always have to mean your full-time vocation. Building on last month’s theme of creativity, you may explore a calling to be creative, to expand your horizons, to deepen in your spiritual practice, to be more present for loved ones who need you. Part of being called is an awareness that the world’s needs are tugging at your sleeve.

Presbyterian minister and writer Frederic Buechner has written extensively about calling, “the kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work that you need most to do and that the world most needs to have done. The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and world’s deep hunger meet.”

This is why we often consider ministry a calling instead of a job. Yes, there are office hours and meetings, budgets and vacation days. Yes, there’s health insurance and retirement funds to support. But there’s also the phone call that comes and you need to respond with your whole heart and presence. And there’s the grieving for a beloved

church member that must be done in private, in order to be able to show up for others. There’s the countless conversations and ministry done that the minister shouldn’t get credit for, because it’s the people’s work after all. To be called to a ministry and to a congregation is not an office job and it’s not a marriage. It’s a vocational choice — to love, to serve and help a congregation live into its own values, mission and ends. It’s never all about the minister. It’s about the congregation’s own sense of calling to who they are and who they wish to become. When a congregation experiences their own sense of calling, they live out Buechner’s wisdom. They discover the place where their deepest gladness and worlds deepest hunger meet.” And may the church say “Amen.”

*Rev. Kathleen Rolenz  
on behalf of this month’s theme team:  
Rev. Lara Cowtan, Rev. KP Hong,  
Rev. Tom Duke, Nelson Mourokian,  
Rev. Andrea LaSonde Anastos*



### Theme Resources

For further reflection on the theme, see this month’s spiritual practice packet, available online at [unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html](http://unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html).

# IN THE MEANTIME



## Reflections on Interim Ministry

Rev. Kathleen C. Rolenz

By the time you receive this newsletter, it's likely that the Ministerial Search Team (MST) will have announced their candidate for the position of your next senior settled minister. There are already a lot of big feelings out there! Some of you have expressed confidence and serenity, feeling good about what you've heard from the MST. Others of you have been

quietly anxious, and in your anxiety may not have heard some of the information relayed about the search process. Still others may have a picture in your mind of who you want (or don't want) in this role, or opinions about what the MST should be doing. What is underneath *all* of these feelings is perhaps the most important one of all — you love this church and what it means to you — for your family — for your friendships — for your own spiritual development. It's not that you don't want it to change (because it has changed during your time here), but you don't want it to change in a direction that would make it unrecognizable — or uncomfortable for you to be here.

So what's a church member to do with these feelings? Your ministerial search team, executive and ministry teams are keenly aware of all the complex feelings that may be swirling around right now. Excitement. Anticipation. Doubt. Fear. Grief. Ambivalence. Guilt. Hopeful. Open... and more and none of the above! One thing you can do is talk about them with me, with Rev. Lara, with Rev. KP. You can also ask questions of the MST. And while you're sending them your questions, do also share with them your appreciation and gratitude. Unlike hiring a minister, which is done by the board of trustees or the executive team, calling a minister requires a significant commitment of time and energy from a team of church members.

The second thing you should do with all the feelings is to stay up-to-date on the communications coming from the church. The MST, board and executive team have all been working together to communicate clearly with you about the process of calling your next minister — and — your role in that process. This call process was developed over the years to ensure fairness and equity among candidates and congregations. Read your newsletter. Visit the website and the bulletin board located between Parish Hall and the kitchen. Stop by the MST table in Parish Hall after worship services to ask questions and share a word of gratitude.

And finally, dig deeper into your spiritual practices. Notice when your anxiety begins to rise. Take a minute — or five. Breathe. Pray. Sit in meditation. Practice the art of patience. Sing. Play music. Make art. Go for a walk or a run. Invite a church member for coffee or tea. Read more poetry or scripture. Ask clarifying questions. Be curious. Check your assumptions. Verify secondhand information. Breathe some more. Open your heart. Know that the church has witnessed so much change over the course of its 152 year lifetime. This is not the first — nor the last.

Believing in you,  
Rev. Kathleen

## Support Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf

We are on our way to reaching our goal of 4000 pounds for 2024! For the first two months of the year, we have donated 566 pounds of food. Yippee!! Our contributions are needed now more than ever. In April, the food shelf needs garbage bags, dish soap (24 oz or less), dish pods, laundry soap and bleach (32 oz or less), laundry pods, and non-perishable food.



## The Wheel of Life

*In Celebration*

**Doug and Phyl Ostergren**

celebrated their  
70th wedding anniversary  
March 20, 2024

## Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday worship service, please contact Suki Sun at [sunflowerselflove@gmail.com](mailto:sunflowerselflove@gmail.com).

## In The Justice Database

We Choose Us: A Movement for Multiracial Democracy in Minnesota is an organization that works for meaningful change that brings more people into the democratic process and reduces barriers to participation by working to expand voter rights, and more. Recommended by Dane Smith. [bit.ly/JusticeData](http://bit.ly/JusticeData)



# SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

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## Sunday Worship Services

Sunday services are held at 9:00 and 11:15 a.m., except where noted. The 9:00 a.m. service is also offered via livestream. Religious Education programs for children and youth are held Sundays during our service times.

### April 7: The Music of the Spirit

**Rev. Justin Schroeder**

Livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=AL8Wb9Py5Ow](https://youtube.com/watch?v=AL8Wb9Py5Ow)

*There is a voice within you which no-one, not even you, has ever heard. Give yourself the opportunity of silence and begin to develop your listening in order to hear, deep within yourself, the music of your own spirit.*

— John O'Donohue, *Anam Cara*

In a world full of distractions, screens, video bingeing, and climate unraveling, paying deep attention to our inner lives — and the wisdom and music that is there — is critical.

Tuning in and encountering the deepest parts of ourselves can help us unearth the hidden treasures, insights, and clues within that can lead to more aliveness, joy, and abundance. This Sunday, we'll explore concrete practices that can help us tune into the "song that is our life."

After two decades in Unitarian Universalist ministry, Rev. Justin Schroeder and his wife, Juliana Keen, launched Holding Space for Change, a practice that accompanies and supports people through life transitions. They provide spiritual direction/accompaniment, therapy, grief support groups, divorce support groups, life-transition support groups, and more. Between the two of them, they have over four decades of experience in spiritual leadership and social work.

### April 14 and 21: Candidating Week

April 14 livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=VtaryP1g4gc](https://youtube.com/watch?v=VtaryP1g4gc)

April 21 livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=jsqpnNxflq4](https://youtube.com/watch?v=jsqpnNxflq4)

These two Sundays are reserved for Unity's candidate for settled senior minister. Unity Church will publish titles and descriptions when they are available.

### April 28: Coming of Age Sunday

**Rev. KP Hong | Drew Danielson**

Livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=aXXibLY3HQw](https://youtube.com/watch?v=aXXibLY3HQw)

Coming of Age Sunday celebrates the signature year-long journey of our ninth 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 11:15 a.m. service, while both services will include a collage of voices, with religious education staff and ministers leading in joyful celebration.

Mark your calendar!

Arthur Foote Music Sunday is May 7!

## Offering Recipients

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

### April 7: Unity Church Act for the Earth Community Outreach Ministry Team

The mission of Unity's Act for the Earth team is to engage the Unity Church-Unitarian community to act to stop climate change, species extinction, and environmental injustice by practical and systemic solutions while grounding this work in Unity's spiritual and antiracist/justice stances. This collection will underwrite the purchase of various materials needed to implement Act for the Earth's ongoing educational and lobbying programming through the remainder of 2024. [unityunitarian.org/act-for-the-earth.html](https://unityunitarian.org/act-for-the-earth.html)

### April 14: St. Paul YWCA Stride Program

YWCA'S Stride Program supports young women of color who are transitioning from foster care by helping them secure stable housing and navigate the complexities of mentor relationships along with financial and educational resources needed to realize their dreams of self-sufficiency. This collection will purchase cleaning supplies, toiletries and other basic necessities of participants moving into their own housing. Unity Church members Mary Morris, Nan McGrane and Andrea Bond have supported participants in the Stride Program. [ywcastpaul.org/youth](https://ywcastpaul.org/youth)

### April 21: BLUU

Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) is committed to expanding the power and justice-making capacity of Black UUs within Unitarian Universalism by providing support, information, and a variety of resources tailored to the needs of Black Unitarian Universalists. In 2019 BLUU acquired eight vacant lots in North Minneapolis with the goal of transforming those lots into actually affordable, multi-family units. This collection will be used to support this BLUU Housing Cooperative Initiative in North Minneapolis, a first-in-the-nation development for housing justice. Unity Church member Karen Abraham is a BLUU advocate. [blacklivesuu.org/](https://blacklivesuu.org/)

### April 28: Unity Church Chalice Camp

Chalice Camp provides a unique summer opportunity for children and youth (ages 5 through 12th grade) to deepen their connections to Unity Church, Unitarian Universalism, and the wider church community (as both campers and counselors). This summer's camp will include worship, small and large group activities, and time for outdoor fun and play. Today's collection will support scholarship opportunities for Unity Church families. [unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp.html](https://unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp.html)

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES



## In the Spirit of Covenant

**Kevin Ely, Trustee**

This last May, the board offered a charge to the congregation as we entered our search for a new senior minister. Part of the charge was that congregants would be informed participants in the search process, while respecting the covenantal nature of it, and knowing that the Ministerial Search Team (MST) cannot share everything with the congregation. Together with the

MST, the board continues to work to keep you informed about the search process, while also helping you through the discernment process. Searching for our next senior minister, there are a number of questions that are undoubtedly arising for many of you. The board would like to reassure you about a few things.

There will be some changes as we move forward. From 2000 to 2021, Unity had senior co-ministers. However, Unity Church has always had ministry teams. Currently and in the next chapter of Unity's life, the ministry team will consist of a new senior minister, Minister of Faith Formation Rev. KP Hong, and Minister of Congregational Care Rev. Lara Cowtan. The executive team will be composed of our new senior minister, Rev. KP Hong, and Executive Director Laura Park. Interim Senior Minister Rev. Kathleen Rolenz's last Sunday with us will be June 23 and we'll celebrate the conclusion of this interim time on that Sunday. The board will soon be sharing detailed information about the congregational meeting on April 21 to call a senior minister. What does it mean to "call" a minister? (See cover article of this newsletter.) A called minister is one whose ministry is affirmed by a congregational vote. According to our bylaws, the selection of a called minister requires consent of 85 percent of the voting members of the congregation in attendance at the meeting. So the decision to call a senior minister is a very significant decision made by the church as a community

The meeting will be organized to promote timely discussion and a timely finish. There will be options for online and absentee voting, per our bylaws. At the end of this article is the congregational covenant for your review. We anticipate that the spirit of this covenant will inform our participation in the congregational meeting to call our next settled minister.

Candidating week provides the Unity Church community the opportunity to learn about the candidate and share stories as part of the process of coming together to vote on a senior minister. Informed participation is part of what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. As always, if you have questions, feel free to reach out to the board ([unityunitarian.org/board-of-trustees.html](http://unityunitarian.org/board-of-trustees.html)) or MST ([unityunitarian.org/ministerial-transition.html](http://unityunitarian.org/ministerial-transition.html)). We are here to help you find the information and resources you need at this time. For now, please consider the Unity Church Board of Trustees Charge to the Congregation:

- As a congregant, I will be an informed participant in the search process.
- I will respect the covenantal nature of this process.
- I will respect the work and honor the service of the Ministerial Search Team, knowing that they cannot share everything with the congregation.
- I will offer thoughtful discernment about the current and future needs of the congregation.
- I will engage in best practices of transformative conflict but not engage in divisive behavior that causes harm.
- I will be mindful in my use of email and social media communications with respect to matters concerning the search and the search process.
- I will be present during candidating week, will learn about the candidate, make my decision carefully, and vote responsibly.

## Candidating Week

**April 14-21, 2024**

*Please watch carefully for additional events and information in the coming weeks.*

### Meet with the Ministerial Search Team

Wednesday, April 3 | 7:10 p.m.  
Parish Hall and online via Zoom:  
[bit.ly/aprilmst](http://bit.ly/aprilmst)  
A Q & A session with our Ministerial Search Team

### Preparation for Candidating Week

Wednesday, April 10 | 7:10 p.m.  
Parish Hall and online via Zoom:  
[bit.ly/candidateprep](http://bit.ly/candidateprep)  
Join representatives from Unity's executive team, board, and ministerial search team for specific information about what to expect during candidating week, suggestions for the best ways to engage, and an overview of the April 21 congregational meeting and vote.

### Candidating Week

**Sunday, April 14-21**

Candidating week is the opportunity for the congregation to meet the ministerial candidate. Watch for a complete listing of ways for the congregation to engage with our candidate.

### Candidate Leads Sunday Worship

April 14 | 9:00 and 11:15 a.m.

### Meet the Candidate

Wednesday, April 17 | 7:10 p.m.  
Sanctuary and online via Zoom:  
[bit.ly/candidatemeets](http://bit.ly/candidatemeets)  
Engage with the candidate! This session will focus on the areas of policy, governance, and leadership.

### Candidate Leads Sunday Worship

April 21 | 9:00 and 11:15 a.m.

### Congregational Meeting

Sunday, April 21 | 1:30 p.m.  
Sanctuary | Zoom (watch for link)  
To affirm the call of the candidate for senior minister.

# MINISTERIAL SEARCH TEAM

## Reflections on Calling

### Jennie Smith on behalf of Unity's Ministerial Search Team

As Unitarian Universalists, we can find ourselves defining our beliefs by what we don't believe rather than what we do. A list of what we don't believe or do is easy for me to rattle off, but expressing our collective identity and values takes more thought. Personally, I'm drawn to our shared principles of justice, equity, the inherent worth of every person, creativity, and boundless compassion. It's our congregation's shared convictions that inspire me.

Similarly, defining "call" can lead to the same challenge of defining it by what it is not rather than what it is. Through conversations at cottage meetings and in Parish Hall and through many stories, we've encountered various interpretations, as different as who we are individually.

For some, it's about endorsing a decision that seems already made, while for others, it's a leap of faith toward a shared vision. One congregant even likened it to an HR process while simultaneously not being like an HR process at all. How do we navigate these diverse perspectives?

It's through this diversity that we deepen our understanding and strengthen our bonds. We encourage each of you to actively participate in discussions and share your own experiences and insights regarding the meaning of calling a senior minister, and to listen to each other. Your perspectives are valuable contributions to our collective journey.

We continue as we have for the past year: listen, ask questions, share stories, and listen again. In this article, members of the search team offer our insights. We encourage you to ponder what calling a senior minister means to you and engage in dialogue with fellow congregants.

**Angela:** The process of bringing a new minister to Unity is designed and carried out with deep intention. The call is the culmination of that work — all of the conversations and stories, the

goodbyes and losses, the dreams and moments of connection and holiness. Candidating week is a time to do what we practice as UUs — draw the circle wide. The call is a process of discerning whether we will shift the circle in order to create space for our new minister, in the hopes that they will join us in our longing and our work, with deep love for this broken, beautiful world.

**Kat:** To me, the formal process of calling a minister resonates with the other senses of "call": that we are crying out, seeking to recognize and be recognized in turn. Underneath the meetings and the ballots, what we are doing is saying we have heard each others' voices, met each other where we are, and found harmony. That going forward, we want to belong together.

**Jennie:** To me calling a minister is a spiritual saying "yes" to possibilities for our future, formalized by the process of our bylaws. Through a call, I reflect on what I know about myself and our congregation and invite someone to dream and achieve with us. In saying yes to a senior minister, and that person saying yes to us, we are inviting space with each other to dream, learn, teach, guide, to be imperfect and to be *amazing* together.

**Ray:** The MST works for a year to identify a person who has the capacity to lead us... a person we can "call." For us as a congregation, to call a minister, is for us to agree to be in relationship with a person who will lead us... not to answer all our questions but rather to help us find the answers ourselves. I think of it as a call to covenant... a call for us to pilgrimage together.

**Rich:** This whole process of "calling" a minister is at least as much, if not more, about self-examination and deep reflection as an individual and as a congregation as it is about looking at the resumes and qualifications of potential candidates. It seems like only with some serious hard work looking at ourselves, can we begin to say, "this is who we are,



this is what we want, and these are the qualities we are looking for to guide us, learn with us, and grow with us." I think to call a minister is to tell the world who Unity Church is and then discerning if the person answering that call truly fits what we as a whole congregation have said we want and need.

**Rebecca:** When I think of calling on a personal level, it feels like being nudged, challenged or beckoned. As I contemplate calling a new minister, it feels more like a personal and congregational "imagining"... imagining our future together, taking that leap of faith, knowing that deep down, we are leaping into the good and grace of a new way of congregational being, together.

**Tara:** We've been through so much. We have so many hopes and dreams. A new senior minister is a new chapter for Unity, a leap of faith into what we can become, working towards our Ends collectively, welcoming this new minister with open arms.

- What *is* call and calling?
- What is it to you, the congregation, and a candidate?
- What does call mean as a process?
- What does call and calling mean as a spiritual practice and to me as a spiritual person?
- What stories are important to share with a ministerial candidate? What stories do I want them to share with us?

Please take time in the coming weeks to reflect on these questions. As candidating week approaches, we look forward to sharing in the spiritual practices of calling and covenant, together. If you have questions about the search, please contact us by email at [mst@unityunitarian.org](mailto:mst@unityunitarian.org), or visit us in Parish Hall on Sundays.

## Lead Me to Practice Discomfort

Marjorie Otto, Beloved Community Communications Team

I think it's safe to make the generalization that for many of us who find ourselves in a liberal theological community, one of the most difficult tasks asked of us is to develop a spiritual practice. And don't even get me started on my (and probably others') struggle with developing a prayer practice; that's for another newsletter. Thankfully, we find ourselves here at Unity Church with a plethora of circles, sources, events, and publications to support that task. But even with all those resources, the learning never stops, so I joined the late-February follow-up to the fall 2023 series *Spiritual Practice: Discovery and Transformation*, with Rev. KP Hong to continue my dive into spiritual practice.

If you are contemplating these questions, you are not alone:

What's the point of a spiritual practice?

How should it look?

How do I use my practice to support my social justice and antiracism work?

It can be overwhelming to know what a practice can look like that fulfills *within*, *among*, and *beyond* needs.

During the February event, KP reminded us of the core definition of spiritual practice: it's how we connect to the whole, the holy, that which is greater than the self and greater than the ego. He also reminded us of the unbreakable bond between spiritual practice and antiracist practice. We cannot think to dismantle racism without the transformation a spiritual practice provides to us to connect to that which is greater. This intertwining is seen in the Double Helix Model ([bit.ly/unitydoublehelix](https://bit.ly/unitydoublehelix)) in which spirituality and antiracist work at the *within*, *among*, and *beyond* levels to break down white supremacy.

We were asked to consider these questions as we shared what our

practice looks like:

Is there a root spiritual practice for you?

Why is it important/ formational/ meaningful?

How does this practice connect to the whole, the holy, that which is greater?

Of all my spiritual uncertainties, I've always known that nature has been, and always will be, my connection to that which is greater because it is the realm in which I've experienced the most awe: the pulsating of an aurora borealis, waves lapping against rocks, and a Cooper's Hawk raising its young in our backyard silver maple. A spiritual practice for me is anything that brings me outside.

We were then asked to name our antiracism practice and to look at how it and our spiritual practice come together to support each other. And if it was hard to name how the two support each other, are there adjustments to be made to increase that support?

That's where I find myself: ruminating on the adjustments. I feel a connection between my roots in nature and an antiracist practice of acknowledging how environmental destruction is a white dominate act. However, I don't yet know how to clearly define that thread to someone else.

This idea of spiritual and antiracism practices supporting one another follows a theme. The disconnections we often experience in our capitalist society that does not value spirituality, rest, community, art, face-to-face communication, or humanity as a part of nature, lead to other-ing and barriers. We put up barriers thinking that we need protection between the "other" and the "self."

Within the "self," even more barriers go up to create separations of the body, the mind, the persona, and the ego. When all these barriers become impermeable, it easy is for us to see

ourselves as separate from the "other." That's how we find ourselves in these problems: racism, environmental destruction, individualism, and burnout. If we are unable to move through these boundaries to see ourselves as connected to the "other," the disconnection leads us to see a race different and as less-than. It leads us to see humans as having dominium over nature rather than as a part of it. Disconnection ends in destruction.

But spiritual practice is the key to rebuilding those connections.

Maybe you're thinking that seems a bit overblown: "My spiritual practice can't really hold that much weight; all I'm doing is going for a walk or sitting on a meditation cushion."

That's where the February event culminated: not only should your spiritual practice be about the space to transform the self, the *within*, it should serve to transform the other, the *beyond*. The final question hints at that: Does your spiritual practice bring you comfort, or does it bring you to connections you're uncomfortable with?

The call to action is the answer you and I are trying to find: If your spiritual practice pushes you to connect with something you'd rather avoid, to discomfort, *that* is your spiritual practice.



# CONGREGATIONAL CARE



## April Is Calling!

**Rev. Lara Cowtan, Minister of Congregational Care**

*Every tear is answered by a blossom  
Every sigh with songs and laughter blent  
April-blooms upon the breezes toss them  
April knows her own, and is content.*

— Susan Coolidge, April

People often ask a minister for the story of their calling into ministry. It is different for each one of us, and often a profound, life-altering, life-defining journey to fulfill what we feel is most true to our being, our purpose. Often, instead of a sudden, on the road to Damascus-like epiphany, it is a series of events or awakenings, often met with our own resistance or denial until the call becomes a deafening roar that simply cannot be dismissed, it is the only true path forward. It may feel like destiny, or coming into alignment with what we have always known to be our right course. From the Gospel of Thomas, “If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you.” Does a calling come from within us or from outside of us? What do you think?

Do you feel called to something, to create art, to teach, to work in nature conservation, to be a parent, to make music?

Calling and storytelling seem to me to be inextricably linked in many ways. During the week of April 14-21, we will all be eager to learn the candidate’s stories, and to share stories about ourselves, as individuals and as a community, stories of the past, present and future, and to imagine new stories unfolding together.

The stories of our lives are not always the stories we live, but sometimes even the ones we do not. The paths not taken, or the truths about ourselves that we may, by choice, fear or circumstance, not follow. The story then may become one of unfulfilled longing, the woulda, shoulda, couldas of a calling not answered that continues to beckon or, eventually, lie dormant, like the potential of an unfertilized seed.

Maya Angelou wrote, “There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.” It makes sense to me that, if we do not answer what calls us as we write our life’s true story, we would suffer somehow.

As we enter this month of April, with all the promise and freshness of springtime and excitement in the air, I hope we all might take time to pause and listen, listen for that still, small voice inside, listen for what is calling, and may we answer, “yes.”

I leave you with deep and warm blessings, and with this quote to ponder.

From Katharine Butler Hathaway:

*I invented this rule for myself to be applied to every decision I might have to make in the future. I would sort out all the arguments and see which belonged to fear and which to creativeness, and other things being equal I would make the decision which had the larger number of creative reasons on its side. I think it must be a rule something like this that makes jonquils and crocuses come pushing through cold mud.*

Do you have a concern or celebration you wish to have shared in the Embracing Meditation during Sunday worship? Would you like to request a call from the minister or a helping hand or listening ear of a care team member? Please send us an email at [pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org](mailto:pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org). If you are experiencing an urgent need for pastoral support, call 651-300-9123.

## Spending a Saturday to Save a Life Preventing Teen Suicide with QPR Training

**Saturday, April 13**

**11:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**

**First Unitarian Society:** 900 Mount Curve Avenue, Minneapolis

First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis partners with the I’m Glad You Stayed Project to offer teens and adults training in QPR – Question, Persuade, Refer. It’s like CPR for your brain. Workshop is free and includes lunch.

Registration is required: <https://bit.ly/qprfirstuni>



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# WELCOME NEWCOMERS | FELLOWSHIP GROUPS



## Welcome Words

**Philippa Anastos**  
Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant

This is my first column as your Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant! I have met many of you already, and look forward to meeting everyone. It is humbling to think of weaving my own talents and passions alongside those already present in this vibrant, creative community — and those yet to come, from members and friends who will join us in the future! I look forward to serving you in my new role, and in extending the same welcome I have received to newcomers.

## 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 Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant, [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

### *Finding Yourself at Unity: For Visitors and Inquirers*

**Sundays 10:15 a.m. | Drop-ins welcome; childcare in the nursery.**

**Gannett Room or online via Zoom: [bit.ly/fyuonline](https://bit.ly/fyuonline)**

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. Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time.

Weekly church emails include the session topic or find the session schedule at the Welcome Table in the main lobby or in Parish Hall, or email [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) to receive Saturday morning email reminders.

This month's offerings:

April 7: Community Outreach and Social Justice

April 14: No session

April 21: Worship and the Liturgical Year

April 28: Q&A with the Minister

### *Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church*

**Tuesday, May 7 | 6:30-8:30 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? 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 Philippa Anastos know you're interested in participating or to ask questions. She can also arrange a private signing ceremony.

## Fellowship Groups

For more information email Philippa at [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org).

**Afterthoughts** offers time after 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 third Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

**Kung Fu** meets Saturday mornings, 9:00-10:00 a.m., in the Body Room.

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

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

**Men's Conversation Group** meets on Zoom April 1, 15, 29, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Men's Retirement Circle:** Monday, April 8 and 22, 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 on the first Wednesday 1:00-2:30 p.m., and third Wednesday 7:10-8:00 p.m. of each month. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc.

**Unity Book Club** meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

April 9: *The River We Remember* by William Kent Krueger

June 11: TBD

July 9: *Driving Dad Home* by John Halter

**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)



# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

April 3

*Dinner: Sopa de albondigas (meatball soup), cilantro and lime salad, bars*

## Meet with the Ministerial Search Team

Parish Hall and online via Zoom: [bit.ly/aprilmst](https://bit.ly/aprilmst)

Join the Ministerial Search Team (MST) for a Q&A about their process and discernment up to this point, as well as the next steps in the journey. When are your next opportunities to engage with the call of a senior minister? What questions did the MST consider as a part of this process? Get answers to these questions and more.

## Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza

Choir Room

Beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Learn basic violin posture, note reading, and more! Email Mayra at [mayraquitzia@gmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

## Religious Education New Family Orientation

Gannett Room

Interested in learning more about Unity's religious education programs for children and youth? We offer Religious Education New Family Orientation on the first Wednesday of every month. Email Nelson Moroukian at [nelson@unityunitarian.org](mailto:nelson@unityunitarian.org) one week in advance that you plan to attend.

April 10

*Dinner: Chili, cornbread, jicama slaw, cranberry lemon bars*

## Preparation for Candidating Week

Parish Hall and online via Zoom: [bit.ly/candidateprep](https://bit.ly/candidateprep)

Join representatives from Unity's executive team, board, and ministerial search team as we prepare for candidating week, April 14-21. This session will provide specific information about what to expect during candidating week, suggestions for the best ways to engage, and an overview of the April 21 congregational meeting and vote.

## Lectio Divina

Online via Zoom: [bit.ly/Lectio2023-24](https://bit.ly/Lectio2023-24)

Participate in a centuries-old monastic practice of listening, contemplating, and responding to sacred texts, modified with poetry for UU small group spiritual practice. Led by Lisa Wersal or Shelley Butler. A different poem at each session. On Wednesdays, join the Zoom from the Gannett Room at church!

## Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza

Choir Room

Email Mayra at [mayraquitzia@gmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

April 17

*Dinner: Mulligatawny stew, bell pepper salad, Indian butter cookies*

## Meet the Candidate

Sanctuary and online via Zoom: [bit.ly/candidatemeets](https://bit.ly/candidatemeets)

Join us to engage with the candidate. This session will focus on the areas of policy, governance, and leadership. Come to hear stories and responses to the questions that have come up this week!

## Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza

In-person, Choir Room

Email Mayra at [mayraquitzia@gmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

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 Parish Hall, a short chapel service begins at 6:40 p.m. in Ames Chapel, and programs begin at 7:10 p.m. Childcare is available. Details including dinner cost and menus are online at [unityunitarian.org/wellspring-wednesday.html](https://unityunitarian.org/wellspring-wednesday.html).

April 24

*Dinner: Chicken tinga tacos, lime slaw, Mexican brownies*

## The Color Purple

Parish Hall

Join us for an engaging exploration of *The Color Purple*, a theatrical adaptation of Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. Led by local teaching artists Anna Hashizume, Maria Asp, and Harry Waters, Jr., we'll delve into the journey of Celie, exploring themes of resilience, identity, and hope. Through selected readings and discussions, we'll connect the narrative to current events and personal values. Participants will enjoy a ticket discount to experience the play at Theater Latte Da until May 5.

## Seriously, Unity Board Service Could Be Right for You

Robbins Parlor

Want to find out what it's like to serve on the board? Current and former trustees will share their experiences including board service as spiritual practice, policy governance, and how the executive team and board work together. Applications will open later this spring for the next term of service.

## Board Game Night

Anderson Library

Games will be available, or bring your favorite. Kids are welcome with adult(s)!

## Beginner Violin

Choir Room

Email Mayra at [mayraquitzia@gmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## End of Life: Our Other Choice

UUUs think a lot about the choices involved in reproductive health. But there is *another* health care choice many of us will eventually face: the choice of how and when our lives should end.

Approximately 74 million Americans live in a state that allows medical aid in dying — but not the residents of Minnesota. It doesn't have to be that way! Minnesotans should have a choice, and you can help make that happen.

A bill for end-of life options (EOL) is making its way through the Minnesota legislature in no small part thanks to advocacy from Unity Church members and other UUUs. The law, if passed, would allow a terminally ill, mentally capable adult with a prognosis of six months or less, the option to request, obtain and take medication — should they choose — to die peacefully in their sleep if their suffering becomes unbearable.

Unity Church members have written letters, testified, and showed up at hearings for the bill. If you have done any of these things, thank you! As Minnesota Unitarians, it's clearly time for us to advocate for this end-of-life choices legislation.

If you'd like to support the Minnesota End of Life Options bill, visit the website of Compassion and Choices ([compassionandchoices.org](http://compassionandchoices.org)) a good source of up-to-date information on the bill's status, and next steps for advocacy.

And mark your calendar! A final session of Dying for Beginners will be held on May 8, hosted by Reverend Lara Cowtan, whose experience in Canada and Switzerland will help us understand the spiritual dimensions of choice — in dying and living.



## The Role of Responsible Firearm Storage

### From Moms Demand Action, Partner of Unity's Gun Violence Prevention Team

A sobering reality our community faces is the impact of firearm-related incidents, particularly those arising from unsafe storage practices. When guns are not securely stored many dangers arise: accidental harm from a child "playing" with a loaded weapon, the ease of access for a person struggling with mental illness, and the risk of the weapon being stolen and used for criminal purposes. In October, a four-year-old in Martin County wounded his younger sibling after finding an unsecured gun in the seat of a car. Each year approximately 351 people in Minnesota die by firearm suicide, with the availability and effectiveness of firearms increasing the risk of a fatal outcome. Equally concerning is the alarming rate at which guns are stolen from vehicles. The FBI reports that approximately one gun is stolen from a car every 15 minutes on average in cities across the country. In the first two quarters of 2022, the St. Paul Police Department identified that 52% of stolen guns recovered from crimes were stolen from motor vehicles.

Since May 2023, it is also the law in St. Paul that guns must be securely stored following the amendment of Chapter 225 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code. Secure storage measures, such as gun safes and gun locks, can play a crucial role in preventing unauthorized access to firearms and ensuring compliance with the city ordinance. By practicing and encouraging responsible storage and fostering a culture of awareness within our community, we can collectively contribute to reducing the incidence of firearm-related tragedies and make our communities safer for everyone.

Get your gun lock, or get one for someone you care about at Unity Church. Join us at one of our Gun Violence Prevention meetings, the third Thursday of each month (April 18), at 3:30 p.m., at Unity Church and on Zoom. For more information or to be added to our email list, contact us at [unityunitarian.org/gun-violence-prevention.html](http://unityunitarian.org/gun-violence-prevention.html).

## Obama/JJ Hill School Team

In case you haven't noticed, the "school across the street" is in the first stages of a two-year renovation project. Construction fencing has been placed around the north side of the building, eliminating the possibility of Unity folks parking in that lot when coming to church. So far, there aren't many indications on the exterior of the building that a project is underway, but a lot is happening inside. Interior walls have been demolished, some flooring replaced, new electrical and mechanical systems are being added, and all interior spaces will be renovated to bring the building into the current century. New construction will add space for the Children's House [pre-K and kindergarten classes]. Eventually, you'll see a new main entrance on Holly. The goal is to have the J. J. Hill Montessori Magnet School move into the Barack and Michelle Obama building in the fall of 2025.

As the J.J. Hill/Obama School outreach ministry team, our goal for this church year is to begin to build a strong relationship with the J. J. Hill community of staff, students, and parent-teacher organization in anticipation of the move. Next month's newsletter will give more details on what we've done.

The Saint Paul Public Schools website has a monthly construction update. If you'd like the details, please visit <https://bit.ly/mbosupdate>.

The Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA) works to connect Unitarian Universalists and allies to help shape a just and loving world. [muusja.org](http://muusja.org)



## What Happened with the Right Relations Team?

Rev. Kathleen Rolenz

This fall, I put out a call to serve on a right relations team (also known as healthy congregation team, behavioral covenant team, etc.) Such teams exist in many churches to help congregants live into their congregational covenant. However, after putting out the call, I realized two things: first, Unity Church needed a covenant, and second, that I had not received the applications. I believe some of you expressed an interest and your applications were lost. My apologies to those of you who expressed interest and didn't hear back from me.

In January and February Unity Church members responded to the question: *What is one behavior you do or have observed someone else doing at Unity Church that builds a community of integrity, openhearted engagement and courageous action?* The responses were collected and organized by themes and then a draft of these responses was reviewed by the Interim Monitoring Team (IMT) for feedback.

The original draft covenant was a full page long. The IMT recommended making it shorter and more to the point. This is the draft covenant that Unity Church may use as the first step in establishing a congregational covenant of right relations.

### PREAMBLE

To covenant with one another is to engage in the spiritual practice of building a more supportive, inclusive, loving community. Although this document expresses our written promise to one another, our true covenant lives and breathes in our actions. This will inspire us to be better together, and we will use it to guide us.

### COVENANT

We individually commit to developing and practicing a spiritual discipline that centers love in its many forms and expressions so that:

We meet each person with respect, refraining from preconceptions or stereotypes, even with those we think we know,

We are alert to our own assumptions and can decenter our cultural bias by using "I" statements and speaking for ourselves alone,

We listen with curiosity to learn from perspectives that differ from our own,

We remain courageous when conflicts arise, continuing to show up even when it is hard, speaking and acting with kindness, trust, and vulnerability,

We forgive ourselves and others with generosity when mistakes are made, working to rebuild relationships when they have been fractured allowing us to bring a presence of peace, justice, and compassion to our work beyond this community.

Is this covenant perfect? No. No covenant can cover *all* aspects of congregational life. Is it final? No. Finalizing this covenant and creating a conflict transformation team or right relations team is something Unity Church and your next senior minister may choose to do in the year ahead. Regardless, I hope this covenant will help frame your congregational meeting and serve as a guide for how to be in community with one another.

## 2024 MidAmerica Regional Assembly

The MidAmerica Region is coming together — both online and at the First Unitarian Society of Madison, WI, on Friday, April 19, and Saturday, April 20, for a multiplatform regional assembly!

The Keynote address will be given by the Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, and Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ.

There will be workshops, the Annual Business Meeting of the MidAmerica Region, and opportunities to meet UU leaders from across our faith tradition. Get the details: [bit.ly/midra](https://bit.ly/midra)

## 2024 All-Virtual General Assembly of the UUA

General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles. Please join us online Thursday, June 20 through Sunday, June 23, 2024 for this four-day immersive experience where we participate in inspirational worship services and informative workshops, reconvene with friends and colleagues, and explore our virtual exhibit hall.

Reserve your space by registering now: [uua.org/ga](https://uua.org/ga). Whether you are a seasoned attendee or a first-timer, this is your opportunity to be a part of an extraordinary gathering. Please let us know if you are interested in serving as a delegate from Unity Church by sending an email to [unity@unityunitarian.org](mailto:unity@unityunitarian.org).



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
VIRTUAL GA • JUNE 20 - 23, 2024

# PARISH HALL EXHIBIT | SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

April Parish Hall Exhibit: *Let It Shine*

## Evergreen Quilters Exhibit and Sale

From April 4-28 Evergreen Quilters of Unity Church invite you to view their biennial exhibit, "Let It Shine," consisting of hand-made quilted original art creations and crafts, including small bed and lap quilts, wall-hangings, as well as accessories for personal use and the home. They also offer the chance to win a queen-sized raffle quilt, "The Light Within," that they made especially for this sale.

Evergreen Quilters, one of Unity's community outreach ministry teams, is made up of Unity members and friends who love to quilt. They make quilts individually and collaboratively for the benefit of three local organizations assisting families experiencing difficulties obtaining adequate food and housing. This includes twin-sized quilts for families living at Project Home, as well as financial contributions earned from selling quilted items several times a year to church members and the wider public. Recipients of these funds include Project Home, a family shelter focused on helping families find permanent housing; Hallie Q. Brown food shelf; and Jeremiah Transitional Housing, a program offering mothers with young children housing, education, job training, parenting instruction and support.

Evergreen Quilters have donated over \$33,000 to these groups in the past eight years. The quilters donate 100% of their earnings from the quilts they make. The funds are used to support food, housing, and other services helping families attain their goal of living independently. Earlier this year, Unity Church members generously contributed to a Sunday collection which helps Evergreen Quilters with their occasional miscellaneous expenses associated with making quilts. Otherwise, all the costs associated with making quilts comes from the members themselves.

The Evergreen Quilters members represent many years of experience, ranging from a year or two to more than forty. They will all tell you that they learn from one another all the time. Several make quilts in support of other organizations, as well as for their own families and friends. All see their participation in Evergreen Quilters as a personal ministry to help those with little-to-nothing find some beauty, warmth, and comfort in their lives.

One sub-group of Evergreen Quilters maintains and tends to the food collection baskets located at our church entrances. Evergreen Quilters collect and deliver the food from those baskets weekly to Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf. Another small sub-group provides a full meal (funded by Evergreen earnings) a couple of times each year for mothers and their children living at Jeremiah Transitional Housing.

New members are always welcome to join Evergreen Quilters. The group meets twice a month, year-round at the church to share their love of quilting for the community. Contact Peggy at [pwright@rubywings.com](mailto:pwright@rubywings.com) for more information.



## Lectio Divina

April 10 and 23 | 7:10 p.m.

Zoom: [bit.ly/Lectio2023-24](https://bit.ly/Lectio2023-24)

Participate in a centuries-old monastic practice of listening, contemplating, and responding to sacred texts; modified with poetry for Unitarian Universalist small group spiritual practice. Led by Lisa Wersal or Shelley Butler. Held at 7:10 p.m. on the second Wednesday and fourth Tuesday of each month. A different poem at each session. Questions? Contact Shelley at [library@unityunitarian.org](mailto:library@unityunitarian.org).

## Queer Theology

Tuesday, April 9 | 6:30-8:00 p.m.

In-person, Center Room

Queer Theology is a theological practice that attempts to erase boundaries that exist in religious traditions, to include rather than exclude more voices. Open to adults of all genders and sexual orientations. Contact Mike Huber for access to the readings or if you have any questions: [mikehuberece@gmail.com](mailto:mikehuberece@gmail.com).

## Sangha Practice

Tuesdays | 4:30-6:00 p.m.

Ames Chapel

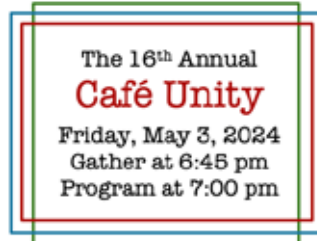
At the heart of Buddhist practice is the commitment to awaken — to step into our doubts and predicaments and hear the roaring of life at the still point of a turning universe. Through weekly practice of meditation, we discover a clarity of mind attentive and accountable to each moment of life's flow, and touch the mystery of our original face. This group is open to anyone interested, no experience is necessary, and instructions will be provided. For more information, please contact Rev. KP Hong at [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org).



## Café Unity & Other Things On My Mind

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

It's become a tradition at Unity Church and hundreds of people have shared their literary and musical talent at Café Unity. It's always (and I do mean always) a pleasure when someone who has been part of Café Unity participates again, as well as a bit exciting to include new participants. Contact us here to sign up to sing, play music, read your original work, or host at the **May 3, 2024 Café Unity**: [library@unityunitarian.org](mailto:library@unityunitarian.org).



I love the possibilities that abound at Unity. I'm forever grateful that I was asked and encouraged, and given support for so many things like Café Unity and editing/publishing *Cairns: The Unity Church Journal of the Arts*.

But here's some real questions for you: Should we hold on to our Unity traditions like the annual publication of *Cairns* or make way for new ones? What would it mean to you to see *Cairns* continue past 2024? How important is it for the voices of the congregation to be heard in publication?

Our current *Cairns* staff is committed to producing vol.16 this fall of 2024, but some of us will step down from our current roles at the end of 2024, including the lead co-editors and our layout editor. Among the three of us combined, we count some 40 years in service to the publication.

If you: 1) have always wanted to work on a magazine, 2) have time to offer in late September through early December, and 3) are willing to either offer your skills or stretch yourself to learn new ones, then contact us about joining our 2024 staff with a goal of leadership in 2025: [cairns@unityunitarian.org](mailto:cairns@unityunitarian.org).

Don't tell us you don't know how! None of us had ever published or edited an arts journal before starting *Cairns*. We started from scratch, knowing only enough to know that we had a lot to learn; we researched; made guidelines, standards, policies, procedures, editing/style manuals; and created a ministry in which the words and art of ministers, staff, and congregants of Unity Church humbly edited and set down with reverence. We are ready to pass on a well-honed system for editing and publishing *Cairns* to new leadership with new ideas.

*Cairns* has become a record of our Unity time; there's a piece of all the contributors that will remain at Unity in *Cairns*. This could be your time!

From the Archives Team

## Selecting a Minister

As we approach selecting our new minister, the archives team thought it might be interesting to review how Unity Church selected its next minister in 1970-1971. This article is an excerpt from *The Story of Unity Church, 1872-1972* by Elinor Sommers Otto.

"Unity Church was well aware of the difficulties involved in choosing a successor to Arthur Foote. The task was complicated in this instance by the dissimilar viewpoints in the church between those who preferred a continuation of the ministerial pattern set by Foote and the group which was more willing to accept changes in church attitudes. In order to get a "profile" on what this divergent membership wanted in a new minister, the Board of Trustees published in a bulletin a request for suggestions of persons to be placed on the Committee to Recommend a New Minister (CRAM)... From a poll of sixty-four write-in names, the following twelve were chosen: chairman, T. D. Wright; Josephine Downey, James Fish, Howard Huelster, Mrs. Martin Imm, Mrs. Howard Mayne, Mrs. Orville Peterson, Lindsay Power, Mrs. Beatrice Reed, Hamilton Ross, Mrs. Warner Shippee, Perry Wilson. Upon the request of Tower Club, a representative from that group (Dan Huelster) was accepted as an additional committee member.

Neighborhood meetings supplied CRAM with information on the members' views in this matter and an exhaustive search for the new minister began. This involved numerous trips to other cities, many interviews, and lengthy meetings on the part of the committee...

The "search for excellence," carried on so thoroughly by CRAM, resulted in the candidacy of thirty-year-old Roy Dennis Phillips. Following an enthusiastic vote of approval on March 1, 1971, T. D. Wright, chairman of the committee, cautioned the membership about the danger of making comparisons between a highly successful twenty-five-year incumbent and a newcomer to the pulpit. And Foote, before leaving St. Paul, had admonished the parishioners not to be afraid of youth, reminding them that many of Unity Church's ministers, including Crothers, Eliot, Robbins, and Foote himself, had come to St. Paul as young men in their late twenties or early thirties."

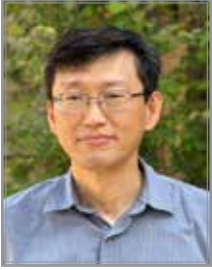


Rev. Arthur Foote



Rev. Roy Phillips

Archives Team: Louise Merriam, Carol Miller, Patt Kelly, Eve Johnson, Pauline Eichten and Susan Foote (emerita).



## Pitter-Pattering Questions

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

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

What does *calling* mean in a culture of pervading choice?

The contemporary cultural default of choice signals one of our most established and sacred ways of framing reality. From where we choose to live and shop and whom we elect to what social identities we claim and which spiritual practices express our credos, choice shapes our approach in every aspect of our lives. If an earlier era located religious life “dwelling” within inherited traditions and communities, Robert Wuthnow and other sociologists of religion have been describing a fundamental shift in American sensibility toward “seeking” as the spiritual project of individuals, assembling bits of wisdom from here and inspiration from there, toward creating a useable framework for our own faith journeys.

The power of choice as a frame for religious life challenges older assumptions about religious membership and participation, and the individualism inherent in this paradigm coupled with the consumerism in our spiritual marketplace make choice an easy target as promoting trivial, privatized, self-absorbed spiritualities. But it would be a mistake to judge the paradigm of choice by its most shallow forms. Choice cannot be written off. Doing so would ignore or underestimate the motivations of many seeking genuine purpose and meaning in life. Choice redeems religion from blind acceptance and animates faith beyond passive membership. And even self-centered, consumerist motivations may find the spiritual quest extending into selfless service and sacrifice for the greater good.

Yet for all the virtues of choice, the paradigm of choice can too easily diminish, distract, and divert us from

the transformative power of *calling* to claim us prophetically within, among, and beyond. If faith traditions no longer provide the accountable context and strong claim upon our lives, can they ever really challenge us? If our faith makes no truth claims upon our understanding and orientation to life, and instead serve merely as resources for our own spiritual constructions, does it have teeth to dismantle dominant culture? What if our chosen values have become proxies for truths deprived of their commanding character, substitutes for revelation and prophetic imperatives that have dissolved into a range of possibilities? What if the very word “values” signifies this reduction of truth to utility, conviction to preference, all provisional and exchangeable as our choice of lifestyle? Essentially, what if the question about calling is not really about choice but about conversion, about transformation?

The prophets speak of calling as that summons from beyond the self who is subject to the call. In the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel who answered the call to Selma in 1965, it is “the voice that God has lent to the silent agony, a voice to the plundered poor, to the profane riches of the world. It is a form of living, a crossing point of God and man. God is raging in the prophet’s words.” Before such a calling, there is none of the usual “choosing” from a checklist of actions, only a “responding” to a radical conversion of being. To be sure, there is freedom in both cases, but in responding to the prophetic summons, the freedom is not an inner, self-directed impulse but the freedom of the will to open to a truth and reality greater than the self. It is the radical calling at the heart of that ancient Greek word *klesis* from which the church as an *ecclesiastical* body is “called out” beyond self, possessions,

preferred lifestyle, empire and risk a voluntary loss of self into wonder, open-hearted engagement, and courageous action. Called out for an unforeseen and unknown world that lives in the imaginary we dream for our children. Called out from “being me” to “becoming we” only within which I discover the freedom of being truly and wholly me. Called to the deep truth and paradoxical joy of giving our lives away and watching it become everlasting life.

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



## Coming of Age 2024

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

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

# MUSIC MINISTRY



## Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries

Last month I traveled to the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, where I was invited to talk

to the students and faculty about the intersections of sacred music and social justice. After one of my lectures, one of the students asked how I create space for musicians' trauma and trauma recovery in the organizations that I lead. That question threw me for a loop, because the student clearly wanted a very fluffy sort of answer. The same question had already been asked to another one of the guest lecturers, who had replied with several examples from their own practice, such as building time into rehearsals for conversation and processing and inviting singers for meals and gatherings outside of rehearsal. This isn't unusual: many choir directors (and church ministers) are called to our field because they have the sort of personality that thrives on this sort of community and social interaction.

The thing is, I never had this sort of calling. I was called to music precisely because I struggle to connect with other people in the "normal" ways; music created a space where I could find those sorts of connections with other people on terms I could understand. I am a huge introvert. I am also autistic and really struggle to understand what's going on when I interact with others. I have learned to do it, but it always feels like I'm speaking a foreign language with rules that I have had to learn painstakingly, rules that other folks seem to have internalized simply by how their brain is wired. Before any social interaction I have to rehearse what might be said and how I should respond beforehand, and build a little flow-chart for myself, because my instincts are so wrong

on this front; when I wing it, things can go disastrously bad – and I often leave these interactions exhausted and drained. Maybe this is why I'm particularly talented at putting together rehearsal plans for my ensembles?

People often come up to me to share their appreciation for my music, or wanting to connect in some way and, most of the time, when this happens I go into fight or flight mode — it's all panic and anxiety and an eagerness to get the hell out of whatever interaction I'm having as soon as possible. It takes me a frustratingly long time to build any sort of friendship with another person, beyond a collegial or professional relationship. I'm perfectly at ease speaking to a room with hundreds of people, an audience, an orchestra, or a choir, but the idea of sitting across from a person I don't know all that well and having a conversation fills me with dread.

So, back to the student's question: how *do* I create space for that trauma and trauma recovery? I'm carrying plenty of my own trauma around and have very little capacity to carry other people's trauma most of the time... and the pandemic seems to really have diminished my capacity to do that drastically, even more than before. Well, I've tried to set things up so I don't actually have to. I am lucky that in every organization I lead or am a part of I have people that I can lean on that do have the right sort of calling. People will help each other if I get out of the way. At Unity, I have learned to ask the ministers or longstanding community members about what the rights steps are to address something in particular that might be weighing on people's hearts.

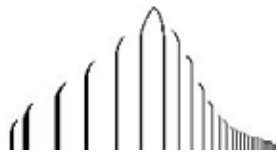
My answer to the student's question was "policy and governance." I don't invite musicians to my house for meals or have lots of casual conversations with them, but I do work to make sure that their paychecks and contracts

are fair and consistent with my values, and I make sure that there are policies that provide oversight and training to prevent abusive leadership or destructive behavior from me or others. In the choirs I lead, professional or amateur of varying levels, I try to make sure that there is a balance and flexibility that allows for people to tend to their health and to their families while also being able to make music to the best of their ability, and that there are clear and reasonable expectations of what everyone brings to the ensemble.

I often struggle with feelings of inadequacy because I am so bad on this front compared to many of my colleagues: I am a warty troll hiding in the mud under a bridge while my fellow choir directors are sparkly magical unicorns handing out cake. I was surprised by my answer to that student's question because I didn't know that's what I was going to answer until I said it, and it immediately felt true. It also eased some of those feelings, since it made me realize that I am doing the work of relationship, although not in the same playing field as most of my colleagues.

**Arthur Foote  
Music Sunday**

May 7, 2024



# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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## 2024 Chalice Camp

Week 1: July 8-12  
Week 2: July 15-19

Chalice Camp at Unity Church 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).

Campers will explore the heritage and history of Unitarian Universalism through varied and engaging activities, everything from puppet shows to field games. Chalice camp offers children a safe, child-friendly environment to be exposed to topics such as racial inequality, gender, social class, and our identities while incorporating the fun and excitement of typical summer camp activities.

Registration and counselor applications: [unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp.html](http://unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp.html).

## Candidating Week

April 14-21, 2024

See page 4 for more information.

## The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Café Unity

A Showcase of the Literary and Musical Talent of Unity Church

Friday, May 3, 2024  
Unity Church-Unitarian Parish Hall

Gather at 6:45 pm  
Program to start promptly at 7:00 pm

Sign up to sing, play music, or read your original work. Space is limited.

Contact us now:  
[library@unityunitarian.org](mailto:library@unityunitarian.org)



Hosted each year by: **The Library-Bookstall Team**  
Unity Church-Unitarian

