

Joyful Visions

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.

*We the people of Unity Church-
Unitarian, grounded in a joyous vision
of beloved community, within, among,
and beyond ourselves...*

— Preamble to Unity Church Ends

This spring the song that has been going through my head most weeks is Charles Tindley's "[The Storm is Passing Over](#):"

*Courage, my soul, and let us
journey on,
tho' the night is dark it won't be
very long.*

*Thanks be to God, the morning
light appears,
and the storm is passing over,
hallelujah!*

We have been through a storm in Minnesota this winter. And while we are not yet out of it, we are in a different place than we were a month ago — I can start to see something like morning light appearing on the horizon. In the midst of the immigration enforcement action that abducted and deported over 4,000 of our neighbors, one of the bright spots to emerge was the verb Thomas Friedman wrote about in the New York Times: "Neighboring." As in "I am going neighboring today, patrolling at a school drop-off." Or "I am neighboring, bringing food to families unable to leave their houses." And "I am neighboring, showing up with whistles and signs to declare that a better world is possible." In "neighboring," we glimpse a vision of what Unity Church has talked about for years. This is the beloved community, a place where we gather together and say this is only a community when all of us are a part of it, that we refuse to be a part of a politics or city defined by whom it excludes.

One of the questions for us, in the spring of 2026, is how we will hold onto the joy of what we have just seen, even as we process and heal from the fear, the harm, the 4,000 Minnesotans who have been deported, and may be trying to return home. We should not understate the wounds left after this winter, but nor should we discount the possibility of alternative ways of being a community that we got a glimpse of. Unity Church has been saying "there are no other people's children" for a very long time, but have we ever seen a more sustained, lived example of that vision than volunteers in yellow vests on the corner of Grotto and Holly every morning in the depth of winter?

In the Book of Proverbs, we can read that "without vision, the people perish." It is never enough to express anger and opposition. What drives us, as individuals and a community, is the sense that we are working for something. What does the world we hope and work for look like? It better be joyful! [Emma Goldman never wrote](#) "If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution." But she did write this in her autobiography *Living My Life*: "I did not believe that a Cause which stood for a beautiful ideal, for anarchism, for release and freedom from conventions and prejudice, should demand the denial of life and joy. . . . If it meant that, I did not want it."

The month of April begins with Easter this year, which means I (Oscar) have been spending time with sermons from John Wesley. Our theology is not

the same, but in a 1744 sermon he preached about a vision of a world that embraced the values he held. Speaking about what a hypothetical "Christian Nation" would look like, [he said](#):

And, first, I would ask, Where does this Christianity now exist? Where, I pray, do the Christians live? Which is the country, the inhabitants whereof are all thus filled with the Holy Ghost — are all of one heart and of one soul cannot suffer one among them to lack anything, but continually give to every man as he hath need; who, one and all, have the love of God filling their hearts, and constraining them to love their neighbour as themselves; who have all "put on bowels of mercy, humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering" who offend not in any kind, either by word or deed, against justice, mercy, or truth; but in every point do unto all men; as they would these should do unto them? With what propriety can we term any a Christian country, which does not answer this description? Why then, let us confess we have never yet seen a Christian country upon earth.

This is one vision of the beloved community, where the values he held dear pointed him toward a world where people "cannot suffer one among them to lack anything, but continually give toward [all] as they have need."

As we move from the long cold winter into whatever we will build next together, what is our joyful vision, which grounds our work within, among, and beyond this community?

*Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair
with this month's theme team.*

Theme Resources

Further reflection on the theme:
unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.



Just Words

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister

This month, I am preaching at the ordination of Cara Fortner, a new Unitarian Universalist Minister in Fairfax, Virginia. I've known Cara since her first year of seminary at Wesley Theological, when she asked the UUA if there was a Wesley graduate who might be able to talk to her about being a Unitarian Universalist in an overwhelmingly

Christian setting. Since then, I've had the privilege to meet with her once a month as she has gone through classes, Clinical Pastoral Education, an internship, a trip to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, and a job search. Ordination is not a role taken on lightly, and we aren't always clear about what it means to spend half a decade in various forms of training before you are qualified to work with a congregation.

And so, an ordination is a joyful day. In our tradition it is an event hosted by a local congregation, not a denominational body. It is a chance to step back and say something about the state of ministry and the movement in the world we find ourselves in. My friend Cara, in 2026, has chosen "Be the light" as her theme and I cannot help but hear the echoes of the Buddha: "Be ye lamps unto yourselves." And Jesus: "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid... In the same way, let your light shine before others." Cara spent the last year in the shadow of Washington, DC, but rather than dwell on the grim state of the world in 2026, she has asked us to consider the light. What is the joyful vision of ministry in and despite these times?

To ask to be ordained in our tradition is to dedicate one's life to the building of beloved community. This month, we are welcoming people all along the path of engaging that community, from new members joining on Sunday morning to our youth coming of age on April 26. April is a reminder that even as the makeup of our community changes, we are in good hands, held by a vision of what can be, even when we ourselves cannot yet see it.

On a much more prosaic note, my wife Stacie and I canceled a vacation several times this winter and are headed to New York for a much needed few days of rest, music, and time together. I will be out of the office from April 6-13 and look forward to connecting when we return.

Rev. Oscar



The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Rose Crannell

December 11, 1929–March 4, 2026

In Celebration

Isaac Robin Gernes

born one more redeemer,

February 12, 2026,

to parents Kate and Steve Gernes



Justice Database

A Project of Unity Church-Unitarian

[In The Justice Database](#)

"Takers not Makers," an Oxfam report on colonialism and wealth.

Stay Connected

commUNITY is the monthly newsletter of Unity Church. Deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to the month of publication. Subscriptions to this monthly newsletter (digital and USPS) and our weekly e-news are available by contacting Martha at martha@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x105.

Access all the hyperlinks in the newsletter with this QR code.



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JUNE 14 – 21, 2026

MEET THE MOMENT: TOGETHER EVERYWHERE

For General Assembly in 2026, the UUA is creating a virtual "everywhere GA" with both online and distributed in-person options that will allow Unitarian Universalists to participate in whichever way works best for them. This new format will reduce travel costs and environmental impacts, offer optional in-person connections, streamline production costs, and provide a more flexible schedule for participants. Get all the details: www.uua.org/ga.

SUNDAY SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Sunday Services

Sunday services are held at 9:00 and 11:15 a.m. The 9:00 a.m. service is also offered via livestream. Find the livestream links, sermon podcasts, and worship theme resources at unityunitarian.org/sunday-services.

Easter Family Sunday, April 5: All of Us

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair | Sarah Clewyn, Worship Associate

Jesus, in at least one version of the Easter story, died a human being and came back as a community. One vision of resurrection, in our tradition, is a community in which all of us are needed, gathered in a beloved community of mutual care and thriving. As the ice melts and spring comes, what comes next for this place?

On Family Sundays, children experience the entire worship together with their families in the Sanctuary. A story for all ages and activity books related to the stories and sermon help children to engage in the experience of worship. Regular religious education programming does not take place on Family Sundays, however, the nursery is open for children under three years of age.

April 12: Better than Thomas?

Rev. Shay MacKay | Anna Newton, Worship Associate

Are we a faith of believers or skeptics? Do our joyful visions depend on what we *know* to be true or on what we *hope* to be true? Join this conversation about doubt (and faith).

April 19: Open Eyes, Open Heart

**Amy Brunell, Hallman Ministerial Intern
Charlie Caswell, Worship Associate**

What if the most radical spiritual act is looking closer? Religious Naturalism is a faith practice that finds the sacred not beyond the natural world but entwined into the very core of it. It is the practice of interdependence. When we ground ourselves to look closely at what is actually real, something unexpected happens — call it reverence, call it wonder, call it joy. Come ready to see differently.

Coming of Age Sunday, April 26: All of Us, Redux

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair | Isaac Fried, Worship Associate

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.

Coming of Age gives us a glimpse of what is to come: a Unitarian Universalism that continues to embrace our vision of a community based not on shared beliefs, but a commitment to each other, and what we can do together.

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.

April 5

The Easter collection will support life-saving work of [Mano a Mano International Partners](#) in Bolivia, a South American country linked to Unity Church for over two decades. Devastating inequality in rural Bolivia is evidence of centuries of resource exploitation, embedded racial and class oppression, and — more recently — the whipsawing of climate change. This is the venue for Mano a Mano's inspiring work. Founded in 1994 by longtime Unity Church members Segundo and Joan Velasquez, Mano a Mano International Partners is dedicated to building infrastructure — schools, clinics, roads, reservoirs and wells — as well as developing human capacity training health care providers, farmers, and builders. Dozens of church members have been privileged to travel to Bolivia to witness the impact of this amazing work.

April 12

[United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities](#) (UTS) is a significant educational resource, locally and nationally, for Unitarian Universalists, whether they are answering a call to the ministry or pursuing graduate level education focused on theology, justice and the arts. Many Unity Church members, interns and staff are graduates of UTS, and several of Unity's ministers have taught on the faculty. With this collection, Unity Church joins 17 other congregations funding scholarship support for UU students attending UTS.

April 19

[Act for the Earth](#) empowers the Unity Church community to address climate change, climate justice, and environmentalism through education and action. The team plants pollinator gardens and trees; advocates for clean energy, electric vehicles, plant-based eating, and waste reduction; and offers spiritually grounding practices and workshops based on the Active Hope model. Their advocacy group follows the work of community partners Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light and Rise and Repair to support environmental action. This May they will host the second annual EcoFair in partnership with six local churches.

April 26

[Zion Community Commons](#), on the corner of LaFond and Aldine since 1912, is a place of hospitality and grace to all in need. Its food program offers "pay what you can" meals and provides weekly "shelter in place" bags of food, diapers, and more, to 200-plus families caught up in the uncertainties of Operation Metro Surge. Zion's Arts on LaFond program seeks to nurture strong community ties through a vibrant program of music and arts, including weekly concerts that have become a spiritual oasis for the Hamline-Midway community.



Saying Yes with Joy

Debbie Cushman, Trustees

Last fall, I received an email from Mary Baremore, chair of Unity's Board in 2025. She was wondering if I would consider serving again as a trustee to finish out the term of another board

member who needed to step away. (A quick housekeeping note for this article: trustee and board member are interchangeable terms.)

I was honored to have been a trustee from 2022 through 2024. It was quite a time to be on the board; we worked hard, we laughed, we cried, we kept going. Those three years consisted almost entirely of interim ministry save the final five months once Rev. Oscar arrived. It was an incredibly enriching and important experience. And definitely tiring. I declared 2025 as Year of My Neglected House Projects and moved on, with the bittersweet emotional combination of goodbyes and satisfying accomplishments. So why did I say yes to Mary with joy?

For the past three decades, I've been in and around governance in many forms. I've probably participated in a couple hundred board meetings as either staff or board, in small nonprofits and large corporations. While each role provided me with a different understanding of the complexities of organizational success, none of those experiences offer a precise parallel for governance at Unity Church.

If you go to Unity's website to look for the Board of Trustees page you'll find it under the "Connect" tab. That's exactly where it should be if you're anyone besides a trustee. That tab answers questions about news, calendars, congregational care, fellowship groups — who to contact for what. But, for me, I think the role could fit just as well under "Grow." This tab includes adult faith formation, antiracist multiculturalism and spiritual practice. For whichever configuration of nine Unity Church members share the responsibility each year, we can be sure that the experience will change us.

Serving as a trustee asks for more listening than talking, humility before accomplishments, contemplation before movement. Of course, we do approve things and conduct plenty of official business, but our overarching priority is the thoughtful stewardship toward our Ends. The lines of responsibility between board and staff are drawn clearly by policy governance, the approach we follow at Unity. Last but not least, volunteering as a trustee includes close collaboration with Unity's fabulous Executive Team which is always a joy.

The application for 2027 trustees will open soon. Board service doesn't call to everyone. But if this round of applications has caught your interest, stop by our outreach table on Sundays this spring to have a chat. A great volunteer role transforms the volunteer more than the stakeholders and serving on Unity's Board is no exception. If this calls to you, please apply for 2027.

Stewardship Corner

While stewardship of Unity's future takes more than money, this month we focus on a few financial numbers:

- **2026 Operating Pledge Goal:** We have just 2% (\$26,700) left to meet our operating pledge goal. If you haven't made your pledge yet, please make it today!
- **2026 Sacred Space Pledge Goal:** We have exceeded our sacred space pledge goal by \$14,000. We will see if this can enable us to put signage at the St. Albans parking lot. The capital budget included a number of upgrades to the parking lot, including resurfacing and a rain garden; doing signage at the same time will further integrate the work.
- **Fulfilling Our Promise Fundraiser Auction:** We raised more than \$50,000 to sustain the critically important ministry of Unity Church. After expenses, this should fulfill our promise to fundraise \$45,000 to balance the 2026 budget. Huge shout out to the dedicated, imaginative, and hard-working core auction team: Heidi Birkholz, Shelley Butler, Barbi Byers, Joan Maclin, Jennifer Nedry, and Sara Testen. High five to our live auctioneer Amy Brunell. Deep appreciation to all the volunteers in the kitchen and on the floor on auction night. Thank you to everyone who bid and attended—your generosity deepens connection and makes this church possible!
- **Rent Assistance:** As of March 11, 2026, you've contributed nearly \$22,000 to help our neighbors affected by the ICE surge with their rent. These funds have been enormously helpful to families unable to leave their homes to work. As the initial crisis diminishes, and we attend to ongoing systemic needs, we encourage you to contribute to the Minister's Discretionary Fund, which we use to help with individual requests for assistance and organizational requests for mutual aid.

Unity Church Ends Statements

We the people of Unity Church-Unitarian, grounded in a joyous vision of beloved community, within, among, and beyond ourselves,

- understand the interconnected roots of oppression and yoke ourselves to the demands, sacrifices, and hard work of antiracism, multiculturalism, and climate and economic justice;
- cultivate a multigenerational community of joy, care, and belonging, and evangelize love to meet the deep and abiding hunger in all of us;
- practice lifelong faith formation, grounded in Unitarian Universalist theology, that breaks us open and allows us to be transformed.

Connecting About "Interconnected Roots of Oppression" Series

LauraSue Schlatter

Beloved Community Communications Team

It may feel as though Unity's Board of Trustees presented us with too daunting a task when it asked us, the members of Unity Church, to "understand the interconnected roots of oppression . . ." in the opening challenge of our Ends Statements. But we have willing and patient teachers among our Beloved Community Staff Team, congregants, and partners in the community who can help us.

The six-week "Interconnected Roots of Oppression" Wellspring Wednesday series was designed to teach and engage participants during weekly dialogue circles about:

- Foundations of Racial Capitalism;
- Land, Ownership, and Housing Justice;
- Borders, Policing, and the Politics of Belonging;
- Finance, Debt, and the Cost of Inequality;
- Universal Care and the Struggle for Collective Wellbeing; and
- Fossil Capitalism and Imagining New Futures.

Who, we wondered, was showing up at this well-attended series? Why? And are these conversations leading to new possibilities, cultivating collective action, and genuine transformation? We spoke to some attendees to find out. Use the links below to access the interviews or look for links in an April weekly e-newsletter.



[Lauren Gunderson Interview](#)



[Kirt Schaper Interview](#)



[Kathy Wallace Interview](#)



Writing for Wellbeing Workshop

Saturday, April 25 | 9:00 a.m.-noon | Robbins Parlor

Registration: bit.ly/wellbework

Grief is one of the most challenging and emotionally painful experiences all of us face. In living with grief, we often experience a fragmentation of our self and our understanding of the world. Integration of loss requires not only the expression of grief and meaning-making, but also the rebuilding of identity.



Writing for Wellbeing is an effective and powerful research-based method to empower us to integrate and transform our grief. All who are grieving, who have experienced loss and are struggling, who want to explore new and different ways of writing their stories, are welcome to join Rev. Shay in a morning of reflection, writing, and sharing.

Living With Grief Group

Third Tuesday of the month | 7:00-8:30 p.m.

A group for people living with grief and loss. All are welcome to come and discuss issues related to the grieving process. Email shay@unityunitarian.org to participate.

Caregivers Support Group

Third Thursday of the month | Noon-2:00 p.m. | Zoom

Are you a part-time or full-time caretaker of loved ones in your life? Do you need support in order to sustain the care you are giving? Join Rev. Shay MacKay and Congregational Care Team member Cynthia Orange for an informal support group for caregivers. Email pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org to participate.

Families Living with Mental Health Challenges

Third Saturday of the month | 9:30-11:30 a.m. | Zoom

A support group for families living with mental health challenges. Email pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org to participate.

Congregational Care

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? Send an email to pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org.

WELCOME NEWCOMERS



Welcome Words

Philippa Anastos
Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant

In the cycle of the seasons, spring is a burst of energy after the fallow season of winter. How, then, do we conceptualize spring when our winter has been full of activity instead of rest? Our community has drawn closer to stand firm in the face of injustice and cruelty, and many of us now carry a deep exhaustion in our bones. The worship theme for this month reminds us that, even when we move out of sync with the seasons, the *cycle* of potential and fruition remains. These past months have seen us plant the seeds of many joyful visions, and the community here, both established members and newcomers, will help those seeds grow.

Finding Yourself at Unity

Finding Yourself at Unity: For Visitors and Inquirers

Sundays | 10:15 a.m. | Center Room | Childcare available in the nursery

Join the repeating five-session cycle at any time. Attend the sessions in any order, which include Faith Formation for Children, Youth, and Adults; Congregational and Pastoral Care; Q&A with a Minister; Social Justice and Community Outreach; and Membership 101 and Congregational Life. 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 to receive Saturday morning email reminders.

- April 5: No session, Easter Sunday
- April 12: Building Tour
- April 19: Membership 101
- April 26: Q&A with the Minister

Ingathering of New Members

Sunday, April 5 | 9:00 a.m. Service

We invite all new members to participate in an Ingathering of New Members ceremony as part of a regular Sunday service. The litany of Ingathering in the service establishes the membership promises between the new members and the congregation to walk together in covenant. A reception immediately following the Ingathering service provides an opportunity for all congregants to meet and greet new members and to celebrate their decision to formally join the church.

Bond of Fellowship — William Channing Gannett, March 9, 1879, adapted

As those who believe in religion,

As those who believe in freedom, fellowship and character in religion,

As those who believe that the religious life means the thankful, trustful, loyal, and helpful life, and

As those who believe that a church is a community of helpers, wherein it is made easier to lead such a life;

We join ourselves together, name, hand, and heart, as members of Unity Church.

Join the Welcome Team

The Welcome Team is expanding! Every Sunday we greet new visitors and old friends, help individuals navigate the building, usher, collect the offering, and more. As our weekly numbers grow, more team members will help us greet at additional entrances and provide more guidance to newcomers. If you are interested in joining the Welcome Team, or in trying a shadowing shift, contact Philippa Anastos at philippa@unityunitarian.org.

Fellowship Groups

Email Philippa at 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 13 and 27, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Zoom. Discuss a range of topics.

Men's Retirement Circle: Monday, April 6 and 20, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Robbins Parlor

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

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

Unity Book Club: second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Zoom. April 14 discussion: *The Shadow of War* by Jeff Shaara

Women's Coffee Circle: first and third Saturday of each month (March 7 and 21), 10:00-11:30 a.m., Center Room

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.

Spiritual Practice Packets

Spiritual practice packets related to Unity's monthly themes are available online at unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.

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, instructions provided. Email kp@unityunitarian.org to join the practice.

Between Heaven and Earth: Embodied Practice Circle

Wednesdays | 12:00-1:00 p.m. | Foote Room

Between Heaven and Earth is a practice gathering for learning and sharing Tai Ji and Qigong, movement and stillness, poetry, song and silence. No registration or previous experience required. Practices can be modified for sitting or standing.

Lectio Divina

Second Wednesday and Fourth Tuesday

7:10 p.m. | Zoom: bit.ly/lectioucu

Come experience the alchemy that occurs through focused reflection on an inspirational text. Many people find Lectio Divina sessions to be a time of rejuvenation and insight. Led by Shelley Butler and Lisa Wersal; facilitated by your own heart. Register once and attend as often as you are able.

The Singing Resistance

Thursday, April 9 and 23 | 6:30-7:15 p.m. | Parish Hall

Interested in singing as a form of community uplift and change-making? Join Unity's pod of The Singing Resistance! This group meets to learn songs of hope and resilience to sing at vigils and in community as a part of the larger Singing Resistance group in the Twin Cities. Questions? Email Meg at megtietz@yahoo.com.

Active Hope for the New Now Practice Gathering

Monday, April 13 | 7:00-8:30 p.m. | Robbins Parlor

The intention is not a discussion of the issue but to move through the Active Hope Spiral of grounding in gratitude, touching into feelings, seeing with new and ancient eyes, and gathering our capacities for action in response to this issue.

Garden Clean-Up

Saturday, April 25 | 9:00 a.m.- Noon

Help clean out Unity Church gardens for the spring! Bring gloves, rakes, carts, and other tools you know will be helpful. Come for the time you can and know your help will be greatly appreciated!

Coming of Age 2026

The entire congregation is warmly invited to witness the Coming of Age of this year's ninth grade class on Saturday, April 25, 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.



Join Unity's Food Ministry



Help prepare a Wellspring Wednesday meal, set-up and serve coffee on a Sunday morning, or share in one of the many kitchen tasks that contribute to opportunities for our community to share meals together. Volunteers have a lot of fun in the kitchen together! Kids are welcome with their adults! Contact Heidi Birkholz at heidi@unityunitarian.org.

Join us for a St. Paul Saints Game

A baseball game makes the perfect summer outing — so save the date and join us on Friday, August 28, as we cheer on the St. Paul Saints! Tickets are \$22 each. Contact Philippa Anastos at philippa@unityunitarian.org to reserve tickets.

Childcare for Church Events

Unity Church offers childcare for church-wide events, free of charge. Please request childcare one week ahead of time by completing the online form: unityunitarian.org/childcare-request-form.html.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

April 1

Dinner: Salmon, miso-browned butter cabbage, roasted potatoes, butterscotch oatmeal bars

In Conversation with the Unity Church Executive Team | Parish Hall

Join Unity's Executive Team (KP Hong, Laura Park, and Oscar Sinclair) for a Q&A about where we have been as a congregation over the last several months, and what visions we see emerging for what comes next. Come with questions and curiosity!

Religious Education New Family Orientation | Robbins Parlor

Learn about Unity's religious education programs for children and youth. Email Nelson Moroukian at nelson@unityunitarian.org one week in advance if you plan to participate.

Somatic Yoga | Foote Room

This class is accessible to anyone comfortable sitting on the floor, bring a yoga mat, blanket, or blocks for added comfort. Led by Dr. Tamara Kraft, a somatic psychotherapist and holistic health coach.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room

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

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: [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. Each week we share: :
:

- Meaningful time and nourishing food together (5:45). The cost for dinner is \$10/adults, \$5/child (ages 5-12), \$3/child (ages 2-4), and \$25/family.
- Multigenerational worship in Ames Chapel (6:45)
- Opportunities to play, learn, and practice — childcare provided (7:10)

April 8

Vegan friendly dinner: Baked potato bar, chop salad, roasted asparagus, thumbprint cookies

Facing the End | Parish Hall & Zoom

Join Unity Church members and friends for the first session of a three-part series tackling important aspects of the end-of-life journey: dementia and memory loss, getting life records in order, and options in body handling after death. Participants will also be updated on End-of-Life-Options legislation. Led by Rev. Harlan Limpert, a former hospital chaplain with years of experience supporting individuals through their end-of life journeys, and Rev. Shay McKay, Unity's Minister of Congregational Care, these three sessions will provide useful information and resources to help participants make effective choices at the end of life.

Lectio Divina | Gannett Room & Zoom

Come experience the alchemy that occurs through focused reflection on an inspirational text. Many people find Lectio Divina sessions to be a time of rejuvenation and insight.

Introduction to the Alexander Technique | Foote Room

This interactive session will introduce you to the Alexander Technique, a way of learning to feel more comfortable in your body by better understanding your postural and movement habits. A true mind-body approach, the Alexander Technique understands that how you think affects how you move and knows your habitual tension patterns are often at the heart of your problems. Lauren Hill has been an AmSAT-certified teacher of the Alexander Technique since 2003. She is the author of *What Your Body Wants You to Know: Exploring Body Awareness, Posture, and Movement with the Alexander Technique* (Wise Ink Creative Media, 2025).

Young Adults Group | Center Room

A fun, reflective group working to build multifaith and multicultural community.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room

April 15

Dinner: Gingered-chicken stir fry, rice, spinach salad, lime bars

Tales from Bethlehem; Conversations in Minnesota | Parish Hall & Zoom

What is daily life like for Palestinians in the West Bank? Is Anti-Zionism Anti-Semitic? What is Boycott/Divestment/Sanction? How do we navigate the competing media narratives and complicated but needed conversations about Israel and Palestine?

Ruben Slomianski is a Jewish American whose family members include people who died as a result of the pogroms of the early 20th Century and the Holocaust, and also now includes family members who suffer under occupation in the West Bank. He is an artist and advocate for human rights and justice for Palestinians, and he has been active with Jewish Voice for Peace Twin Cities Chapter and MN-BDS for several years. Ruben will discuss his perspectives and explore these questions and the ways our community can work together to affect positive change.

Facing the End | Robbins Parlor & Zoom

Join Unity Church members and friends for the second session of a three-part series tackling important aspects of the end-of-life journey.

Justice Learning Partners | Zoom

Justice Learning Partners is a program that matches two or more people to take a deeper dive into a social justice resource: book, podcast, or documentary film, over 6-8 weeks. This is your opportunity to hear more about the program and what is being offered this session, and to connect with others. Learn more in the Library-Bookstall column on page 10.

Somatic Yoga | Foote Room

This class is accessible to anyone comfortable sitting on the floor, bring a yoga mat, blanket, or blocks for added comfort. Led by Dr. Tamara Kraft, a somatic psychotherapist and holistic health coach.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

April 22

Sani's Ghanian celebration dinner: Jollof rice, chicken, Ghanian salad, ice cream

Facing the End | Parish Hall & Zoom

Join Unity Church members and friends for the third session of a three-part series tackling important aspects of the end-of-life journey.

Sanctuary Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team Conversation Circle | Robbins Parlor

Minnesota, and specifically the Twin Cities, has shown the world what it means to love our neighbors, build resilient communities, and resist hate. Here at Unity Church, we are continuing that vital work through the Sanctuary Justice Ministry Team.

This program honors the caring community we have built through our team efforts. It is an opportunity to hear stories and experiences from the voices of both those who have received assistance, and the team members who have supported them and worked to keep them safe.

Looking forward, we will discuss new opportunities for mutual aid, including rent assistance, food shelf support and delivery, court accompaniment, and singing as a form of resistance.

Young Adults Group | Center Room

A fun, reflective group working to build multifaith and multicultural community.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Justice Learning Partners



Wednesday, April 15

7:10 p.m. | Zoom

Register: bit.ly/jlpapr26

Find a partner and take a deeper dive into social justice resources. This is but one step toward transforming ourselves into members of the beloved community, a.k.a. justice-seeking people.

April 29

Dinner: Taco salad, cilantro-lime slaw, beans, rice, banana cake

Ain Dah Yung Center – Healing Spaces for Our Indigenous Neighbors Parish Hall and Zoom

Join this presentation by Sheri Riemers (Nindaanisequay), CEO of Ain Dah Yung Center, (ADYC) which provides a healing place for American Indian youth and families to thrive in safety and wholeness.

Ain Dah Yung means “Our Home” in Ojibwe and has facilities and programs within our immediately adjacent neighborhoods near UU. ADYC also provides oversight and Indigenous community liaison services in our Ramsey County Court proceedings to help Native families with culturally appropriate court environments and monitors compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

The presentation will include an overview of the services ADYC provides as well as the Blanket Exercise, which is an experiential tool that explores the historic and contemporary relationship between American Indian and non-American Indian peoples in Minnesota. Sheri will be joined by Stella Barnes and Sadie Hart from ADYC to help with the Blanket Exercise. Stella is the ADYC ICWA Court Monitor and Resource Navigator. Sadie is the ADYC Policy and Advocacy Director.

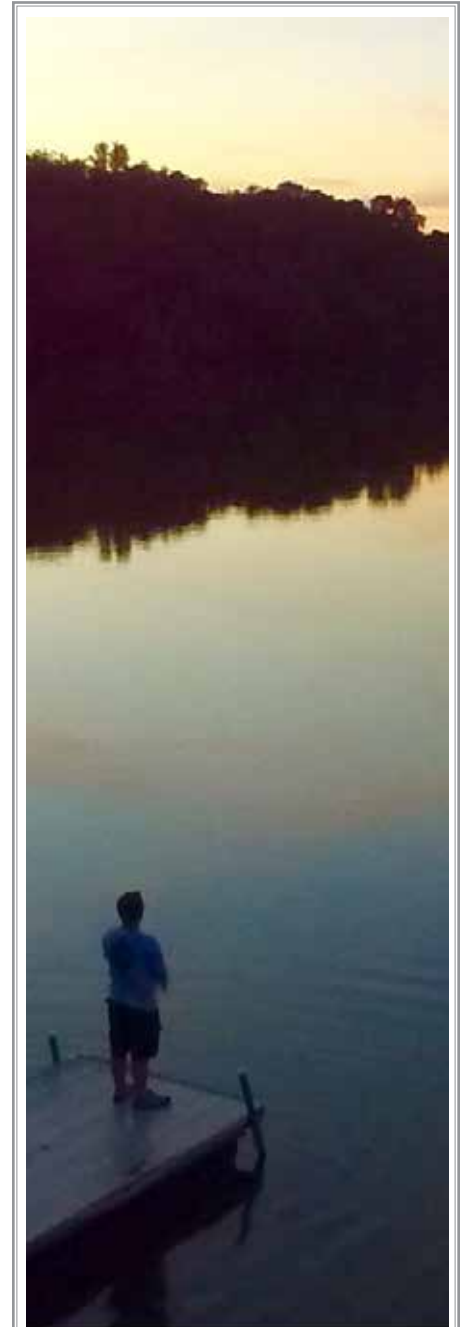
Somatic Yoga | Foote Room

This class is accessible to anyone comfortable sitting on the floor, bring a yoga mat, blanket, or blocks for added comfort. Led by Dr. Tamara Kraft, a somatic psychotherapist and holistic health coach.

Hymn Sing | Robbins Parlor

At each session participants sing a hymn from our hymnals; discuss its music, text, history, and theology; and share personal reflections on the music and its meaning.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room



You've Built a Life. Can You Shape Its End?

Join “Facing the End,” a three-week series on end of life topics

April 8, 15 and 22, 7:10-8:30 p.m., at Unity Church and on [Zoom](#), after Wellspring Wednesday dinner.



Spring in Your Heart and at Unity, Too

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

The snow has not yet left the earth, but spring is already asking to enter your heart.... The air is so clear and transparent that if you were to climb to the top of the pigeon loft or the bell tower, you feel you might actually see the whole universe from end to end.

— Anton Chekhov, *The Exclamation Mark*

We Minnesotans typically long for spring to come earlier than it often does, and this year, the coming of it feels extra-welcome; spring really is asking to enter our hearts early.

Fresh and new in The Bookstall this spring is a selection of graphic novels. ***The Arrival*** is a wordless novel, in which Shaun Tan captures the struggles and joy of the immigrant experience through clear, mesmerizing images which tell the story of a man who leaves his homeland and his family to build a better life. Find more fresh and new books in **The Bookstall, open Sunday mornings in Parish Hall.**

We hope you will welcome back Justice Learning Partners (JLP), as well. This program is one way of exploring and building beloved community, starting from the understanding that oppressions are inextricably linked and that each one of us can make a difference. The vetted resources deal with the demands of anti-oppression, multiculturalism, and climate and economic justice. [Register and come to the Justice Learning Partners meeting](#) on Wednesday, April 15, at 7:10 p.m., on Zoom, to learn more about JLP and the five resources offered this spring:

1. [Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance](#) by Edgar Villanueva (book)
2. [King in the Wilderness](#) (documentary film)
3. [On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century](#) by Timothy Snyder (book)
4. [The Power of Bridging: How to Build a World Where We All Belong](#) by John A. Powell (book)
5. [The Sum of Us](#) with Heather McGee (podcast series)

Find these and other justice books in the Anderson Library.

If you find you cannot come to the meeting, you can still [sign up to join a JLP group](#) that will look deeper into the resource of your choice.

Next Month: If it's spring, it must be time for Café Unity: Friday, May 8, 7:00 p.m. Contact me to sign up to sing, read, or play music at library@unityunitarian.org.

Updating the Online Unity Church History

Pauline Eichten, Louise Merriam, Betsy Moore, and Deb Woodburn

If you go to Unity's website, you can find a link to Unity Church History under the "About" menu. It provides an overview of the church's history, from the earliest days in 1852 to the present. We believe the first version was written by Elinor Sommers Otto, the author of *The Story of Unity Church, 1872-1972*. (You can find a revised edition of this book in The Bookstall and Anderson Library.)

**The Story of
Unity Church
1872-1972**

Revised Edition



Elinor Sommers Otto



In 2007, Pauline Eichten updated the online history. She and Ellen Green had collaborated to produce *Sacred Place: A Centennial*, a picture book commemorating 100 years since the building of the church Sanctuary on Portland Avenue in 1905. (Find this book in The Bookstall and in Anderson Library.)

Clearly, the online historical overview needed an update. But distilling almost 20 years of active church life into a few paragraphs was not going to be easy. After much avoidance and procrastination, Archives Team members Louise Merriam and Pauline Eichten finally tackled the job. See [Unity Church History](#) for the updated version.

Of course, we couldn't include all the changes and developments that have occurred since 2007. That will have to wait for the next history book. However, do contact us at archives@unitychurch.org if you think of something critical that needs to be included.

Since 2013, the Archives Team has sent over 100 boxes of materials to the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS). These materials have been added to the extensive collection of Unity-related materials curated by MNHS staff. Curious about what is available? [Check out the listing.](#)

April 12, 1963 Unity Fire Revisited

Last year we shared an exhibit about the 1963 Sanctuary fire. We're showing it one more time before it gets dismantled and stored away.

Watch for it in the main lobby this spring!



COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Project Home Household Goods Collection

Saturday, April 4 | 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Holly Avenue Parking Lot

Back by popular demand, Unity's Evergreen Quilters and Housing Justice Team will collect small household items for Project Home, an emergency shelter for area families where they stay until they can move into their own housing. Project Home's new location at Bandana Square is housing 29 families (97 people) on the first floor. On the second floor they have two rooms where clients can select household items to take with them when they move to their permanent home. Our goal is to fill those rooms with your household donations. Please donate the following clean and gently used or new household items:

- Bath towels, washcloths, kitchen hand and dish towels, dishcloths
- Gently used silverware and knife sets
- Gently used pots and pans, baking pans, storage containers, serving pieces
- Cleaning supplies: brooms, Swiffers, microfiber cloths, toilet bowl brushes and cleaner, all-purpose cleaners, glass cleaner, dish soap
- Dish sets (large and small) including fine china. New or gently used, no chips, cracks, stains
- Kitchen utensils: spatulas, can openers, ladles, measuring cups and spoons
- Gently used small appliances: toasters, microwaves, coffee makers, mixers
- New pillows and new or gently used sheets and pillow cases (twin, standard and queen-size)

Bring items to the Holly Avenue parking lot where Barb Rogne from Evergreen Quilters and Janice Gestner from the Housing Justice Team will meet you and transfer the items from your vehicle to theirs. Questions? Email Barb at bzrogne27@gmail.com and Janice at janicemgg@comcast.net.

Donate to Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf

During the month of February, the congregation donated 509 pounds of food and personal products. In April the food shelf is collecting garbage bags, dish soap (24 oz or less), dish pods, laundry soap (32 oz or less), laundry pods, bleach (32 oz or less). Nonperishable food items are always appreciated. Please no expired food.

Financial contributions are gratefully accepted online at hallieqbrown.charityproud.org/donate.



Easter Collection Supports Life-Giving Solidarity

Patricia Ohmans

Mano a Mano Community Outreach Ministry Team

This year's Easter collection will support the life-saving work of Mano a Mano International Partners in Bolivia.

Despite vast resources, staggering natural beauty and a young, energetic, largely indigenous population, Bolivia is one of the poorest places in the world. Devastating inequality is evidence of centuries of resource exploitation, embedded racial and class oppression, and — more recently — the whipsawing of climate change. Many rural Bolivian families eke out lives on less than \$9 a day. This is the venue for Mano a Mano's inspiring work.

Founded in 1994 by longtime Unity Church members Segundo and Joan Velasquez, Mano a Mano International Partners is dedicated to building infrastructure — schools, clinics, roads, reservoirs and wells — in rural Bolivia. Mano a Mano also builds human capacity, training health care providers, small farmers, and builders. Mano a Mano works in partnership with four Bolivian counterpart organizations, all of which are staffed by native Bolivians. Remarkably, the headquarters organization here in St Paul operates with a skeleton crew of three paid staff and an administrative overhead rate of less than five percent.



With financial support from U.S. donors and others, Mano a Mano's Bolivian partner organizations have built a network of 190 community health clinics as well as 71 rural schools with onsite housing for teachers. Mano a Mano has constructed 1,200 miles of roads to connect remote villages with larger towns and services. Mano a Mano's water projects support food security for subsistence farmers in the high Andes, while the organization's

Center for Ecological Agriculture trains farmers in sustainable agricultural practices. Taken together, Mano a Mano programs deliver practical hope for the future in Bolivia.

Dozens of Unity Church members have been privileged to travel to Bolivia, to witness the impact of this amazing work. In May, Rev. Oscar will join yet another group. These pilgrimages strengthen the relationship between the congregation and Mano a Mano, a relationship which binds us to our Bolivian friends in solidarity and love.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Evergreen Quilters Exhibit and Sale

From March 26 to April 26 you can enjoy the quilted artwork handcrafted by the Evergreen Quilters of Unity Church. The artwork they created will fill Parish Hall with eye-candy for viewing and for sale. One hundred percent of the money that the quilters raise from the sale supports special projects and operating expenses at Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf, Project Home, and Jeremiah Program. All these agencies, in turn, provide services and support to families facing food and housing insecurity in our neighborhood.



Please visit Evergreen Quilters' exhibit "Cultivating Hope" in Parish Hall, enjoy the quilts, and consider adding one or more of these creations to decorate your home. Quilts, wall-hangings, runners, and other quilted items are included in the exhibit.

But that's not all! If you'd like to meet the quilters who created these beautiful items, please attend their opening reception on Friday, April 10, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Another opportunity to meet the quilters and buy their wares is at the quilters' Buy-It-Now Boutique on Sunday, April 19 and 26, after each morning service. Smaller quilted and sewn items will be available for your personal use and enjoyment or for gifts — think Mother's Day! Featured items for purchase will include table mats and runners, zipper bags, gift bags, and handbags, pillowcases, scarves, and more!

Documentary Film Night

Sacred Planet with Gulnaz Khan: Rescuing Peru's Glaciers

Friday, April 24 | 7:00 p.m. | Parish Hall



Unity's Mano a Mano, Indigenous Justice, and Act for the Earth Community Outreach Ministry Teams are co-sponsoring a showing of the PBS documentary, *Sacred Planet with Gulnaz Khan: Rescuing Peru's Glaciers*.

The documentary focuses on how Andean glaciers have melted over the last 40 years due to climate change, devastating to the Andean communities for which the glaciers have provided water for thousands of years. The film shows how Indigenous Quechua and Catholic traditions are connected to the glaciers, and how those traditions are being mobilized to confront the climate crisis. The engineer Magdalena Machaca Mendieta explains how she builds lagoons to harvest rainwater. The film lasts about an hour, and there will be a discussion following the viewing.

Planting Seeds of Justice

Krista Finstad Hanson and Clover Earl

The Unity Church UUSC Partner Team is working to deepen the connection between the congregation and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.



Upon joining the UUSC with a financial contribution, members receive mailed newsletters and email updates about the good social justice work the UUSC is doing in the world. These updates occasionally include invitations to participate in virtual roundtables with UUSC leaders.

One way to learn more about the UUSC is by joining a virtual roundtable on Thursday, April 9 at 3:00 p.m. DST. The event will feature Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, the UUSC President; Jessica Sapalio, Community Accompaniment Coordinator; and Laura Randall, Director of Congregation Relations.

The event will be focused on the ways the UUSC is mobilizing to strengthen protections for people in migration, defending democracy, and advocating for human rights during a time of escalating injustice in the United States.

The UUSC team will provide "an update on UU and interfaith initiatives which have made a tangible impact even amid harsh crackdowns." They will also share how they have made changes to the "Community Accompaniment Program for Asylum-Seekers to continue to provide support in today's rapidly changing landscape."

We hope you consider joining this Roundtable spotlighting UUSC's domestic advocacy and activism. Use this link to register: bit.ly/uuscroundtable. To join via phone: dial 309-205-3325 and enter meeting ID: 899 9635 0282.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Housing Justice Team

In late February, hundreds of housing advocates gathered in the Rotunda at the Minnesota State Capitol to make noise and remind legislators that the need for increased, reliable funding for the housing crisis is a priority for Minnesotans. Rev. Oscar introduced legislators who spoke in support of the agenda of this coalition, which includes Unity's Housing Justice Team and our partner, [Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative](#) (one of the organizers of the event). Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan blew the roof off with her remarks and support of new, ongoing funding.



Supportive Housing is a legislative priority for 2026!

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative builds deeply affordable housing with "supportive services." This includes mental health, employment, recovery, parenting skills and other services that ensure that people are successful when they move into permanent housing. One of the best ways to understand how this works is to take a tour of one of Beacon's properties. Tours are offered monthly and can be [found on their events page](#).

And, approved federal funding has been withheld and threatened by the Trump administration. Unity's Housing Justice Team is working with state legislators and a statewide housing coalition to create reliable funding here in Minnesota. To learn more, check out our team's monthly Zoom meeting on the second Tuesday of each month from 4:30-5:30 p.m. To receive the Zoom link, email Lauren Gunderson at lauren.b.gunderson@gmail.com. You should also [let your state legislators know](#) that you want supportive housing to be a priority!

Project Home Emergency Shelter Volunteers

Renovations are going well at Project Home's new location at 1010 Bandana W. in Saint Paul. Project Home provides immediate shelter for families until permanent housing can be found. If you have daytime availability and are willing to assist with door security and light administrative tasks, Project Home needs help at their front desk. [Sign up today!](#)

Habitat for Humanity is Gearing Up

Another partner of our Housing Justice Team is Habitat for Humanity. Each year, we organize people from Unity Church who want to participate in their "build week." Planning has begun with Habitat for a late-spring build. Sign up will be available as soon as dates and location are confirmed. Watch for details!

No More Broken Hearts

Bob Albrecht, Gun Violence Prevention Team

On Friday, April 13, members of Unity's Gun Violence Prevention Team attended a profoundly powerful rally in the Capitol Rotunda coordinated by our team's partner organizations, Protect Minnesota (legislative action and community education group) and Moms Demand Action (grassroots advocacy group), as part of 2026 Legislative Advocacy Days. A large sign

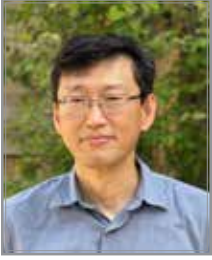


on the podium read "NO MORE BROKEN HEARTS." The eight speakers that morning included state senators and representatives who have authored bills promoting the elimination of high velocity, military style weaponry; an emergency room surgeon who attended to Annunciation Church victims (116 shots were fired in under two minutes at Annunciation on August 27 killing two young students); an Annunciation School parent whose son survived recounted the horrors of that late summer day; a pastor from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in South Minneapolis; Michael, whose father was "snatched by gun violence" in 1986 spoke about growing up without Dad; and Diane, whose daughter Michelle, herself a mom and student at St. Catherine's, was shot through the head in 2014 by her former boyfriend in an act of intimate partner violence. Diane told of her family's diligent yet failed efforts to get the boyfriend, a drug addict, admitted to psychiatric care before he murdered her daughter. Each speaker's story was beyond heart wrenching.

State Senator Heather Gustafson expressed her belief, based on conversations with many of her conservative constituents, that resistance to passing sound gun violence legislation resides inside the capitol, more so than throughout the greater Minnesota community. "This work takes sustained effort. Don't give up hope! And we must address the mental health component," was the message of Gustafson and her legislative colleagues.

The presentation concluded with moving remarks by Angela Ferrell-Zabala, the national executive director of Moms Demand Action. Angela acknowledged our particularly brutal year of gun violence in Minnesota (572 gun related deaths in 2025 and the number one cause of child death). In her passionate voice that about raised the dome off the building she encouraged all citizens to honor the loss with action: "Don't look away!"

Please visit [Unity's Gun Violence Prevention Team](#) webpage to learn about how you can become involved in the critical work and conversations of our group. We meet every other third Thursday, 3:30-4:30 p.m., at church and via Zoom. Our next gathering will be on May 21.



Pitter-Pattering Questions

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

Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation

Some experiences don't happen *to* you or *because* of you. They happen *with* you. You are neither the author nor the receiver of the experience, just the site where it blooms.

Our grammar tends to sort the world into the *active* and *passive*, but some experiences — wonder, grief, joy, healing — fit neither category. They are not actions we perform, nor events that simply befall us. They are *participatory*. And the middle voice is the grammar of participation. We can find the middle voice in languages like Sanskrit, Greek, Tamil, Icelandic, certain Scandinavian and Slavic languages, but English no longer has a dedicated middle-voice form. It survives only as a ghost, an echo in certain verb patterns or reflexive constructions that behave as if the middle voice were still alive. We hear it in expressions like “I was moved to tears” or “the bread cuts easily” or “the meeting ran long” or “I got better” — moments where agency is softened, suspended, or shared. To say that “joy came over me” claims neither clear agency nor pure passivity, but rather joy as an emergent, co-arising, relational experience mimicked in the middle voice. In this sense, the middle voice is not just a grammatical category but a truer, more spacious way of perceiving experience itself.

What if joy is a middle voice event? Not something we manufacture nor something that simply drops upon us, but something that stirs to life from the particular quality of our participation in the ache and grace of the greater world. Something luminous and excessive, a responsive state of exaltation and gratitude for what is beyond the self and yet supremely intimate with oneself. An event that opens us to a story greater than the transactional grammar of subject and object, as if reality can be segmented into a series of discrete exchanges rather than a continuous field of participation.

And what if children instinctively live in the middle voice? Not yet trained to see themselves as isolated agents acting upon a world “out there,” nor as passive objects being acted upon “in here.” Not yet pushed into the active or passive voice by adult habits of control, power, or self possession. Their experience still porous, relational, and participatory. For no child simply observes a puddle; they *enter* it. No child simply receives joy; it *comes alive* in them. Children live in the middle voice as its native speakers, their grammar of experience radically participatory, because for them perception is participation.

To retrieve the middle voice, then, is to retrieve the childlike capacity to be addressed by our precious and precarious world, to be drawn out of the familiar grammar that partitions our experience into manageable fragments, and to step forth into the trembling openness where we no longer control the terms for all that is unfolding. And this is where the risk lies, for both joy and despair are middle voice events, experiences that exceed our control the moment we allow ourselves to inhabit a grammar of life larger than anything we can neatly sort and stack. Both a joyous vision and a despairing outlook can arise from the same unguarded terrain, the same porousness, the same willingness to be touched by a greater reality. But perhaps the invitation of this overwhelming moment is not to double down on the active voice of control nor collapse into the passive voice of resignation, but to discern the middle voice and the grammar of a deeper, braver, more faithful participation in what is unfolding. What if joy is the middle voice of participation made radiant?

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



Chalice Camp Registration is open!



Week 1: July 6–10

Nature, Food, and Land

Exploring our relationship with the natural world, where our food comes from, and how we care for the land around us.

Week 2: July 13–17

Stories, Myths, and Music

Diving into the power of storytelling, the wisdom in myths and traditions, and the way music connects us to stories told across cultures and communities.

Campers going into 7th or 8th grade will be part of our senior camper program.

Chalice Camp runs Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., providing a full day of activities for children and youth ages 5–13.

Alongside lots of outdoor fun and games, craft projects, and water days, our daily activities are designed to deepen Unitarian Universalist values through fostering creativity, building community, and engaging in spiritual practices.

Details and registration, including opportunities for older youth to serve as senior campers and counselors are available online at unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp.

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries

This April I am very excited about a program Border CrossSing will perform at The Ordway titled *Un Milagro de Fe* (A Miracle of Faith.) This is the title of our first album, recorded in 2020, although the music on the concert is not the same as the music on the album. The concept of the program, a meditation on faith and courage, is something that is very personal to me.

Un Milagro de Fe is more than a concert; it is an exploration of how religious faith in Latin America has always required extraordinary courage. Across centuries of colonization, displacement, erasure, and reinvention, our communities did not lose their faith but transformed it to meet their needs. They reshaped it in their own image, blending ancestral traditions with imposed structures, and created something resilient, beautiful, and profoundly human. That act of spiritual survival is, in itself, a miracle. The concepts of “religious syncretism” or “religious hybridization” fall short when it comes to expressing the full nuance and value of this phenomenon.

Although I grew up in a Muslim family and then converted to Catholicism, I am not religious and adhere mainly to humanist principles. However, this music makes me think of my Mexican grandparents and gives me an understanding of the role religious faith played in their lives. They woke up every morning at dawn to sing and pray the Rosary together. Their lives had their share of hardship, yet their devotion gave them the resilience and strength to face the day and hope for a better future for their children and grandparents. They taught me that for many of us, faith is not an escape from reality but rather a daily act of bravery. It is resistance. It is liberation.

The concert program features three incredible pieces of music that are rarely performed in the United States. *Fiesta de San Juan* by Venezuelan composer Beatriz Bilbao, *Misa Criolla* by Argentine composer Ariel Ramírez, and *Réquiem Osún* by Cuban composer Calixto Álvarez. In this music, faith becomes rhythm, language, memory, and ritual. Africa and Europe, the Andes and the Caribbean, Catholic saints and the Orishas of the African diaspora all speak together. The music reminds us that courage and faith have always walked hand in hand, and that the spiritual imagination of our peoples is the greatest miracle of the Americas. In *Fiesta de San Juan*, Afro-Venezuelan communities turn the trauma of enslavement into celebration, resilience, and rhythmic joy, a miracle born from courage. In *Misa Criolla*, entire nations finally claim their right to worship in their own language, affirming that their voices, their cultures, and their prayers matter. In *Réquiem Osún*, Catholic and Yoruba spirituality stand side by side, testifying that survival is itself an act of bravery.

This program is a reminder to myself that my people have continued to survive because they dare, every day, to keep singing, praying, and imagining something better. I hope to see you all at The Ordway on Sunday, April 19, at 4:00 p.m., for this one-time performance!



Arthur Foote Music Sunday

Sunday, May 3

9:00 and 11:15 a.m.

Sanctuary | Livestream at 9:00

Our annual music Sunday will feature Craig Hella Johnson's work *Considering Matthew Shephard*. Deeply moved by the murder of a young gay man, acclaimed conductor Craig Hella Johnson composed an evocative and compassionate musical response that leaves audiences hopeful and joyous.

ALWAYS SINGING

*A Celebration of Unity Singers'
20 Years of Music Ministry*

Sunday, June 7 | 2:00 p.m.

Sanctuary

Please mark your calendar for this anniversary concert with reception to follow.

The Singing Resistance | Thursday, April 9 and 23 | 6:30-7:15 p.m. | Parish Hall
Join Unity's pod of The Singing Resistance! This group meets to learn songs of hope and resilience to sing at vigils and in community as a part of the larger Singing Resistance group in the Twin Cities.

Hymn Sing | Wednesday, April 29 | 7:10 p.m. | Robbins Parlor

Participants sing a hymn from our hymnals; discuss its music, text, history, and theology; and share personal reflections on the music and its meaning.



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 | unity@unityunitarian.org

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister

Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation

Laura Park, Executive Director

Marcia Hayes, Chair, Board of Trustees

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Evergreen Quilters

CULTIVATING HOPE

Exhibit & Sale | March 26-April 26 | Parish Hall

100% of sales benefit non-profit organizations serving families in our community.

