

Justice for George: Finding Our Next Right Action

Don Lee, On Behalf of the Beloved Community Communications Team

In the wake of George Floyd's killing on May 25, 2020, many of us have been looking for ways to turn our outrage and sorrow into concrete action to end racial injustice. Under the banner Finding Our Next Right Action, members of our community are coming together to work toward change on a number of fronts, and you are invited to join us.

On three Wellspring Wednesdays in August, this work will continue with a discussion with Rob and Janne (August 5), peace circles facilitated by Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice Team (August 12), and Committing to Our Next Right Action (August 19). Please see full descriptions on page two.

Shaping ideas that emerged from the Next Right Action Zoom discussion groups in early June, Unity's Beloved Community Staff Team is channeling these efforts into seven specific focus areas:

Education

The church will make the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) more widely available. The IDI is an assessment tool, used with follow-up resources and activities, intended to help the congregation grow as an anti-racist, multicultural spiritual community. If you are interested in taking the assessment, contact Drew Danielson. Team Dynamics, the consulting firm guiding Unity in this process, will offer three half-day workshops and training sessions during the fall/winter season. *Dates: TBD. Contacts: Drew Danielson at drew@unityunitarian.org (to request an IDI assessment); KP Hong at kp@unityunitarian.org.*

Policing Reform

Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice Team (RRJ) plans to hold two circles this summer, inviting people into

deeper conversation about efforts to change infrastructure, training, and accountability for police and police departments. Conversations will be led by RRJ Team members. *Date: August 12, 2020. Contact: Karen Hering at karen@unityunitarian.org.*

Youth and Parents

A Family Fishbowl on Race and Racism, a Zoom conversation exploring thoughts and emotions about these issues, will be (was) held July 23: <https://www.unityunitarian.org/uu-families.html>. In the longer term, the congregation will explore ways to strengthen parental involvement in Religious Education, especially in seminal programs and events including the Boston pilgrimage, Coming of Age, Our Whole Lives, and Tower Club parent council. *Date: July 23, 2020 (Family Fishbowl). Contact: Drew Danielson at drew@unityunitarian.org.*

Neighborhood Organizing and Policing

Building on existing relationships with organizations such as the Summit-University Planning Council and the St. Paul Police Department, Unity Church (and, in particular, executive director Barbara Hubbard) will seek opportunities to engage in the complex and multifaceted conversation about policing that is under way in our community and our country. Your ideas for creating and shaping these conversations are welcome. *Contact: Barbara Hubbard at barbara@unityunitarian.org.*

Funding Emergency Needs

A list of opportunities to support critical initiatives that address police violence, gaps in housing and education, growing economic disparities, and more is available on the Beloved Community Staff Team webpage and

will be updated to provide ongoing guidance: www.unityunitarian.org/beloved-community-news/community-resources. In the longer term, Unity will work toward establishing sustained support and closer coordination with partner organizations led by people of color. *Contact: Barbara Hubbard at barbara@unityunitarian.org.*

Hands-On Volunteering

Information about volunteer opportunities will be updated and available on the Beloved Community Staff Team webpage: <https://www.unityunitarian.org/beloved-community-news>. *Contact: Karen Hering at karen@unityunitarian.org.*

You can read more about these opportunities and Finding Our Next Right Action at <https://bit.ly/nextrightstepsdoc>.



Finding Our Next Right Action

Turn to page two for program details.

Reflecting on the Journey

Wednesday, August 5

7:00-8:30 p.m.

Email madeline@unityunitarian.org to join this session.

Reimagining Public Safety:

A Circle of Peace

Wednesday, August 12

7:00-9:00 p.m.

<https://bit.ly/ucreimaginepublicsafety>

Committing to Our Next Right Action

Wednesday, August 19

7:00-8:30 p.m.

<https://bit.ly/commitnextrightaction>

Just Words



In welcoming new members into the congregation, we tell them and remind ourselves, “we are a church that reveres the past, envisions the future, and lives with passion in this moment.” Sometimes, we revere that past in ways that make us resistant to change. For instance, it wasn’t all that long ago that the church closed down over the summer. Everyone simply

went to the lake. The old Unitarian adage has it that God works on the academic year. Ministers in our tradition, ostensibly as close to God as it is possible to be in human form, embraced God’s practice by taking the summer off ourselves. It is a profoundly class-bound custom, that comes as a surprise to many unfamiliar with Unitarian Universalist church culture.

They are right, you know. God is hard at work the whole year ‘round and so is almost everybody else. This dynamic is yet another way in which we claim to welcome everyone unaware of how off-putting and dismissive our old ways of doing church can be. Don’t get me wrong. Everyone needs time away. Everyone needs Sabbath rest. Everyone deserves a long vacation now and then. But the church doesn’t get to go away. The church needs to be open and available when people need it.

So we are doing summer differently this year. We still treasure the lay preachers and musicians who have shared their depth and passion in the summer months. This year, we the ministers are also sharing the pulpit. Wellspring Wednesday chapel and opportunities for online opportunities for faith formation will continue as well (see the offerings for August in the column to the right). As the realities of leadership transition set-in, the longed-for uprising against racism deepens and Covid-19 calls us to new ways of being both careful and creative, the church is at your side, growing and changing as you grow and change.

There are far more questions than answers in the air these days. More than ever we are asked to envision a future more just and loving than today. We know we are called to deep humility, listening, and respect as we work through our habitual need to lead, and seek to learn to follow. And dear ones, I know you well enough to be moved and inspired by the passion you bring to each moment.

As always,
Rob Eller-Isaacs

The Wheel of Life

Turn to page 4.

Wellspring Wednesday

A virtual church night including online chapel and programs.

Reflecting on the Journey

Wednesday, August 5 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Email madeline@unityunitarian.org to join this session.

Senior Co-Ministers Revs. Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs will each reflect on a personal journey they are presently on and on the journey we are on together as a congregation now. In breakout groups, participants will be invited to similarly share with one another.



Reimagining Public Safety: A Circle of Peace

Wednesday, August 12 • 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/ucreimaginepublicsafety>

The Racial and Restorative Justice team is calling together a Circle of Peace to help us begin talking and learning about Reimagining Public Safety, how white people center police in maintaining personal safety, and how policing harms people of color and fails to keep them safe. All levels of interest are welcome; the Circle is open to people ages 15 and older. Most of the time will be spent sharing in the Peace Circle process to enhance listening and avoid crosstalk.

All participants must preregister and are asked to read the MPD 150 report “A People’s Project Evaluating Policing” before attending. This first step in understanding multiple perspectives will be followed with an invitation into several ways for getting involved. The MPD 150 report is online at www.mpd150.com in both printed and audio formats.



Committing to Our Next Right Action

Wednesday, August 19 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/commitnextrightaction>

A follow-up to Finding Our Next Right Action held on June 4, 2020 (participants do not need to have attended June 4).

We’ve listened, we’ve discerned, we’ve created lists—what’s next? Come connect with others to learn more about and sign up for action steps generated from the “Finding Our Next Right Action” forum held on June 4 (see the doc outlining next steps here: <https://bit.ly/nextrightstepsdoc>). There is work enough for everyone — some of it personal, some of it within and some outside Unity Church.



Mano a Mano Responds to COVID in Bolivia and the Twin Cities

Wednesday, August 26 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Email madeline@unityunitarian.org to join this session.

Nate Knatterud Hubinger, Mano a Mano’s Executive Director, will lead an online discussion about the challenges presented by lack of basic medical supplies during the Covid-19 pandemic, in Bolivia and in our local community, and how Mano a Mano has responded. We will learn about day-to-day life in communities that are surviving the pandemic with minimal material resources and revisit our understanding of cross-national, cross-cultural relationships during this shared global experience. Sponsored by the Mano a Mano Community Outreach Ministry Team.

AUGUST SUNDAY SERVICES / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Sunday Worship and Coffee Hour

While our building remains closed, multigenerational Sunday Services are being live-streamed from the Sanctuary at 10:00 a.m. Religious Education's Summer in the Garden program is available for families. Details and links, including access to past services, are available online at www.unityunitarian.org.

Each Sunday, church members, friends, and newcomers are invited to join a virtual Zoom coffee hour after the service. To participate in the coffee hour, please refer to the link in our weekly Sunday service email, sent on Thursday afternoon. If you would like to receive our congregational emails, visit www.unityunitarian.org and click on "Join our email list."

August 2: *Journey Guides*

In this service, worship leader Brian Newhouse and worship associate Rebecca Flood explore sources for moving "out of the muck." As individuals, as a community, as a nation, there is no shortage of muck available at this moment. Still, can you name yours and what you yearn for now? What grounds and inspires you to imagine your first step, and the next?

August 9: *Passing Over and Coming Back*

The essential spiritual journey of our time may be one of passing over from one culture to another, from one way of life to another, of entering into the experience of others by sympathetic understanding and coming back to see ourselves anew (John Dunne). Such journeys risk exposure to disorientation, disassembling, and mystery. But like windows that also mirror our face, we may glimpse our truer lives in the play of reflections. Worship leader: Rev. KP Hong.

August 16: *The Journey of Accountability*

As we work and yearn to make the beloved community real in our lives, we must take a journey toward accountability. To whom and to what values are we responsible, and how does that journey unfold in different stages of our lives? Join Angela Wilcox and her children, Lucy and Nelson Moroukian, as they map a journey of accountability.

August 23: *Journey as Healing*

Healing describes a journey from a place of diminished health to a place of greater wellness. But that journey isn't necessarily a straight path, nor is it a path to a specific place other than "not where I was before." Worship leader Lia Rivamonte and worship associate Bob Peskin explore the often wandering, confusing, and uncertain journey of healing, through stories, poetry, and music.

August 30: *Where to? What next?*

Carl Sandburg ends his epic poem "The People, Yes" with these words: *Time is a great teacher. Who can live without hope? In the darkness with a great bundle of grief the people march. In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars for keeps, the people march: Where to? What next?* Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and Laura Park, Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality, will ponder Sandberg's questions in light of the life of the Church.

Offering Recipients

Each Sunday, thirty percent of the offering goes to support the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church and seventy percent is given to a chosen community non-profit recipient. Donations are gratefully accepted online at <https://bit.ly/sundayoffering>. Offering checks, payable to Unity Church, should be sent "Attn. Song Thao."

August 2: *Minnesota COPE Program*

Minnesota COPE (Creating Opportunities for Post-Secondary Enrollment) Program is a community outreach organization whose mission is to assist underrepresented scholars in identifying educational opportunities, key resources, and financial support necessary to realize their academic, personal and professional career goals. This offering will help provide talented youth the resources needed to shape the future workforce. Unity Church is a COPE partner.

August 9: *The Circle of Peace Movement*

The Circle of Peace Movement (TCOPM) touches lives by working to fulfill its mission: to end violence and promote racial healing. Through mentoring of youth and families and advocating for their larger well-being, TCOPM works to pull community members from the school to prison pipeline.

August 16: *Exodus Lending*

Exodus Lending is Minnesota's only non-profit dedicated to helping Minnesotans get out of payday lending debt. The program model allows enrolled participants to "gift" their past due payday loan to Exodus Lending who then pays off the loan in full. Program participants re-pay Exodus in twelve monthly installments.

August 23: *Obama School*

Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary School serves children Pre-K to grade 5. With the motto "Giving Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day," the goal is to inspire all scholars to reach high levels of academic and social achievement and to become future leaders. This collection will support the principal's Sunshine Fund and will be used for extra support for the students and the staff for field trips, staff recognition, and hiring specialized staff. Unity Church is the de facto Parent Teacher Association for Obama School with over 70 church members volunteering at the school in a variety of capacities.

August 30: *Anti-Racism Study Dialogue Circles*

Anti-Racism Study Dialogue Circles (ASDIC) include individuals who want to become more involved with the increasing anti-racism effort by offering strategies to move beyond conversation and into doing the actual work of anti-racism. ASDIC's aim is to transform individual understanding of racism and white privilege and inspire all participants to help create a more racially just world. This collection will support ASCIS's expanding network of webinars and Zoom gatherings, helping people dig more deeply into the roots of the recent uprising here in the Twin Cities.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / PASTORAL CARE



Challenging Times: New Routines

Jill Van Kookwijk, Trustee/Board Secretary

I love Unity Choir — for its intimate connections and comradeship amongst us, the spiritual experience of singing and performing together, the inspiring beauty of the music that lifts my heart and soul every single time. Who would have guessed that continuing to be in Unity Choir during a pandemic would be so difficult. Who would have known that the Zoom platform really doesn't lend itself to hearing more than one speaker/singer and everybody else has to sing on mute by themselves! Who would have known that despite all the difficulties, isolation and distancing that the Covid-19 brings to our community, I would not give up on attending Unity Choir week after week as our choir director, Ahmed Anzaldúa, finds numerous creative ways to keep us engaged. Hymn sing sessions, music theory lessons, voice lessons with KrisAnne Weiss, community singing with choirs from Pennsylvania and Arizona, ear training, harmonizing, anything and everything, fun, fun, fun.

I hope that all of you have also found meaningful ways to stay connected and engaged with virtual church. According to the Executive Team, Unity Church membership has grown during the last months and attendance at online worship services has surpassed all expectations and stretches out to other states and other countries (including to some of my own family members in Germany).

Not only has the pandemic made worship services, Wellspring Wednesday, and choir an entirely different experience, it has also slowed us down. Some of us hardly commute anymore, hardly leave the house. Many of us spend way more hours in front of tech devices for learning, communicating, exercising, working, and playing. In the life of the church, we have noticed the empty Sanctuary during worship services and the many emails in the pursuit of staying connected and moving along. Others may be essential workers on the front lines taking care of people in hospitals, child care centers, grocery stores, on farms, etc. We probably all feel the pain of being separated from some of our loved ones.

Back in March, the Board of Trustees had been hard at work in the transition process to find a new called senior minister. This process first came to a standstill when we closed the church building. Then we were delighted to receive the generous offer from Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs to stay with us for another year. We were relieved that the timeline to select an interim minister and to create a Ministerial Search Team (MST) was delayed and gave us time to breathe, reorganize, and slowly proceed with a new plan.

At this point, we anticipate to circle back in September to our task: inviting members of the congregation again to put their names forward in self-nomination to be considered for the MST. We will also keep in mind the names of those who were suggested by congregants last spring. There will be a short questionnaire to be filled out which will ask you to explain your relationship to and your work with Unity Church and our End Statements. From these applications, 20 will be selected by the Board of Trustees to come before the full congregation for a vote at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation in November. The final MST will have a total of nine members. The team will have 18 months to find a new called senior minister for Unity Church.

Looking ahead to next spring, the Board of Trustees will begin the selection process for an interim minister who will join us in August 2021. We will have help from the Unitarian Universalist Association and Rev. Jen Crow, our transition advisor, to find our candidate. In preparation for these transitions, Unity Church has undertaken a full financial audit with the firm Shechter Dokken Kanter. The results will give our new church leadership the transparency it deserves.

This has been a really challenging time, but the Board of Trustees has begun to settle into a new routine. We trust that you know Unity Church is here for you and we hope that you and your loved ones feel safe and well taken care of.

The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Tom Merritt
1944-2020

Matt Bergen
1971-2020

In Celebration

Levi Alexander Franco-Isaacs

born one more redeemer

July 11, 2020

to parents

Hannah and Tim Franco-Isaacs

and proud grandparents

Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs

Pastoral Care

If you have a joy or sorrow, life-cycle event, or concern you would like to share with the ministers and Pastoral Care Team, or have shared in the embracing meditation during Sunday service, please complete the online form at www.unityunitarian.org/pastoral-care.html or send an email to janne@unityunitarian.org and a minister will contact you.

Staying Connected

Members are invited to log in to ShelbyNext, the online congregational database that includes the ability to update and review your own membership and giving account, access the membership directory, and view the calendar. Visit www.unityunitarian.org/membership-directory.html for all the details about how to connect. Questions? Contact Martha Tilton at martha@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x105.

Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for Sunday worship, contact Martha Tilton at 651-228-1456 x105 or martha@unityunitarian.org.

WELCOME NEWCOMERS / COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Welcome Words

Laura Park, Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality

The journey into belonging at Unity Church can take so many forms. For a few of us, it's a clear path to deep involvement. For others, our travels meander with fits and starts as we search for our authentic connection. Sometimes our path leaves the church, to explore other possibilities, and sometimes we return with renewed vision, a deeper understanding of the purpose of church in our lives, and a new appreciation for the gifts of community.

Whatever your path, however you're taking it, welcome! We're so glad you're with us, whether from near or far in these times of online ministry. My virtual door is always open for conversation, information, and exploration of your pathway into our religious community. The best way to contact me right now is email, if possible, laura@unityunitarian.org. Or call the church office and leave a message: 651-228-1456 x110. I look forward to getting to know you!

Pathway to Membership Classes

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

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

Finding Yourself at Unity includes eight classes that you can attend in any order to better understand how Unity Church supports our faith journeys, our work to build Beloved Community, and our efforts to bless the world. Topics include: UU History; Religious Education for Children, Youth, and Adults; Pastoral Care; Q&A with a Minister; Worship and the Liturgical Year; Social Justice & Community Outreach; Membership 101 and Congregational Life, and even an online Building Tour! Weekly emails include the class topic and a Zoom link to get connected, or email laura@unityunitarian.org.

August 2: Q&A with the Ministers

August 9: Building Tour

August 16: Social Justice and Community Outreach

August 23: Worship and Liturgical Year

August 30: UU History

Committing to Unity • Wednesday, September 30 • 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Have you been considering membership at Unity Church? This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's need meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book (virtually if necessary) and officially join the church! RSVP by email to Laura Park at laura@unityunitarian.org.

Mentoring at Unity Church

Would you welcome having a guide to congregational life at Unity Church? Request a mentor! Your mentor will meet with you at least once a month face-to-face and be available for ongoing questions and advice. Each pair makes a commitment to work together for at least six months. If you have questions, or would like to request a mentor, please email Laura Park, Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality, at laura@unityunitarian.org.

Community Outreach Fostering Connections Within, Among, and Beyond

If you've been looking for a way to stay connected to others in the congregation and to be involved in the larger community in these challenging times, Unity's Community Outreach Ministry Teams can be a good place to start. Whether you're interested in volunteering, organizing and advocacy, or learning, these teams offer many different opportunities.

Each team has a focus (sustainability, racial justice, affordable housing, etc.) and partners with one or more organization in the community to engage education, service, and advocacy within the context of our spiritual development and lives.

To get connected, contact Rev. Karen Hering at karen@unityunitarian.org.

Obama School Outreach Team Update

**Nancy Heege, Obama School
Outreach Ministry Team**

Things are still unsettled as to how Saint Paul Public Schools will start in September, and whether our volunteers will be able to get back into the school. We expect to have more information later in August.

If we are able to go back in the building, volunteers will be needed for a variety of roles including assisting teachers, shelving books, providing snacks, preparing learning tools, helping with family events, fundraising, and more. For more information and the application forms, contact Karen Abraham at karen2bavol@gmail.com.

Our team was excited to read about the Beloved Community Staff Team's recent work and are studying the Finding Our Next Right Action document (<https://bit.ly/nextrightstepsdoc>) to align our volunteer work at Obama.

LIBRARIES & BOOKSTALL / ONLINE GROUPS

Justice and Emergence

More Podcasts and More Cairns

Shelley Butler, Unity Library and Bookstall Team

Maybe you've seen the campaign ad that shows raging fires and looting while you hear a recorded message saying, "You have reached the 911 police emergency line. Due to defunding the police department, we're sorry but no one is here to take your call." Is that really what defunding the police means? Well, no. Take a listen to two podcasts just added to the Unity Library catalog that explain just what it means to defund the police.



While you're at it, take a listen to Ibram X. Kendi talk about how to be an antiracist, and other podcasts added to the **Anti-Racism Collection**. Find the Unity Library Catalog online from any computer, smartphone, or tablet with internet access, anywhere in the world at this address: librarycat.org/lib/UnityChurch.



The **Unity Cairns Vol 12, 2020** editors want to ask: How are you doing? In this unprecedented summer and year of change, grief, and confusion, what new things are you seeing or what has been hidden? What hopes and fears, ideas and feelings are surfacing?

We invite you to consider the theme of emergence, which suggests change and

adjustment, welcome or not. What has evolved from the shifts in your lives? Can you envision a phoenix rising?

We invite you to submit art and writing on any topic, whether it touches on our theme of emergence or not. In this year of physical distancing, it seems more important than ever to stay connected as a community. Cairns is one of many ways to do that, so please consider contributing. Submissions are being accepted for Cairns Vol. 12, 2020 between now and September 28, 2020. More information is on the Unity website or contact us with questions (we like mail): cairns@unityunitarian.org.

Photo credits: "We must defund..." by Erika Sanders; "Cairn" by Anita Witta.

Online Group Meetings

The following groups have committed to meeting online while our building remains closed.

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

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Meets on the third Thursday of the month from noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Evergreen Quilters: The group meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact Peggy Wright, 651-698-2760

Families Living with Mental Health Challenges: A support group for families living with mental health challenges. Meets the first Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Kung Fu: This 60 minute practice strengthens the body, calms the mind, and lifts the spirit. Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Contact Barney Kujawski, barney.kujawski@gmail.com

Living With Grief Group: A group for people living with grief and loss. Meets on the third Tuesday of the month, from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

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

Men's Conversation Group meets August 3 and 17, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., to discuss a wide range of topics. Contact Terry McDanel, tmcdanel@gmail.com

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, August 10 and 24, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Tom Zell, tomzell@me.com

Music Ministry: Unity Choir, Unity Singers, Women's Ensemble, and Thresholds Choir are all meeting and singing virtually. Contact Ahmed Anzaldúa, ahmed@unityunitarian.org.

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

Recovery from White Conditioning: Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Contact Dayna Kennedy, daynamelissa@icloud.com

Single Parenthood Support Group: A single parents group building community together. All are welcome! Contact Laura Park, laura@unityunitarian.org

Textile Arts Group meets every other Wednesday, August 5 and 19, from 7:15-8:30 p.m. Contact Johanna Stammeier-Toole, johanna21e@gmail.com

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. August 11 discussion: *Talking to Strangers* by Malcolm Gladwell. Contact Jack Hawthorne, jack.hawthorne@centurylink.net

Women In Retirement: Meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Laura Park, laura@unityunitarian.org

Young Adult Group (ages 18-25): No meetings in August. To join the YA email list, please email kp@unityunitarian.org.

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa Director of Music Ministries

Fairly late into my doctorate in music conducting at the University of Minnesota, I realized that some credits I had transferred in from my previous degree would not work out as I expected. To complete my coursework, I would need to sign up for a three-credit, graduate-level music history seminar. This meant adding a whole lot of unexpected work to my course load at a very inopportune time, and I was not excited. As I looked through the course offerings, my goal was to find a course that would require the bare minimum effort (to be blunt, something I already knew) and, lo and behold, there it was: "Medieval Voices and Instruments," a historical overview of music from the 800s to the 1300s.

Medieval music and instruments... that to me meant Gregorian chant, the music of Notre Dame Cathedral, the music of the wandering minstrels that roamed France and Germany, many polyphonic Masses, and the development of Western musical notation in Italy. Over the course of 15 years of music school (an undergrad, two masters degrees, and two doctoral degrees), this was a subject that had been drilled into me repeatedly. Every single general music history course — including several I've taught — spends at least a few weeks covering the music of the Middle Ages. I'd also taken three dedicated courses on subjects in Medieval music... not to mention the education you get as a choral director performing early music. "Here we go again," I thought. I'd show up to class, barely need to study, and get the credits I needed for my degree with the bare minimum effort.

And then the course started... with Chinese traditional opera. This was followed with a week exploring the instruments that were used for Japanese court music in the 9th century. The first month alone explored Persian and Arab music, the emergence of Carnatic and Hindustani music in India, and the rich musical traditions of Indonesia. That semester, in the final year of my doctoral coursework, we studied musical instruments and vocal music forms from all over Asia and North Africa, and throughout it all it was very clear that we were barely scratching the surface of the incredible music that was being created all over the world between the year 800 and the year 1400. Absolutely nothing in the course description or course materials hinted that this was a "world music course," and I am forever grateful to that professor for pulling such a wonderful bait and switch. Otherwise, I would have passed this course over because it was "too much work." In fact, the work was grueling, but, dropping the course wasn't an option; I was so excited to finally learn Medieval music history! (Even if I had to wait until the final year of my many years in music school to have the opportunity.)

That semester, we spent only one single class near the end of the course visiting my old friends in Germany, Italy, and France. After such an eye-opening journey, it was impossible to not see that music I thought I knew so well in an entirely new light. It was no longer separate from the rest of humanity, lifted up on a pedestal of whiteness but, rather, made richer through its connections to the larger story.

Sing with a Unity Choir

Unity's choirs are meeting online every week! In addition to learning new music, we are also meeting to sing familiar songs and maintain our connection to each other and to the church. All newcomers are welcome and encouraged to take part! If you are interested, contact Ahmed at ahmed@unityunitarian.org.

Unity Choir is our non-auditioned ensemble of 60 to 75 voices. This singing community is the strong component on which our music program is built.

Unity Singers is Unity's auditioned, a cappella chamber choir.

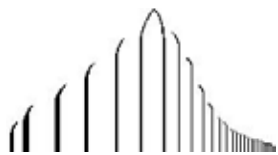
Women's Ensemble is a continually growing and evolving group with members bringing tremendous creative energy, commitment, and joy!

Unity Church houses the Twin Cities chapter of **Threshold Choir**, an ensemble that sings for those at the thresholds of life. Small groups of singers bring music to the bedside of people as they die or endure illness or other suffering.

A Call for Music

Have you been enjoying the daily music messages? Would you like to be featured as one of our daily music messages? Here is your chance!

Given the depth of musical talent in this congregation, Ahmed is extending an invitation to individuals and families to share their music making. Please send a video of your singing, playing a musical instrument, or doing anything else that's musical! The only request is that this is a video of you or your family making music — please do not send prerecorded music made by someone else. So, turn on your phone camera, record yourself singing a song or playing something, and send it to Ahmed at ahmed@unityunitarian.org.



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
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Habitat for Humanity

Summer Build 2020

The Unity Church Affordable Housing Outreach Ministry Team is co-sponsoring an August Habitat for Humanity build as an interfaith partner with Faith Builders. This will be new construction on the north side of St. Paul. A Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity “green” build integrates building practices that reduce detrimental impacts on the natural environment, promote healthy indoor air quality for occupants, and reduce energy costs while increasing the long-term affordability of homes and improving the neighborhood housing stock. Work week is August 17-21. Special procedures are in place to maintain safety in this time of Covid-19. Details and registration are online at www.unityunitarian.org. Questions? Contact Chuck Griggs at griggscb@msn.com or 612-408-0486.



Chalice Circles Register Now!



Are you looking for a way to meet others at Unity Church and to engage in rich conversations about the intersection between your faith, your lived experience and the events of our times? The monthly Chalice Circles, opening in mid-August to registration for the new fall schedule, invite you to experience this and, often, much more.

Chalice Circles are small groups of 6-8 participants who meet monthly, currently online, with a trained facilitator to reflect on the monthly worship theme and to nurture spiritual growth in community. At the beginning of each month, participants receive materials on the theme, and from that packet each participant chooses one spiritual exercise and a deep question to sit with for the course of the month. Near the end of the month, participants gather with their group to share their experiences.

The circles have offered a meaningful way to stay connected in this pandemic time. Participants can receive assistance from Unity staff and the circle process and size have been modified to adapt to the gifts and challenges of online gatherings.

Details and a registration form will be online by August 1 at www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html.

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