

## Practice and Inspiration

*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.*

One of the first things we ask of new members at Unity Church is to "develop a personal practice that helps you find and keep your balance." Ministers at Unity Church often talk about spiritual practices as a central part of religious life: if our work on Sunday morning happens *among* the congregation, and our work for justice in the world points us *beyond* our walls, spiritual practices ground us and tend to our souls *within*.

What makes something a spiritual practice? First, they are activities that connect us with the source of meaning in our lives: a Christian might have a practice of prayer that brings them closer to God, a humanist naturalist might have a practice of walks by the river drawing close to the interconnected nature of the world. Second, they are practices, disciplines that are repeated with intention. Practices are developed over time, and it is often when they are done out of habit that we start to see the transformation they bring. Whether meditation, prayer, journaling, or something else, when done intentionally spiritual practices tend to deepen over time.

This is a broad definition! If any practice done repeatedly, with intention, can be a spiritual practice, then the most mundane activities can be spiritual practices, from peeling carrots to walking to work. The trick is to do those mundane activities with intention, as a practice in which you are fully present. Inspiration can strike while doing the dishes, but only when we are open to it.

In our discussion of this month's theme, a member of the theme team remarked, "I used to think that one day I would be hit by a sudden flash of inspiration and would then find and develop a spiritual practice that reflected that inspiration. I've learned now that I had that backwards. Practice is what gives room for inspiration." Inspiration finds us in moments of repetition.

This is important for worship this April. Over the next month, we have several worship services that we practice, either yearly or at the start of a new ministry. On April 20, we'll gather to celebrate the Christian holiday of Easter, telling the old story of death and rebirth, hearing something new in the ancient story. A week later, on April 27, we'll hold our annual Coming of Age service for the teenagers of the congregation, listening to their hope, aspirations and beliefs, and hearing in the new voices in our community echoes of ancient questions. And on April 12, Unity will hold an installation service to install Rev. Sinclair as the fourteenth senior minister of Unity Church.

Services of installation are rare at Unity Church (this will be the fourth since 1945), but they are a set piece of Unitarian Universalist ministry, recognizing the agreement between a minister and congregation to work together in service of a shared mission in the world. It is a practice, to install ministers, and an opportunity for inspiration: What are we called to do together? Who are we called to be? In a service that echoes language used for over a century, what is the expression of shared ministry for this church in this moment? What will be our inspiration?

*Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair with this month's Theme Team*



### Service of Installation for Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair

Saturday, April 12, 2025

2:00 PM

Sanctuary at Unity Church

Come participate in the  
time-honored ritual celebrating  
the covenant of shared ministry  
as the congregation of  
Unity Church-Unitarian  
joyfully installs  
Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair  
as Senior Minister

*A dessert reception will follow the service.*

### Theme Resources

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

# JUST WORDS



## Just Words

**Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister**

*[Name], We would have you dwell among us preaching the truth in freedom and love. We would have you help educate our children and counsel our youth. We would have you minister to us in our times of joy and sorrow. We would have you demonstrate by your example, as well as by precept, the way of faithful and courageous life. We would have you call attention*

*the places we have fallen short or missed the mark. We would have you lead us in a mutual quest toward a deeper understanding of the religious life. Are you willing to take up those obligations? — Unitarian Universalist Service of Installation*

As I write this column, I'm remembering what I felt like one year ago. In early March, I sent a list to the Unitarian Universalist Association: the list of congregations I had interviewed at that I would be willing to leave Lincoln, Nebraska, to serve. It was a short list: a single congregation in Minnesota, that I had known from afar for a long time and learned to love over the months of the search process. March of 2024 was a stressful month. I knew I felt a call to Unity Church, but did not know if I would be selected. On March 28, the call came, I would be the candidate in St Paul, and I had two weeks to get ready for a very public process culminating in a congregational vote on April 14.

Many of you participated in that process. There are ways in which the Unitarian Universalist search and settlement process looks like a secular job search: interviews, a discussion of candidate's strengths and weaknesses, alignment on goals (or ends, in this case). But finding a minister, and finding a congregation, is also a *religious* process, where we listen for the still small voice in the midst of the whirlwind, whispering "yes, this, now." The vote last April was loud, exciting, and positive. It was also a quiet affirmation: Yes. This. Now.

A year later, on Saturday, April 12, at 2:00 p.m., we will gather as a community to finish the process of searching for and settling a new minister at Unity Church. In our tradition, installation services are the *liturgical* counterpart to the *governance* decision to vote and call a new minister. In a service of installation, the new minister and congregation agree to obligations to each other: to support and serve a shared ministry, affirming the still small voice calling them to the relationship.

Installation services are not celebrations of an individual minister. In some ways, they are relatively rote services. For the last three months, I have had three orders of service on my desk: the installation services for Rob and Janne Eller Issacs in 2000, for Roy Phillips in 1972, and for Arthur Foote in 1945. The service that we will hold this month intentionally echoes all three, emphasizing the continuing of Unity Church's ministry over time.

Installation services mark a moment of passing the baton. But the emphasis is not on the person picking up the baton, but the baton itself. It is the honor of my life to lead Unity Church Unitarian in this moment in the story of the congregation, the community, and the world. And it is a temporary moment: the nature of ministry is to know that you serve an institution that will endure longer, and touch more lives, than you ever will as an individual. Some day, not long from now in the history of this congregation, I will hand the baton off to the next senior minister of Unity Church, as they will to whomever follows them.

But before then, it is right to celebrate. Yes, this, now. These people, this place, this time. The next chapter is wide open. See you on April 12th.

2

*Integrity, service, and joy.*

## The Wheel of Life

*In Memoriam*

**Doug Ostergren**

September 22, 1928 –

February 28, 2025

## All Our Fullness

All Our Fullness (AOF) is an initiative to connect all of us at Unity Church more deeply by sharing our stories with each other. Find reflections from the congregation on the new AOF blog page at [unityunitarian.org/all-our-fullness](https://unityunitarian.org/all-our-fullness).

Please submit your thoughts and experiences about cultural identity, differences, and your dreams for beloved community using the online form at [bit.ly/AllOurFullness](https://bit.ly/AllOurFullness).



*Wonder, open-hearted engagement, courageous action*

# SUNDAY SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

---

## Sunday 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. Find the livestream links and sermon podcasts at [unityunitarian.org/sunday-services](http://unityunitarian.org/sunday-services).

### April 6: Just Breathe

**Rev. Lara Cowtan**

Grounding ourselves in embodied spiritual practices in order to find our balance, heal and engage with the world has long been a role of religious community. Once central to Christian self-understanding and spiritual expression, our bodies have been relegated to an inferior position relative to intellect and reason. What is a spirituality of embodiment? What reflections in theological anthropology might explain the absence of the body in modernity and a lot of Western Christianity? Moving forward, what practices can we adopt that help foster embodied activities as tools for spiritual formation and spiritual practices?

### April 13: Called Out From Among Us

**Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair**

Unitarian Universalist ministry is "called out from among" the membership of our congregations. Our tradition celebrates shared ministry, and we recognize and commission a whole range of ministries, from newly installed ministers to groups of volunteers doing the work of the church every day. This Sunday we join in a celebration of that shared ministry.

### Easter Family Sunday, April 20

*Joyful, Though You Have Considered All the Facts*

**Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair**

Wendell Berry writes:

*Expect the end of the world. Laugh.  
Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful  
though you have considered all the facts.  
...practice resurrection.*

On Easter Sunday, how do we practice joy, not despite but in the midst of heartbreak?

### Coming of Age Sunday, April 27

*The Sound of One Hand Clapping in a Noisy World*

**Rev. KP Hong**

Coming of Age Sunday celebrates the signature yearlong 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.

## 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](http://bit.ly/sundayoffering).

### April 6: Racial Justice Ministry Team

Unity's Racial Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team advocates for justice and to help heal the world. It acknowledges the importance of every voice to restorative and racial justice, in interracial healing, and in building Beloved Community. This collection will underwrite the expenses for author Jodi Pfarr's spring workshop "The Urgency of Awareness" (see page 7) which will offer tools for effective multicultural involvement within Unity's larger community.

### April 13: Sanctuary Justice Ministry Team

The Sanctuary Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team is a faith-based social justice response to changing immigration policies and threats to LGBTQ+ rights. The Sanctuary Justice Team is focusing on three key areas: educating Unity members on policy impacts, advocating for just legislation, and standing in solidarity with displaced persons. The team anticipates needing funds to provide emergency monetary help to those seeking sanctuary assistance and expenses related to sanctuary justice education events for the congregation and in coordination with community partners.

### April 20: Mano a Mano International Partners

Mano a Mano International Partners was founded in 1994 by Unity Church members Segundo and the late Joan Velasquez. Mano a Mano builds clinics, schools and infrastructure in rural Bolivia and trains doctors, nurses and subsistence farmers. Mano a Mano is the partner organization of one of Unity's first community outreach ministry teams.

### April 27: Act for the Earth Ministry Team

Act for the Earth Community Outreach Ministry Team engages the 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 underwrite the purchase of trees which will be made available for Frogtown residents. Recent changes in federal funding have severely impacted the ability of many environmental organizations in Minnesota to carry out their missions.

Nominate an organization to receive the Sunday offering! Details and a nomination form are online at [unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html](http://unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html).

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES



## The Work of Reparations

**Louise Livesay-Al, Trustee**

I am very excited this year about the board's work around reparations. It feels like this year, the board

is able to focus more on carrying out some visions we have had, rather than what I will call the last several years of infrastructure work that needed a lot of attention during the three years of transition. Getting a new settled minister and executive director and all that went into the journey, on top of our regular work, did not leave as much time to work on the reparations piece as we would have liked.

Helener Currier, was a longtime member of Unity Church, signing the membership book on April 24, 1964, because of her belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals. She was born and raised in Tennessee and shared that she was cared for by Maude, her beloved African American nursemaid. When Maude was diagnosed with cancer, the Curriers asked the family doctor to treat Maude. Because she was Black, the doctor refused. This had a deep effect on Helener, influencing her to a life of service and helping others. She was raised Methodist, her family was well-established and her uncle was president of the Commercial Bank and Trust Company and her father served as the chief financial officer. She earned a BA in chemistry at Vanderbilt University in 1943. Not a common place for a woman in that time. She traveled to war-ravaged Europe on a youth mission trip after World War II, which prompted her to focus on helping others after she returned. She then earned an MA degree in religious education and went on to work for the Wesleyan Foundation first in Kansas, then Chicago, and finally in Minneapolis. Helener eventually took a job at the University of Minnesota in the Financial Aid Department. While

at the U of M, Helener earned master's degrees in child development and also in counseling. She was a smart lady! And she was active at Unity Church. Due to a committed group of church members, she continued to attend Sunday services, despite her failing hearing and eyesight.

When Helener died on February 1, 2018, she gave a very sizable gift to Unity Church, wanting it to be used for various efforts around racial justice and healing. The Board of Trustees and Executive Team, at the time of receiving the gift, decided to use funds to work with Team Dynamics and help educate church members in understanding their biases, provided opportunities to take the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), and to help us move from a monocultural identity to a multicultural identity both individually and collectively. Helener's generous gift made it possible for over 200 members to take the IDI. A piece of her gift was also set up as a board designated fund that is earmarked for reparations work. During the interim the fund has doubled in size.

Last year, the board did intentional work reading and discussing various aspects of reparations, seeing what other communities have done around this issue, and decided that due to the amazing work in St. Paul around the City Council setting up the Saint Paul Recovery Act Community Reparations Commission that we would recognize the commission as a source of authority for the congregation as we take steps to distribute the funds. Unity Church, through the work of the Racial Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team and other strong ties between church members and the Commission, has helped put on some educational forums about this important work. What the Board's Reparations Committee learned in a recent meeting with the Beloved Community Staff Team and the Racial

Justice Team is that the Commission's next important task is doing a Harm's Study and Report. We are in discussion with the Commission about how we can support this work.

We have a lot of exciting work ahead of us around deciding how we can help move things forward with reparations. And we will be doing this in partnership with various groups within and outside of Unity Church. And in doing that, the board is mindful of the questions: How do we seek to transform ourselves and our community through this work? How can we be in relationship around this work, that leads to internal transformation and creating the Beloved Community we seek to make real? How do we have "skin in the game" as a congregation when this money was a gift to us? This is an opportunity for us to do some deep reflection and stretching of ourselves in many ways that leads to positive transformation at a time when part of our society is turning away from this work. Let's take courageous action within, among and beyond our hearts and minds, and these walls.

### Serve as a Trustee

**Board Recruitment Committee  
Wednesday, April 23 | 7:10 p.m.  
Robbins Parlor**

Join us for an informational session about serving on Unity's Board of Trustees. Have you wanted to get more involved in Unity Church? Are you unsure if applying to serve as a trustee is right for you? Come ask all of your questions!

## Thank You for Fulfilling Our Promise!

Thank you to everyone who generously contributed to the success of our Fulfilling Our Promise fundraiser auction.

You donated your items, services, events, food, and talents. You asked businesses for donations. You helped make the food, staff the speakeasy, tend the bar, and decorate. You helped bidders navigate the auction and its software. You came, you bid, you won, you contributed.

Together, after most expenses, we raised over \$36,000 for the church's operating fund, going beyond our goal!

A particular thank you to the auction team: Shelley Butler, Barbi Byers, Joan Maclin, Jennifer Nedry, and Sara Testen, supported by staff Heidi Birkholz and Laura Park.



## Leave a Legacy

Congregants (over 140 people currently) who have informed Unity Church of their intention to support the church in their estate plans belong to the church's Heritage Society. These gifts help secure the church's future and enable us to complete special projects beyond the church's operating and capital budgets, such as signage at the Holly Avenue entrance and training for our antiracist multicultural work.

Members of the Heritage Society will gather Saturday, June 7, for dinner and a program to celebrate their stewardship and consider the meaning of history and legacy in the life of the church. If you have or are planning to remember Unity Church in your estate plans, contact Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) to become part of the Heritage Society.

## Parish Hall Artists

### *The Power and Wonder of Nature*

Our Unitarian Universalist faith reminds us that nature commands our attention and deserves our respect. Nature has the power to transform our lives. She constantly amazes and delights, calms and comforts us, with awe-inspiring beauty. But she also horrifies us with unimaginable destructive forces.

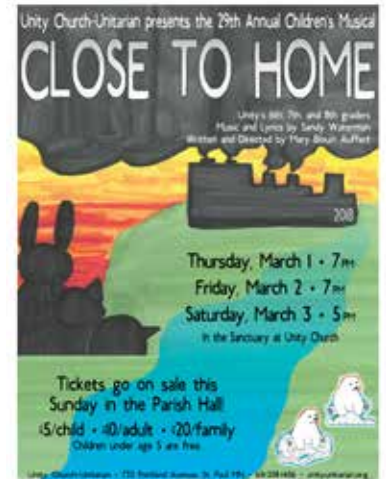
Unity's Art Team is sponsoring a two-month (March and April) Parish Hall exhibit with artists Marie Panlener, Terry McDaniel, and Brian Poulton that focuses on the positive forces of nature and celebrates the beauty that surrounds us. Sometimes it's harder to see the beauty in this crazy, chaotic world — but the three talented artists participating in this unique two-month exhibit will open your eyes to nature's ever-present bounty.

On Wednesday, April 23, artist Brian Poulton will partner with Clean Water Action to offer "Water is Life: Art and Action" at Wellspring Wednesday. Details are on page 11.

## Keep on Singing: The Unity Youth Musical

Louise Merriam, Archives Team

Did you attend the 2025 Youth Musical? Did you see the display of posters from past productions? If not, you missed a treat. This year's musical, *A Happy Little Yak-cident*, was the 36th production by the young people of the church. During those years, some aspects of the musical changed. The event was originally the "children's musical," but it has evolved into an opportunity for middle



school youth. According to early director and script writer Elee Wood, the change from younger children to middle school youth was partly because of demographics — around the year 2010, there seemed to be more middle schoolers at Unity Church who wanted to perform.

The musical evolved in other ways, too. Today's musical enlists alumni, high-school helpers who were once in the musical but are no longer eligible to participate. These helpers, along with parents and friends, build and rebuild the sets every year. The actors and producers even adapted to the pandemic by performing the musical online. Music director Sandy Waterman noted that, "If anything, we have gotten more experimental over the years! The more shows we do, the more we try to avoid replicating story lines or thematic elements. The scripts all present one or more of Unity's Seven Principles."

Musical alumna and assistant director Jane Crosby-Schmidt observed that being in the musical is a growth opportunity for participants. Kids have a chance to operate out of their comfort zones in a safe space. They work together to provide entertainment for the whole community with their acting and singing, developing skills along the way. For many, it is the first time they feel connected to the larger Unity community.

Thanks to Jane, Elee and Sandy for sharing their thoughts. They and others, like current writer/director Mary Blouin Auffert, have given the youth of the church a way to become part of the fabric of the congregation, bridging the gap between religious education programs downstairs and adult activities upstairs. We are all enriched by the performances of Unity's youth and impressed by the many talents that produce the musical year after year.

Archives Team: Pauline Eichten, Fritz Hoehn, Jason Kenley, Louise Merriam, Carol Miller, Betsy Moore, Deb Woodburn

# BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

## The New Sanctuary Justice Ministry Team Welcomes the Stranger

Will Hommeyer and Teresa Connor, Sanctuary Justice Ministry Team

The [Sanctuary Justice Ministry Team](#) (SJMT) has recently been officially recognized as a Community Outreach Ministry Team at Unity Church. What began under the guidance of our former co-ministers, Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs, has blossomed into a powerful effort where a dedicated team of congregants continues to provide support to not only the immigrants in our community but to asylum seekers, and queer and trans individuals. Rooted in our Unitarian Universalist values of human dignity, compassion, and justice, this work continues the church's long-standing commitment to sanctuary justice.

Two members of the SJMT share why they have chosen to become involved in this work.

**Teresa Connor:** The call to sanctuary justice came to me as a facilities staff member during the pandemic, a time when Unity Church provided hospitality to the sanctuary guests hosted by the congregation. Their stories opened my heart and provided an opportunity to get to know each other and continue conversations that touched on our shared values, concerns, and hopes. To welcome the stranger, to travel with them on their journey, to hold these beloveds in all their inherent dignity, and informed by our shared humanity, led me into deeper engagement. The work of the SJMT is an invitation to hold the complexities of the challenges our guests and other migrants face, and to journey with them. To do this work in community (both within Unity and beyond), I have felt called to engage in broadening circles of love and to advocate for our migrant neighbors who are vulnerable to unjust policies and actions. I am reminded of the line from the Marge Piercy poem that we will all find familiar, "The pitcher cries for water to carry and a person for work that is real."

**Will Hommeyer:** "Being in right relationship with the world" is a



concept central to many Indigenous worldviews. It acknowledges the interconnectedness and sacredness of all beings — human and non-human — and emphasizes harmony, respect, and mutual responsibility with the Earth and each other.

For nearly ten years, I sought to learn from Indigenous spiritual leaders by participating in prayer and sweat lodge ceremonies, and spending time on northern Minnesota reservations, listening to stories. I also traveled to the Navajo Reservation with a small group, where we stayed on the land, split firewood, hauled water, and herded sheep to support elders who remained in their hogans\*, while resisting forced relocation by the U.S. government to mine for uranium. It was as if they were refugees on their own land.

For me, being in right relationship means I cannot turn my back on a neighbor in need. I cannot look away when migrants, including many Indigenous people displaced by forces beyond their control, seek asylum. The SJMT at Unity Church provides a supportive community and spiritual foundation for this vital work. Witnessing the dysfunction and cruelty of the immigration system has been both eye-opening and heartbreaking, but welcoming the stranger into my life has transformed me in ways I never anticipated.

In response to changing immigration policies and threats to LGBTQ+ rights, the SJMT is focusing on three key areas:

1. Educating Unity Church members on policy impacts,
2. Advocating for just legislation, and
3. Standing in solidarity with displaced persons.

Our efforts are supported through partnerships with local UUA congregations, multi-faith groups, and community organizations. We invite the congregation into the transformative sanctuary work of welcoming and journeying alongside our neighbors.

The SJMT invites you to Sanctuary Justice 101 on Wednesday, April 16, at 7:10 p.m., in Robbins Parlor. If you are interested in the justice work of welcoming the stranger, please join the meeting, or sign up to get team updates at [unityunitarian.org/sanctuary-justice.html](https://unityunitarian.org/sanctuary-justice.html).

\*The hogan is the traditional dwelling of the Navajo people.



# BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

## The Reimagined Racial Justice Ministry Team and The Urgency of Awareness

Maura Williams, Clover Earl, and Angela Wilcox, Racial Justice Ministry Team

**Maura Williams:** What's the role of a ministry team in a faith community with a strongly voiced commitment to racial justice? How do we advance justice, wholeness, and equity, or dismantle dominant culture, as stated in our congregational Ends? Where should we start?

After reflecting on these questions, gathering input from stakeholders, and discerning an authentic path forward, the Racial and Restorative Justice Team has been reimagined as the new Racial Justice Ministry Team (RJMT). We are back with refreshed commitment to our work.

Statement of Purpose:

Justice can be defined as love made public. We focus on how to dismantle white dominant culture by expanding our individual and congregational capacity to center relationship and love as foundational to our work in the world. We see this as the first step before the hard work needed to achieve racial justice. The RJMT brings the [double helix](#) to life, integrating spiritual and antiracism practices within and among, so we can step into courageous action in the beyond.

Our initial efforts this spring follow two pathways.

1. Energized by a Racial Justice Team Circle conversation, Maura Williams, Clover Earl and Angela Wilcox continued talking about how we collectively could better understand the ways that abstractions like "racial inequity" and "dominant culture" inhabit our everyday experiences. As a result, we are excited to host two **Urgency of Awareness Workshops on Saturday, April 19, and May 10**, from 9:00 a.m. to noon with [Jodi Pfarr](#), consultant, podcast host, and author of the book *The Urgency of Awareness*.

In a society that categorizes and labels people, those of us who

benefit from privilege are often unaware of how our social system consistently favors some over others. This disparity seems to broaden daily. Jodi will challenge perceptions of our and others' experience and offer tools to help us be more present and effective in our multicultural communities.

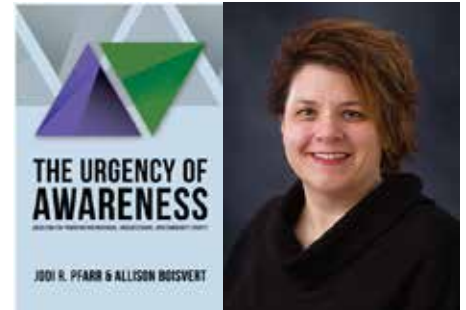
**Registration is required by**

**April 6.** Participants will receive a complimentary copy of the book; childcare will be provided. Follow-up circle conversations on April 29 and May 14 will explore how the workshop concepts impact our experience.

2. We are committed to cultivating relationships with people in the wider community. Ray Wiedmeyer and I have attended most monthly meetings of the Saint Paul Recovery Act Community Reparations Commission. Watch for more about this and other RJMT community work in the next months.

**Angela Wilcox:** Jodi Pfarr facilitated a training about identity and awareness at my school several years ago, and the impact was immediate: her model helped us understand the way our identity changes the way we do our work, without the shame that can sometimes put people on the defensive. The simplicity of this model, along with her humor and gifted storytelling, makes her the most effective trainer on this topic I've worked with. I'm excited to experience how Jodi can help prepare us for our work beyond the walls of Unity, equipped with tools to help us better understand our own identity and approach commitment to our community with greater intention.

**Clover Earl:** Since resigning from the Board of Trustees last year, I have been in search of a place here at Unity Church to call home, and recently joined the RJMT. In my five years on the board, we had myriad



conversations about dismantling white supremacy culture in support of our aspirational multicultural end. We used Tema Okun's characteristics of [White Supremacy Culture](#) to challenge ourselves to take note of how we, as *individuals*, were showing up and behaving in our monthly board meetings.

Turning the spotlight on our own behavior is both uncomfortable and courageous work. In the weeks since January 20, our world has turned inside out and upside down. Chaos rules the day. It seems urgent that we as a congregation continue the identity work begun with Team Dynamics and challenge ourselves to deepen our understanding of how to connect across difference. It is my experience that doing this work in community, with the support of those qualified to guide us, like Jodi Pfarr, is well worth the investment in time. We would be delighted to see you at the workshops this spring!

Notes:

- Register for the Urgency of Awareness workshops: [bit.ly/awarerjmt](http://bit.ly/awarerjmt)
- Learn more about Jodi Pfarr on her website: [jpfarr.com/about-jodi](http://jpfarr.com/about-jodi)
- Visit the White Supremacy Culture website: [whitesupremacyculture.info](http://whitesupremacyculture.info)
- Revisit the Team Dynamics workshops at Unity Church on the "Antiracist Multicultural" playlist on the Unity YouTube channel: [bit.ly/ytarmcucu](http://bit.ly/ytarmcucu)

# FELLOWSHIP GROUPS | WELCOME NEWCOMERS

## Fellowship Groups

Email Philippa Anastos at [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) to get connected.

**Afterthoughts:** Sundays, 10:15 a.m., Middle School Room 021, to discuss the service

**Caregivers Support Group:** third Thursday of the month at noon, Zoom

**Evergreen Quilters:** second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Anderson Library, and fourth Saturday of the month, 10:00 a.m.-noon, off-site.

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

**Living With Grief Group:** third Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Zoom

**Men's Coffee Group:** Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m., Center Room, for light-hearted conversation

**Men's Conversation Group:** Monday, April 7, and 21, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Zoom. Discuss a range of topics, offer support, and connect.

**Men's Retirement Circle:** Monday, April 14, and 28, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Robbins Parlor

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

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

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

**Unity Book Club:** second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Zoom. On April 8 the group will discuss: *Juliet in August* by Dianne Warren. On May 13 the book is *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond.

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

**Young Adult Group** (ages 18-35): every other Wednesday at 7:10 p.m., Center Room

## New Groups Now Forming

**Parents of Teens:** Many of the support structures that surround us when we have small children fade away as our children get older. If this isolation frustrates you, and you want to spend time with a group of parents sharing in the joy and struggle of raising teenagers, reach out to Gail Mulcahey at [gtbmulcahey@gmail.com](mailto:gtbmulcahey@gmail.com). We are still determining the best format and meeting time for this group!

**Mid-adults Group:** Middle adulthood brings a host of changes and challenges in all facets of life. How do we live our values as we navigate those changes? If you have been searching for a group that lies between the Young Adults Group and the retirement groups here at Unity Church, reach out to Tom Coffee at [tomcoff@pm.me](mailto:tomcoff@pm.me).



## Welcome Words

**Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant**

In our quest to become a welcoming church, practice is the consistent act of hospitality, and inspiration is the spirit that drives it. Either falters without the other – hospitality without inspiration becomes routine, while inspiration without practice remains a fleeting idea. True welcome requires both the steady, intentional effort to create space for others and the heartfelt passion that makes that space warm, inclusive, and transformative. What inspires you to welcome others?

## Finding Yourself at Unity

**Sundays 10:15 a.m. | Center Room | Childcare available**

This is our weekly class for visitors and newcomers. Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time and attend the sessions in any order! Watch our weekly email for class topics or contact Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant, [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

April 6: Congregational Care

April 13: Building Tour

April 20: No session

April 27: Membership 101

## Committing to Unity

**Tuesday, April 8 | 6:30 p.m. | Center Room**

Have you completed all of the Finding Yourself at Unity sessions? Has Unity Church become your faith home? Would you like to sign the membership book? If the answer to these questions is yes, please join our senior minister, Rev. Oscar Sinclair and our membership coordinator, Philippa Anastos, on April 9! Participants will share their faith journeys, learn about the commitments of membership, and sign the membership book. Questions? Contact Philippa Anastos at [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

## Volunteer to Give Rides

We're looking for volunteers to give fellow community members rides to church. Your kindness and support will help others connect and participate. If you're able to assist, please consider volunteering! For more information, contact Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant, [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

**commUNITY** is the monthly newsletter of Unity Church. Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Mailed subscriptions are free to those who make pledges to Unity Church.



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Back row, from left: Jeff Vandercook, Brad McGarr, Shahzore Shah, Daniel Kodet, Presley Martin. Front row, from left: Philippa Anastos, Terri Vandercook, Joan Johnson, Margaret Hasse, Chris Kwong, Mallory LaSonde, Andrea Martin, Shelia Cunningham

**Lessie Culmer-Nier** returned to the Twin Cities in 2022 after 45 years in New Jersey. There, she and husband Keith Nier were active members of Beacon UU Congregation in Summit, NJ. Lessie is the retired head of the Library Catalog Department at Drew University. Since becoming involved with Unity Church Lessie has joined the library team, volunteers occasionally at coffee hour, and participates in Chalice Circles and dinner groups. She supports Keith's continued congregation "shopping."

**Shelia Cunningham** is originally from St. Paul, where she grew up in an Irish Catholic neighborhood and worked with the Jesuits and Benedictines, mentored by spiritually and socially engaged leaders. Over time, she found that Catholicism no longer aligned with her beliefs and values. Reading the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism affirmed her path, and at Unity Church through her participation with Active Hope, Chalice Circles, and a trip to Bolivia with Mano a Mano, she discovered her spiritual home.

**Margaret Hasse** grew up in Vermillion, SD, and attended Stanford and UMD. Semi-retired now, she worked as a consultant to arts organizations evaluating, fundraising, strategic planning, and facilitating leadership meetings. She also taught poetry classes in a variety of locations, including correctional facilities. She and her husband raised two sons in the Mac-Groveland neighborhood of St. Paul. *Belongings*, her ninth book of poetry, was released at a reading and party at Unity in October 2024.

**Chris Kwong** has been attending Unity Church for over a year, finding herself involved in Chalice Circles, Wellspring Wednesdays, Dine with Nine, and a couple choirs. She enjoys meeting new friends of all ages. Her spiritual practice is to help others without getting in the way!

**Mallory LaSonde** was born and raised UU in Massachusetts. During college she attended the church her sister and brother-in-law co-pastored in western Massachusetts. While working at Harvard University, she received a call to ministry from God, which she tried very hard to ignore. Now retired and with a Masters in Divinity from Harvard, she has moved to Minnesota and found a spiritual home at Unity Church, where she has found that the call continues.

**Presley Martin** was born and raised in southern Indiana and central Kentucky, attended Indiana University, and earned a Ph.D. in Biology from Johns Hopkins University. He then worked as a research scientist at several universities until he discovered his true calling: teaching. This led him to join the Biology Department at Hamline University. He and his wife, Andrea, have been married for 56 years and have two sons and three grandchildren. After retiring, Presley discovered Unity Church, where he immediately felt he found a spiritual home.

**Brad McGarr** lives in Burnsville with his partner Liz and daughter Annabelle. Originally from Washington and Arizona, he has been attending Unity Church since 2016 and has served the church as a Rotations teacher and as

an OWL team member. Brad enjoys outdoor activities, painting, writing, and political activism. Professionally, he works as a Systems Administrator in higher education.

**Shahzore Shah** is thrilled to join Unity Church as a member after nine years of involvement in the community as a singing staff member. A former Cantus artist, Shahzore currently teaches music at the Friends School of Minnesota, sings with Border CrosSing and serves on the Board of Directors for Giving Voice. He lives in St. Paul with his husband Daniel, their two adopted children, Charlotte and Raphael, and their cat, George. Shahzore loves gardening and cooking, especially as a family endeavor.

**Jeff Vandercook** is a residential real estate agent, working in that field for the past 21 years. He has also coached high school volleyball for 16 years. He was born in Iowa but has lived in Minnesota for the last 41 years. He is looking forward to being a part of the Unity Church community and has already reconnected with old friends and looks forward to making new ones.

**Terri Vandercook** retired after working for 50 years with individuals with disabilities, their families, and educators to support their inclusion into their school community. In her retirement, she has a strong focus on deepening relationships with family and friends and tending to her learning and growth. She looks forward to her membership in Unity Church as a way to support these goals and loves the inclusive focus and commitment to living lives of service, integrity, and joy!

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

A multigenerational weeknight at church!

Dinner: 5:45 p.m. | Chapel service: 6:45 p.m. | Programming: 7:10 p.m. — childcare provided!

Program and dinner details and Zoom links at [unityunitarian.org/wellspring-wednesday](https://unityunitarian.org/wellspring-wednesday).

## April 2

*Dinner: Pozole Verde, cornbread, jicama slaw, sugar cookies*

### Earth Day Poetry Reading | Parish Hall and Zoom

In these troubling times, poetry is a balm for the heart. Poems on behalf of the earth remind us of the beauty and wonder of the natural world, the streams, forests, and creatures that we love, even as we grieve what is being threatened. In this Earth Day Poetry Reading, three local poets will share poems that remind us the natural world is worth saving.

Thomas R. Smith, one of Minnesota's most treasured poets, is the author of 10 books of poetry and has been featured in *Best American Poetry*, *Writer's Almanac*, and elsewhere. Alice Duggan's poetry finds the profound and sometimes whimsical in everyday life; she received the Loft Mentorship award and has published widely. Barbara Draper's poems speak of "living with an awakened heart in a time of fear and uncertainty." Barbara has published her first book, *Sometimes a Door*, and has poems appear in *The Potomac Review*, *Paper Nautilus*, and elsewhere.

### Religious Education New Family Orientation | Gannett Room

Learn about Unity's religious education programs for children and youth. Email Nelson Moroukian at [nelson@unityunitarian.org](mailto:nelson@unityunitarian.org) one week in advance.

### Young Adult Group (ages 18-35) | Center Room

Unity's Young Adult Group is a fun, reflective group of people working to build multi-faith and multi-cultural community. They come together to ask the questions that are consuming us, to practice sharing what is sacred, and to try to live consequential lives as we navigate the complexity of being an adult. To be added to the Young Adults email list, please email [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org).

### Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Join Mayra Mendoza for beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Email [mayraquitzia@hotmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@hotmail.com) by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday to ensure a lesson.

## April 9

*Dinner: Baked potato bar, Italian chop salad, green beans, thumbprint cookies*

### Lenten Series Part 3 | Parish Hall

In the final part of this spirituality series with Revs. Oscar Sinclair, Lara Cowtan, and KP Hong, we come together to explore and share our understanding of spirituality, engage in specific forms of practice, and step further in cultivating practices that ground us in our faith and ministry in a rapidly changing world.

### Hymn Sing | Robbins Parlor and Zoom

At each session group members sing the hymn and discuss its music, text, history, and theology, while also sharing personal reflections on the music and its meaning.

### Lectio Divina | Zoom (from Gannett Room on Wednesdays)

Join the sacred experience of listening, contemplating, and responding to inspirational texts and contemporary poetry.

### Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Email [mayraquitzia@hotmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@hotmail.com) to ensure a lesson.

## April 16

*Dinner: Sopa de Albondigas, mixed greens, lime bars*

### Project Home & Habitat for Humanity Parish Hall and Zoom

Join this insightful session with the Evergreen Quilters and Housing Justice Team on Project Home and Habitat for Humanity. Learn about their impact in St. Paul and Minnesota, including Project Home's emergency shelter at St. Kate's. Executive Director Sara Liegl and Housing Case Manager Nate Jones will share their expertise on housing stability and transitioning to permanent housing. Don't miss this opportunity to engage with leaders in housing justice and support our community!

### Sanctuary Justice 101 Robbins Parlor

Join this introductory meeting to learn about the work of Unity's Sanctuary Justice Ministry Team (SJMT). In response to changing immigration policies and threats to LGBTQ+ rights, the SJMT is focusing on three key areas: educating Unity Church members on policy impacts, advocating for just legislation, and standing in solidarity with displaced persons. Our efforts are supported through community partnerships. We invite you to join the transformative sanctuary work of welcoming the stranger.

### Young Adult Group (ages 18-35) Center Room

Unity's Young Adult Group is a fun, reflective group of people working to build multi-faith and multi-cultural community.

### Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Email [mayraquitzia@hotmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@hotmail.com) to ensure a lesson.

10

*Integrity, service, and joy.*

*Wonder, open-hearted engagement, courageous action*

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY | LIBRARY-BOOKSTALL

April 23

Dinner: Turkey-ginger stir fry, rice, spinach salad, chocolate chip bars

## Water is Life: Art and Action | Parish Hall and Zoom

Brian Poulton, whose art is featured as part of our current nature-themed Parish Hall exhibit, partners with Clean Water Action to draw attention to the beauty of water and its importance socially and politically. Join Brian and staff from Clean Water Action, Kyle Rosas and Morgan Schafer, to hear about current threats to clean water in our state — such as toxic chemicals and increased use of water by corporations — and accessible actions we can take to protect this precious part of our natural world. Co-sponsored by the Art Team and Act for the Earth Team.

## Board Recruitment Committee | Robbins Parlor

Join us for an informational session about serving on Unity's Board of Trustees. Have you wanted to get more involved at Unity Church? Are you unsure if applying for the Board of Trustees is right for you? Come ask all of your questions!

## Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Email [mayraquitzia@hotmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@hotmail.com) to ensure a lesson.

April 30

Dinner: Pork tenderloin, tahini-squash salad, rice, macaroons

## Minns Lecture Part 1

### Rehearsal for Reconstruction | Parish Hall and Zoom

Zoom registration is required: [bit.ly/minnsapr30](https://bit.ly/minnsapr30)

Join us for the first Minns Lecture "Rehearsal for Reconstruction" by Rev. Dr. Wayne Arnason.

In the three-part series

*Deconstructing Mythologies of Unitarian Anti-Racism*, Rev. Dr. Arnason, Rev. Lisa Friedman, and Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed narrate a new story of pre-merger Unitarianism beyond heroic stories of abolition and Civil Rights and beginning with the significant Unitarian presence at the "rehearsal for reconstruction" in Port Royal, SC, during and after the Civil War. Unity Church member Jim Oberly, responding.



Rev. Arnason is a retired parish minister who has authored books and essays on Unitarian Universalist institutional history. He has also served as president of the UU Ministers Association and secretary of the UUA Board of Trustees.

The Minns Lectures are an annual series of lectures on religious topics to reimagine the future of religious life and reconstruct theologies and practices to fit our changing world. Find information about the three-part series (only part one is being held at Unity Church) at [minnslectures.org](https://minnslectures.org).

## Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Email [mayraquitzia@hotmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@hotmail.com) to ensure a lesson.



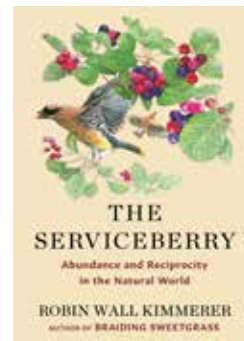
## Spring, Birds, and Books

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

One afternoon last summer, I was reading on my deck when I noticed something fluttering in my peripheral vision. Turning my head slightly, I was graced by a hummingbird visiting me just off my right shoulder. When something extraordinary like this happens, time slows, and it felt like a good long visit — what a gift!

So, while spring is in the air and it is time to walk, run, bike, garden, and enjoy the sun, you never know what may show up to inspire you when reading a book outdoors. Here are a few New York Times bestsellers and "best books" of the year titles to consider; in the Bookstall and Anderson Library:

*The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* by Robin Wall Kimmerer is described by *Sierra* magazine as, "a psalm for the natural world and a profound exploration of how we can reframe our relationship with nature and with others through gift economies."



I know, I know, I wrote about this before, but Amy Tan's beautiful, illustrated *The Backyard Bird Chronicles* bears mentioning again. What began for her as looking for solace in a divisive, troubled world, turned into a charming and witty adventure into the natural world and its potential impact on those that take the time to look. Not for birders only!

*The Berry Pickers*, the debut novel and winner of the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction by Amanda Peters, is a story of a heart wrenching event that leads to a persistent search for truth and a powerful message about love and healing.

On another topic, if it's spring, it must be time for Café Unity, the annual coffeehouse that showcases the literary and musical talent of Unity Church. It's coming up on Friday, May 2. If you have original writing to read, or if you sing, play music, dance, or even tell jokes, please do contact us to get on the program. Space is limited. Email us: [library@unityunitarian.org](mailto:library@unityunitarian.org).



**UUSC**  
Help advance  
human rights!

Please consider becoming part of a Unity group that's connecting with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). The goal is to expand our capacity to advance human rights by joining with an international community of grassroots partners and advocates. The dismantling of USAID increases the importance of this work.

The UUSC is an international human rights organization founded in 1939 when Rev. Waitstill and Martha Sharp took an extraordinary risk, helping refugees escape Nazi persecution in Europe. The Sharp's story was a part of Rev. Lara Cowtan's sermon on March 23.

Join Rev. Oscar Sinclair and the UUSC team on Friday, May 16, at 6:00 p.m., in Parish Hall for dinner and to see the film, *Defying the Nazis: The Sharp War*. There will be discussion, information about UUSC, and ways we can join hands for human rights.

Since its founding, the UUSC mission has been to advance human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies. UUSC's work is grounded in the belief that all people have inherent power and dignity.

UUSC currently works with more than 50 grassroots organizations in 20 countries. In the U.S., the UUSC is focused on areas such as defending civil liberties and human rights by strengthening protections for people in migration, ensuring rights for trans-gender people, and advancing climate justice.

Unity's UUSC team is Clover Earl, Tom Zell, Krista Hanson and Marty Rossmann.

## Indigenous Justice Team

### Author Sarah Augustine Coming to the Twin Cities

Sarah Augustine, co-founder and executive director of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery, will make a series of appearances in the Twin Cities on April 4 and 5. Sarah is a Pueblo (Tewa) descendant and the co-founder of Suriname Indigenous Health Fund (SIHF), where she has advocated for vulnerable Indigenous Peoples since 2004. She has represented the interests of Indigenous community partners to their own governments, the Inter-American development bank, the United Nations, the Organization of American States Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and a host of other international actors including corporate interests. She cohosts the Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery podcast with Sheri Hostetler and serves in a leadership role on multiple boards and commissions to enable vulnerable peoples in Washington State to speak for themselves in advocating for structural change.



Sponsored by the Twin Cities Repair Communities for Makoce Ikikcupi, Sarah will present a lecture, "**Embodying Solidarity with Indigenous People by Becoming Kin,**" on Friday evening, April 4, 7:00 p.m., at United Theological Seminary, 767 Eustis Ave, Suite 140, St. Paul. This talk is open to the public at no charge; doors open at 6:15 p.m.

**On Saturday, April 5, Sarah, together with other staff from the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery, will lead a workshop entitled "Decolonization and Organizing for Systems Change,"** to be held in Parish Hall at Unity Church from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This training is designed for those wanting to review or learn the fundamentals of grassroots organizing through a decolonizing framework. It will be delivered in two interactive modules and is intended to support those ready to move beyond education and into organizing their networks around a structural change or land recovery campaigns at local, state, or federal levels. Multiple role-plays and templates are provided to apply your learning. The workshop will be offered in person and on Zoom. There is no charge for the workshop; the accompanying workbook can be purchased on site for \$40. Registration is required: [bit.ly/augwork](https://bit.ly/augwork).

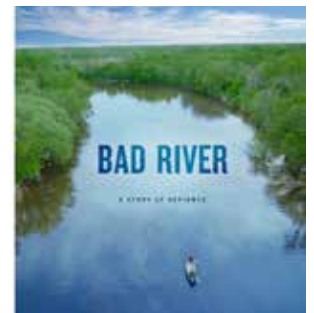
**Following the workshop, at 3:00 pm in Robbins Parlor, there will be an informal discussion with Sarah at Unity about her book, *The Land is Not Empty — Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery*.** The discussion is especially intended for participants in Unity's Indigenous Justice book read but is open to anyone who has read the book. This event is in person only.

## Movie Night: *Bad River*

**Friday, April 11 | 6:00 p.m. | Robbins Parlor**

Unity's Act for the Earth, Indigenous Justice, and Racial Justice Teams are hosting a movie night — with a pizza dinner included!

*Bad River* is a documentary chronicling the Wisconsin-based Bad River Band and its ongoing fight for sovereignty. The story unfolds in a groundbreaking way through a series of shocking revelations, devastating losses, and a powerful legacy of defiance and resilience including a David vs. Goliath battle with Canadian energy company, Enbridge, to save Lake Superior, the largest freshwater resource in America. As Eldred Corbine, a Bad River Tribal Elder declare, "We gotta protect it... die for it, if we have to."



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## A Kickoff Event for Kids Green Team

Saturday, April 19

**Game and Puzzle Swap | 1:00-3:00 p.m. | Parish Hall**

Have you or your kids outgrown your games or puzzles? Are you ready to pass them on? Join the Act for the Earth team as we keep things that are useful out of the landfills with this game and puzzle swap. Bring your clean and complete games or puzzles to donate and browse for something to take home.

**Movie: WALL-E | 3:15-5:00 p.m. | Robbins Parlor**

WALL-E, short for "Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth-Class," is the last robot left on Earth. He spends his days tidying up the trash, but he is lonely. WALL-E will inspire you to make the world a better place. Light refreshments will be served.

## Obama-JJ Hill School Team

Nancy Heege, Obama-JJ Hill School Team

Recently one of the teachers at JJ Hill offered our volunteers a special opportunity and five of us were able to take him up on it. After school one day, the teacher gave us an hour of his time, which included an introduction to Montessori philosophy and a demonstration of two of the materials Montessori students use to build skills — one for math and one for reading. We were grateful for the lesson and for the delicious cookies and juice he provided.

The last week of February each year is Montessori Education Week, and this year it was special because Governor Tim Walz proclaimed it Montessori Education Week in Minnesota! To celebrate with the teachers, several of our church volunteers provided a special treat for the staff — trays full of delicious muffins of various kinds, as well as a copy of the book, *If You Give a Moose a Muffin*, by Laura Joffe Numeroff. Three teachers stopped me in the hall the following week to thank us for the thoughtful treat! We truly are building a relationship with the school, which will carry over when they move to the Obama building across the street from the church in the fall.

Families from JJ Hill will be invited to come to the Game and Puzzle Swap sponsored by Act for the Earth on Saturday, April 19. We hope to see you there, too!

## Gun Violence Prevention Team

Jo Lucas, Gun Violence Prevention Team

"We can do better than this!" So says a young mother while talking with her young son about gun locks, and how they are used, at the Gun Violence Prevention Team table during coffee hour here at Unity Church. She is eager to teach her children a kinder way to live. The Gun Violence Prevention Team works to educate, to legislate and to inform all of us, as an effort toward a kinder way for all of us to live. Come and join us, in person or on Zoom, the third Thursday of May, 3:30-4:30 p.m., in the Gannett Room.

## Housing Justice Team

Dayna Kennedy, Housing Justice Team

**Bagels with BLUU: Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism is creating home ownership!**

Saturday, April 26 | Robbins Parlor and [Zoom](#)

9:30 a.m.: Bagels | 10:00-11:00 a.m., Program

Join us for a very special conversation with Lena Gardner, executive director of Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU), who will discuss their exciting partnership with



Urban Homeworks to create 17 new cooperative housing units to serve Black and Indigenous families in North Minneapolis. The first groundbreaking (for a triplex) was held on May 17, 2024. Come hear about the context, challenges, exciting momentum and how advancing housing justice reflects UU values.

*Rendering of a multi-family unit from BLUU's Housing Initiative. Upon completion, the eight duplexes/triplex will make 17 Black and Indigenous families homeowners in North Minneapolis.*

## Cleaning house? Bring us your goods!

*Many thanks to everyone who donated items in March!*

Provide much-needed household items for families moving out of shelter at Project Home and into more permanent housing. Unity's Housing Justice Team and Evergreen Quilters will be collecting items on **Saturday, April 12, 9:00-11:30 a.m., at Unity Church**. Come to the covered entrance in the east side parking lot (off of Holly Avenue). Volunteers will be ready to load your donations directly from your car into theirs.

**Items should be new or gently used and clean, no chips, cracks or stains:** dish sets, pots and pans, baking and storage items, wastebaskets, small appliances, flatware and knife sets, brooms, cutting boards, towels, and new sheets, pillow cases, and mattress pads. Questions? Contact Barb Rogne at [bzrogne27@gmail.com](mailto:bzrogne27@gmail.com).

## Be a Weekend Warrior

We're looking for groups of 3-6 adults to participate in weekend meal teams at Provincial House in Saint Paul. Volunteers assist with serving meals, visiting with guests, and clean up. For details and to sign up visit [bit.ly/ucuph](https://bit.ly/ucuph). Questions? Email Donna Franklin at [dfranklin@interfaithaction.org](mailto:dfranklin@interfaithaction.org).

## Asylum and Faithful Hospitality

Families seeking asylum in our community face an overflow in emergency shelters. Born out of this need, the Faithful Hospitality initiative partners with local houses of worship to provide shelter for these families. Want to learn more? Please contact Annessa Ihde at [aihde@interfaithaction.org](mailto:aihde@interfaithaction.org).

# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH



## Superstars

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

You likely have heard me say there is one true religion fervently embraced by a large portion of Minnesotans — rabid, fundamentalist followers — and that religion is Hockey. There might be more truly committed followers of Hockey, gathering at rinks and arenas every Sunday morning than at any other place of worship.

As a longtime coach of youth hockey, I well know that Saturday morning hockey is almost always focused on "practice." As I had to remind the kids pretty much every Sunday, we were there to practice, and though I knew everyone would prefer to just play a game, we couldn't be true to the game if we were not devoted to practice.

"Awww — no fun!"

The other night one of the Minnesota Wild's whiz kids, Matt Boldy, scored a shootout game winning goal that made the goalie look like an absolute fool. I can't do it justice with a verbal description. My wife and I applauded the goal and then we both asked "Did he have those moves planned out before he skated in on the goalie?"

I believe he did not. I think it was an inspired reaction to what he saw was possible at that moment. Pure inspiration, absolute magic! And yet I am absolutely certain that his inspired reaction/action was the result of hours, years of practice.

The high school youth in Tower Club share a practice of joining as a circle and listening to each other as they talk about joys and sorrows, opinions and reactions, hopes and fears. In the best sessions it is clear that they have participated with their heads and their hearts. I'll make the very big generalization that the seniors are "better at it" than the juniors and sophomores.

The newer groups are, I know, coming in trying to figure out what is going on, and whether it is something they want to be a part of, or feel they even can be a part of. You could say that there is generally a difference in maturity between 15-year-olds and 17- or 18-year-olds, but that is only part of it.

The seniors have joined in this circle dozens of times by 12th grade and they have been practicing how to be present in both heart and mind the whole time. I can imagine how daunting it is for a new comer to hear one of the veterans giving a response that cuts to the very heart of the matter, and doing so with both vulnerability and confidence. I'm sure some of them sit there panic-stricken wondering what in the world they are going to say to compete with that? Some over think it, some just plain run away.

But those who stay, little by little they practice the practice, and before you know it they are making inspired, vital contributions every week. I hope for every young person the opportunity to practice being together in body, mind and soul. I certainly wish the same for me, and for all of us. The practice will inspire us for whenever we suit up.

## A Kickoff Event for Kids Green Team

**Saturday, April 19**

**Game and Puzzle Swap**

**1:00-3:00 p.m. | Parish Hall**

Have you or your kids out grown your games or puzzles? Are you ready to pass them on? Join the Act for the Earth team as we keep things that are useful out of the landfills with this game and puzzle swap. Bring your clean and complete games or puzzles to donate and browse for something to take home.

**Movie: WALL-E**

**3:15-5:00 p.m. | Robbins Parlor**

WALL-E, short for "Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth-Class", is the last robot left on Earth. He spends his days tidying up the trash, but he is lonely. WALL-E will inspire you to make the world a better place. Light refreshments will be served.



## Chalice Camp

**Registration now open!**

**Week 1: July 7-11**

**Week 2: July 14-18**

Chalice Camp is offered Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., for children and youth ages 5-13.

Campers going into 7th or 8th grade will be part of our senior camper program. If your child would like to serve as a camp counselor, please email [nelson@unityunitarian.org](mailto:nelson@unityunitarian.org).

Campers will explore Unitarian Universalism through varied and engaging activities, everything from puppet shows to field games. Campers will get to participate in traditional camp activities, arts and crafts and lots of outdoor play time.

Details and registration are online at [unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp](http://unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp).

## Coming of Age 2025

The entire congregation is warmly invited to witness the Coming of Age of this year's ninth grade class on Saturday, April 26, 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**

How do you practice spontaneous inspiration? This question was a turning point in my musical journey. Around 2013, when I was still a full-time concert pianist, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21 in C major, K. 467, was a core part of my repertoire. This concerto, which I've loved since my childhood, is one of Mozart's greatest hits — super popular and performed all the time — so one challenge was figuring out how to make my version feel fresh.

Classical concertos have a cadenza, a moment where the performers of the time would improvise to show off their skills. This practice is largely forgotten, with modern performers playing cadenzas written by Mozart himself or other composers from history. Since Mozart didn't leave written cadenzas for this concert, I decided to create my own, crafting them through hours of improvisation. I never wrote any of them down, which gave me the freedom to change things up while keeping the overall structure intact. It felt a lot like jazz improvisation — I had a collection of "licks" I could throw in depending on the moment. After a while, though, playing the same cadenza over and over started feeling stale. The whole point was to keep things spontaneous, and I realized I was doing the exact opposite — sticking to what felt safe. So I made a bold decision: I would improvise a new cadenza in every performance. It was nerve-racking but also exciting.

To get ready, I consulted with jazz colleagues and quickly noticed some key differences between jazz and classical improvisation. In jazz, originality is king — even if things get a little messy — whereas in Mozart's style, you have to stick closely to certain harmonic and melodic rules. The tolerance for "wrong notes" in the classical style is orders of magnitude lower in Mozart than it is in jazz. I spent months listening to and transcribing by ear cadenzas from other pianists, getting a feel for the patterns they used, and figuring out how to build my own improvised sections while staying true to Mozart's style.

I also set some ground rules for myself: no flashy Romantic piano runs and octave passages, no jazz harmonies — only techniques that Mozart himself might have used were admissible. Also, no cheating. The easy way out would have been to stick to what I already knew; whatever I was playing had to be new and created on the spot. I experimented with different ways to transition between themes, practiced making quick decisions mid-performance, and built a toolbox of motifs, chord progressions, and patterns that I could mix and match in the moment.

When it was finally time to perform, my focus wasn't on the little details but on the big picture — where I wanted to go musically and how I'd get back to the main theme to cue the orchestra. It was an incredible rush, unlike anything I'd felt before in classical music. I felt connected not just to the music but to all the musicians before me who had improvised their own cadenzas. And something unexpected happened — I started experiencing the music in a physical way, like I was traveling through different musical landscapes, moving through spaces and then finding my way back home.

The whole experience completely changed how I think about performance. It pushed me to embrace the unknown and rediscover the excitement of playing. These days I always recommend to all my students and colleagues to really embrace improvisation as a practice. It has a way of deepening our connection to music, breaking us free from our routines, and enabling inspiration.

You can watch me play some of these improvised cadenzas in this video: [youtu.be/XIH-PMg5pEQ](https://youtu.be/XIH-PMg5pEQ).



*Border CrosSing Presents*

## Oceana

**Saturday, April 5 | 8:00-10:00 p.m.**

**Ordway Concert Hall**

Tickets: [bit.ly/oceanatix25](https://bit.ly/oceanatix25)

## Hymn Sing

**Wednesday, April 9 | 7:10 p.m.**

**Robbins Parlor and Zoom**

Sing the hymn; discuss its music, text, history, and theology; share personal reflections on the music and its meaning.

## Foote Music Sunday

**May 4, 2025**

**9:00 and 11:15 a.m.**



*One Voice Mixed Chorus Presents*

## Weather: Stand the Storm Concert

**Saturday, May 24 | 6:30 p.m.**

**Ted Mann Concert Hall**

Tickets and details: [onevoicemn.org](https://onevoicemn.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)

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister  
Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation  
Laura Park, Executive Director  
Mary Baremore, Chair, Board of Trustees

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO. 1141

**TIME SENSITIVE  
MATERIAL**

Service of Installation for Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair  
Saturday, April 12 | 2:00 PM | Sanctuary at Unity Church



## Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf Needs Our Help

Visits to food shelves are at an all time high. Please bring nonperishable food items every time you come to church. In February we donated 187 pounds of food to Hallie Q. Brown. Let's make April an even a better month!

April food shelf needs include garbage bags, dish soap (24 oz. or less) or pods, laundry soap or pods and bleach (32 oz or less), and nonperishable food items. Food shelf financial contributions are gratefully accepted at [hallieqbrown.charityproud.org/donate](http://hallieqbrown.charityproud.org/donate).



## In The Justice Database

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

We Make Minnesota is a coalition of labor unions and grassroots organizations united by our shared belief in a caring and collaborative society. We fight for the public revenues and investments that create a strong and prosperous Minnesota, where communities can thrive, and everyone is afforded the opportunity to live a safe, healthy, and dignified life.

## Café Unity

A Showcase of the Literary and Musical Talent of Unity Church

Friday, May 2, 2025

Gather at 6:45 pm / Program at 7:00 pm  
Unity Church Parish Hall



Sign up to sing, play music, or read your original work.  
Space is limited  
Contact us now:  
[library@unityunitarian.org](mailto:library@unityunitarian.org)



**UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
BALTIMORE • JUNE 18 - 22, 2025  
[UUA.ORG/GA](http://UUA.ORG/GA)

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), where participants gather to worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy decisions for the Association through a democratic process. Serve as a delegate! Email Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).