



Wonder

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 own faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community. We explore each theme in worship and in our newsletter; in covenant groups, and religious education; and in our community outreach ministries, our literary journal and programs, and many other opportunities.

In the continuum between curiosity and awe lies wonder. Curiosity can have a tight focus in its active pursuit of information, while awe tends toward a more broad, receptive experience. Wonder, though, combines engagement and wideness, presence and self-forgetting. It is rich loam for transformation, nourished equally by metaphor and action.

Wonder also counteracts the notion that we already know all the answers—or that such knowing is even desirable. What becomes of mystery and transcendence when there's nothing more to learn? A sense of certainty may provide temporary comfort, but if it becomes codified, it also robs our lives of depth. Instead, wonder allows us to release the illusion of control within the context of the sacred and beautiful, and opens a path into the wholeness towards which our longing points us.

Of course, ungrounded wonder runs the risk of disintegrating into bewilderment, just as innocent curiosity can devolve into nosiness or interrogation, and respectful awe can slide into fear or blind obedience. We can see this, too, in the way the winter holidays hurtle into a frenzy of activity rather than slowing into a time of stillness and reflection.

Spirituality itself can turn into a checklist of practices instead of an overall stance that enriches our daily lives. During the Reformation, religion turned toward more of an individual experience than a communal one, more of something to work at and achieve than something infusing the ordinary. Yet children are regularly entranced by the ordinary:

squirrel tracks in the snow, the vibrant color of markers on paper, steam rising from hot chocolate. Wonder can liberate adults to rediscover such moments for themselves, too, but we have to create the conditions that help us get there.

Miles Davis, a 20th-century jazz musician and band leader who helped break open the form, would tell his musicians to “be ready to play what you know and play above what you know. Anything might happen above what you’ve been used to playing.” The idea was to move them to a place where they were forced to do something they’d never done before, which meant they could suddenly do something new. Davis paid his players *not* to rehearse at home in order to keep the sound fresh. He challenged their imaginations to keep reaching past their comfort zone, and then even further beyond *that*, so that they “won’t be fighting when things change.” He created the conditions for his musicians to wonder themselves into territory that only started to exist as they brought it into being.

At its best, a spiritual community helps people unfurl new chapters in their lives. Through a combination of transcendent stories and embodied presence, we remind each other that we have choices about how we respond to change. Will we choose one of the many faces of fear—from overspending to isolation to perfectionism—or will we choose wonder?

French philosopher Paul Ricoeur wrote of a Second Naïveté that was more mature than literal readings of

religious texts and more spiritual than a critical analysis of them. “Beyond the desert of criticism, we wish to be called again.”

As we enter the bustle and stress of the holidays, how might we reach for new ways of doing things? How can we play above what we know and be present to change instead of fighting it? What calls to us when we listen to the night sky? And how will we choose to answer?

— Hallman Ministerial Intern
Lindasusan Ulrich
with this month's theme team:
Janne Eller-Isaacs,
Rob Eller-Isaacs, and K.P. Hong

Worship Theme Resources

BOOKS

“The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry (in *The Four Million*, 1906; 1stworld Library, 2007)

The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory by Brian Greene (Norton, 1999; updated edition 2003)

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

How the Grinch Stole Christmas by Dr. Seuss (Random House, 1957)

FILMS

It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
Avalon (1990)

MUSIC

Kind of Blue by Miles Davis (1959)

Just Words



My first church was in suburban Los Angeles. In those days most of my friends lived in the Bay Area. For the six years I served the Unitarian Society of Whittier first I, and after we met and married, Janne and I, would drive from L.A. up to the Bay Area on Christmas Eve. I would lead carols and candlelight with that sweet little congregation and then we would drive 400 miles up through the Central Valley and over to the Bay. On Christmas Eve in 1980 we bundled six-month-old Jonah into our little Datsun named Rachel and drove north into the starlight. On December 8, John Lennon had been killed outside the Dakota. His music was being broadcast on every station. "Imagine" seemed the most popular choice. We wept as we mourned him and swore we would be dreamers too.

I think of him each Christmas since that year and I remember a conversation with a much-respected older colleague that same month. "I can't fathom all this grief over the death of yet another rock star," he said somewhat scornfully. "The person we should be grieving is Dorothy Day. Now there's someone who really changed the world." Dorothy Day, one of the founders of the Catholic Worker movement, had died just ten days before John Lennon. I found the polarity he drew troubling. Why choose between them? They shared so many core values. Why not admire and honor them both?

We live at the place where love and justice meet. The world cries out for activists, grounded in practice, good at making friends and motivated by compassion. We need both the artists and the organizers. We live out our ministry at the intersection of justice and spiritual growth. To paraphrase E.B. White, we're here to both save and to savor the world. In this season of waiting, when angels hover near and new life is coming to full term may we not succumb to ideologies no matter how seductive they may be. May we make our way into the starlight knowing the creative power of the child always waiting to be born.

As always,

Rob

Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs, Co-Minister

December Parish Hall Artists

In the Parish Hall this month is the work of three generations of an extended family: Jane Thomson, a Unity Church member; her 21-year-old granddaughter Ella Thomson; and Shelley Rohlf, Ella's mother and Jane's friend.

Jane paints with acrylics. She does not in general have much of an artist's statement – she paints for herself and for you, the viewer. Her paintings are whatever you think they are.

Ella works with acrylic paint to create pieces that use symbolism to imply a narrative.

Shelley Rohlf is a painter focused on designing an intimate translation of the natural world using a graphic style, acrylic paints, and a saturated color palette.

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Paige Rowan Benedict

born one more redeemer

October 18, 2014

to parents

Heather and Jim Benedict

Beatrix Hope Chang

born one more redeemer

November 6, 2014

to parents

Anna and Dan Chang

and big brother Henry

Winter Holidays Office Hours

The Church Office will be closed on December 25 and 26, and on January 1, for the winter holidays.

Food Collection for



SHARING KORNER

Unity's Evergreen Quilters coordinate an on-going food drive for the Sharing Korner Food Shelf. Collection baskets are stationed in the main lobby and by the Holly Avenue doors. Donations of non-perishable items are always welcome. Thank you!

commUNITY is the newsletter of Unity Church–Unitarian. It is published monthly, except the month of July. Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Subscriptions are free to those who make pledges to Unity Church and are available to others for \$30 per year.

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Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-228-1456
www.unityunitarian.org

DECEMBER SUNDAY WORSHIP / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Worship Calendar

Sunday worship services are held at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. except where noted. Sermon podcasts and archives are available online at www.unityunitarian.org. Religious Education classes for children and youth are offered during all services.

December 7

The Light We Share — Janne Eller-Isaacs

When we attend worship we don't often think of the role that we play as participants. We think we have come to be filled up but actually all of us participate together in making the worship hour occur. Join Janne and worship associate Jen Welsh as they explore the concept of active waiting and active participation.

December 14

Turn to Wonder — Rob Eller-Isaacs

Advent is all about waiting. Waiting for the light, waiting for the child, waiting for wonder to return to our lives. Sometimes though we need to do more than wait. "When the going gets tough," writes Parker Palmer, "turn toward wonder." Rob and worship associate Heidi Mastrud will lead us back to wonder.

December 21 • Family Sunday

The Empty Present

As Christmas Day approaches the whole church family will gather to sing (SHOUT at 11:00 a.m.) carols, prepare ourselves to greet the child, and remember some of the nicest gifts we have ever received. Gifts like peace and joy and yes, even emptiness. The ministers will be joined by Director of Religious Education Rev. K.P. Hong for a festive celebration. **There will be no Soup Supper after the 4:30 service on December 21.**

On Family Sundays, children experience the entire worship together with their families in the Sanctuary. A children's message 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.

December 28 • One service only at 10:00 a.m.

Other People's Children — Lindasusan Ulrich

Hundreds of thousands of children languish in foster care across the U.S., but the weight of displacement and broken bonds is not borne evenly. Hallman Ministerial Intern Lindasusan Ulrich will examine historical forces, current conditions, and the complications of love that echo between the child welfare system and one family's decision to flee Bethlehem.

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. Please make checks payable to Unity Church.

December 7: PUPS

Parents United for Public Schools (PUPS) is a statewide non-profit uniting those who support public education and training them to be ever-vigilant advocates for excellence in our public schools. The PUPS website offers legislative updates, presentations, and networking opportunities helping its members navigate policy issues and legislative proposals. PUPS is a constant "Watchdog" at the Legislature, sitting in and often testifying at all Education Committee meetings. Unity member Heidi Huelster sits on the PUPS board.

December 14: Sarah's Oasis

As part of the ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Sarah's Oasis is a home dedicated to safety and dignity for a diverse community of women where they are empowered to begin new and productive lives. Sarah's welcomes women in need of resources or support who have often survived significant trauma including violence, abuse, torture, war, discrimination, and other difficult circumstances. Since 1996, more than 600 women have called Sarah's home.

December 21: Crisis Nursery

The Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery works to end child abuse and neglect and create strong, healthy families. The Crisis Nursery supports families in crisis 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through their free, voluntary services.

December 28: Heart of the Beast

The Heart of the Beast Puppet Theatre provides community theatre, produces original plays and commissioned spectacles, and teaches workshops in mask making and peacemaking throughout the Twin Cities area. Many Unity Church children and adults have participated in performances, puppet making workshops and the parade.

Please turn to page 8
for holiday worship
and event information.



Please turn to page 12 for
information about holiday
music offerings.

Join a Welcome Team

Welcome team members are still needed each Sunday to further our ministry of hospitality. If you are interested in learning more about serving on a welcome team, please contact Madeline Summers at madeline@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x126.

Board of Trustees

From Marg Walker, Trustee



My childhood home was in Iowa. I grew up fidgeting alongside my siblings in the pews of the Methodist church on Third Avenue. One Sunday, the man who'd been our senior minister some years earlier returned to speak as a guest. He talked about how good it was to reconnect with old friends, and related a story of chatting with a former parishioner over coffee. The woman told him, "I've always remembered something you used to say in your sermons."

What a sweet moment. Now retired, the minister was gratified that some pastoral insight or part of his theology continued to provide guidance long after he had moved on. Whoever we are, don't we want to know this—that our words matter, that some part of our essence outlives us? "What is it that you remember?" the minister asked.

Her reply: "You always said, 'It seems to me...'"

Oh, dear. How we are remembered may not be what our ego hopes for, or the legacy we intend. Maybe instead it's who we are when we're not thinking about it, woven into others' lives without their necessarily knowing it. My legacy as a mother already lives in my son, and thus in my unborn grandchildren, whether I ever meet them or not. Maybe something I've written—a report's persuasive conclusion, say, or a simple line of poetry—has made a difference to someone who doesn't remember my name. To me, that's kind of freeing. All I need to do is try to be my best self, work at something that matters, and toss it out there into the interconnected web. Bill Holm described it as the "happy work of keeping the chain letter of the soul moving along into whatever future will come."

I've been thinking about legacy because, along with two colleagues, I've just completed my three years of service on Unity's board of trustees. Could I describe what our work has added up to? How do I imagine it might live on in the fabric of church life or governance? That's when the story of the minister came to mind.

But I draw a different conclusion than he did. I think "it seems to me" could be part of a meaningful legacy in a church like ours. It signals a willingness to say what is on our minds or in our hearts, offered not as a fixed position but with a readiness to listen to other perspectives. This is how we practice covenantal relationship. It is a vital part of our board's culture, well-worth transmitting. I was thankful for it each time we worked together to discern the best interests of the church. Put a dozen "it seems to me's" in the room, and after a time you get "it seems to us."

Listen, speak, connect, build. With intelligence and grace when possible, with genuine presence no matter what. What a satisfying legacy that would be.

At least, that's how it seems to me.

Introducing the Newly Appointed Anti-Racism Leadership Team Members

Russ Peterson

I grew up in what was then (or at least seemed), a very "un-diverse" place—Sioux Falls, South Dakota—during a period in which the injuries and injustices of racism, though far from being resolved, were at least being addressed, by the politics and culture of the time. Growing up, my teachers, parents, and even much of what I saw on television, explicitly taught me to be anti-racist.



At the same time, the world I inhabited, in which I never saw a playmate, teacher, cop, or politician of a different race kept such ideals in the realm of the theoretical—a safe place to keep one's ideals, but not the sort of ground in which they can grow or bear fruit.

Still, it is a place to start. I am honored, thankful, and hopeful that my ARLT service will help me to live my ideals, and to further Unity's mission.

Vicki Stewart



Hi, my name is Vicki Stewart and I am a regular church-goer. This "confessional" statement continues to surprise me because I never thought I would be. I rejected "church" in my teens due in part to what I perceived to be an utter lack of acceptance of me—or anyone who didn't fit a prescribed mold, which chafed against my core values of inclusion and acceptance.

Decades later, while looking for a church in which to raise my daughter, it was Unity's welcoming message that first attracted me; but the willingness to go beyond sealed the deal. A church that looked at its history, acknowledged failings, and strove to improve institutionally was, and continues to be, an inspiration. I am honored to join the ARLT and continue its important work, bringing my passion for justice and equality to the church that has given me a spiritual home.

2015 Board of Trustees

At the Annual Meeting that was held on November 15, the congregation elected three new trustees. Here is the 2015 Unity Church Board of Trustees:

Stu Alger: stuart.alger@stinsonleonard.com

Ginny Allen, Chair: library42@msn.com

Deborah Carter McCoy: mcdeborah1991@gmail.com

Mark Foster: markf@tsc401k.com

Hal Freshley: halfresh@q.com

Rich Hamer: rhamer@deftresearch.com

Steve Harper: steve.harper@alumni.macalester.edu

Peggy Lin, Secretary: peggy.peggylin@gmail.com

Angela Newhouse: anewhouse@visi.com

2014-15 Hallman Ministerial Intern

Lindasusan Ulrich



"Have you ever lived in Minnesota before?" By now, I've lost track of how many people have asked me this question. "Just wait," they'd say with a mischievous twinkle in their eyes, "until WINTER."

I'd explain that while I'd called California home for a long time—northern California, with its damp cold and poor insulation that

often required hats and gloves indoors—I'd lived in snowy climes before. Not the Midwest, but I've slogged through my share of slush and walked gingerly across plenty of ice.

Several people have pointed out that part of what makes winter liveable here is that folks continue to go outside and enjoy themselves. "With the right warm clothing," they assured me, "you'll be just fine."

I've taken their advice to heart, and not just in getting a good parka. I've decided that until proven otherwise, winter is going to be just fine. Aydan, our Finnish Spitz, has discovered she actually adores the snow, as though some ancestral canine memory of tramping through snowbanks has awakened during our walks around the block. For all I know right now, I too could fall in love with the crunch of powder underfoot and the muted landscape stretching to the edge of my perception.

As the end of the year approaches and the days grow short, I'm going to look for more ways I can befriend that which seems daunting. I'm going to approach each day on its own terms and do my best to find a path to wonder, even when everything feels like a slog.

I've been told that this winter is supposed to be warmer than last year. Unless it's colder. Either way, I'll meet what arrives.

Please feel free to contact me at lindasusan@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x129.

Crossing and Blessing Our Thresholds

Are you crossing a threshold in your life—a change in relationship, work, home, roles, identity or abilities? Our lives are full of thresholds crossed whenever we experience change—of our choosing and the kind that comes without our bidding. Either way, thresholds often bring heightened awareness as well as risk and possibility. They are places of great vitality and exchange, where new greets old, where outside meets inside, where stranger crosses over to become friend.

This series of four sessions invites you to explore a current threshold in your own life, one you have just crossed, are in the process of crossing or are about to cross. In a supportive small group facilitated by literary minister Karen Hering, we'll each reflect on the threshold we're crossing while accompanying others in crossing theirs. Using conversation, guided writing, and a variety of non-writing activities both playful and serious, we'll consider the meaning, risks and possibilities present on our thresholds. Participants are asked to commit to all four sessions. At the end of the series, the group will be blessed by the congregation in worship, honoring the role of community in giving us all safe passage across the many thresholds of our lives.

The group will meet Saturday mornings at Unity Church, 9:00 a.m.–noon: January 24, February 14 and 28 and March 14. The congregational blessing will occur on Sunday, March 15. The series is free to members; a fee of \$50.00 will be charged nonmembers at the time of registration.

Group size will be limited. Register early to reserve your place by sending an email to Karen Hering at karen@unityunitarian.org with your name, phone, and email address, or put a note in her church mailbox, and a sentence or two describing the threshold you have crossed or will be crossing soon.

You could be in pictures!

Saturday, December 6 • 1:00-3:00 p.m. • Foote Room

We need your help to identify the people and events pictured in photographs taken through the years here at Unity Church. The Archives Team has been working over the past year to identify as many photographs as possible. Join us at a gathering to identify and share memories about the photos. Refreshments will be served. We are looking forward to seeing you in pictures!

Questions? Contact Gretchen Kreuter at 651-647-1269.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



Welcome Words

Whether you love the holidays or dread them, I hope that Unity Church will be a place to ground your spirit this holiday season. For there is wonder and comfort to be found in being together, whether it is singing a beloved carol, sitting in the stillness of the sanctuary, baking cookies or making wreaths, or collecting warm mittens and supplies for those who need them. There is also wonder and comfort to be found in talking together about all that stirs in our hearts this season, the joys and the sorrows, the hopes and the struggles. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help you find your stillness and keep your balance in these holy days. I look forward to celebrating with you! Blessings to you and yours,

Rev. Lisa Friedman

Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement

Pathway to Membership Classes

Unity offers three different classes for visitors who are exploring Unity Church as a spiritual home. Sign up at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107. She is happy to meet with you personally to answer questions and welcome you into the congregation. Childcare is available by contacting Michelle Hill at 651-228-1456 x127 or michelle@unityunitarian.org at least one week in advance.

Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

Wednesday, December 3: 7:15-8:30 p.m. ~also offered ~
Sunday, December 14: 12:15-1:30 p.m.

If you have been visiting and would like to find out more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation, we invite you to join us for a *Welcome to Unity* class.

Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Exploration

Three Tuesdays, January 13, 20, and 27: 6:30-8:30 p.m.
(light dinner provided each night) ~also offered ~
Saturday, March 7: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
(includes potluck lunch)

In this class, we will have an opportunity to share part of our religious journey, to take a more in depth look at the history of Unity Church, to discuss the expectations and benefits of membership, and get to know the programs and ministries of the congregation.

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

Wednesday, January 21: 7:15-8:30 p.m. ~also offered ~
Wednesday, April 8: 7:15 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

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 needs meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class will conclude with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church!

Welcome New Members!



L-R: Sarah Morreim Wood, Brian Davis, and Fulton Silvernale

Sarah Morreim Wood

The first service I attended at Unity Church was back in 2001; it was the Christmas Carol Shout and was memorable to say the least. I am grateful to Unity for its bold stance on social justice issues, numerous personal growth opportunities, and focus on family and community. Professionally I am a portrait/event photographer and my favorite subjects to capture are my children, Alastair (5) and Audrey (3). I enjoy travel, creative writing, watching movies, learning the piano and hosting theme parties with my husband Grant.

Brian Davis

I have been attending Unity Church since early 2007 with my lovely wife Marianne (the second time we met was at an 11:00 service!). I enjoy vegetable gardening, model railroading, electric guitar, and reading. Unity Church is a place where I hear a message that resonates with my values.

Fulton Silvernale

With my dad in the air force, we moved often. We found a welcoming community with the nearby liberal church and so, when I decided to find my own church, I came to Unity and felt at home. I work in customer service and devote my free time to writing.

Bond of Fellowship

*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.*

— William Channing Gannett
March 9, 1879, adapted

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Women's Retirement

The Women's Retirement group will meet once in December for a holiday outing to the American Swedish Institute. Contact Marg Kinney margkinney@gmail.com.

Young Adult Potluck and Caroling!

Join the young adult group for a potluck on Tuesday, December 16, in the Center Room (please note this is the third Tuesday, instead of the usual 4th) following by some neighborhood caroling. All are welcome!

Save the Date!

7th Annual Unity Church Women's Retreat

Saturday, January 31, 2015

The Gathering is a one-day women's spiritual retreat. Join us in an opportunity to reflect on the wholeness of our lives—through worship, song, movement, writing, drumming, conversation, and contemplation. Breakfast and lunch will be provided, as will opportunities for massage and spiritual direction. Registration will be available on our website and in the Parish Hall beginning on Sunday, January 4.

Host a Sources Suppers in February

In the Sources Supper tradition, during the week of February 15-22, 2015, we will come together to tell the story of Unitarian Universalism and apply it to our lives today. There are two options to participate in this opportunity for community building and spiritual deepening: in one another's homes on February 15 and 22, and at the church on February 22. If you would like to be a host for a Sources Supper in your home for 6-10 people on either the 15th or the 22nd, please let Lisa Friedman know at lisa@unityunitarian.org. To read about the origins of the Sources Supper and the key events covered, go to www.SourcesSupper.org.

"Overstuffed" Group Coaching

Do you have goals around creating more simplicity and ease in your life? Maybe you are working on de-cluttering your house or calendar; streamline your spending, or becoming more effective in your day-to-day life. Do you wish you had more support in reaching your goals? Join life coach Nicole Lynskey for an "Overstuffed" group coaching experience and get motivated and focused! This small group will meet bimonthly for three months. We'll have an opportunity to reflect, go deep and get coached when stuck and be supported by the coach and the group.

Starts with an in-depth coaching discovery session scheduled individually with your coach. Cost is \$169 for Unity members, \$189 for non-members, and \$109 for "Overstuffed 7-week" graduates who wish to by-pass the individual session. Contact Nicole Lynskey at 612-578-9783 for information or go to <http://bit.ly/11oo19b>.

Ongoing Groups at Unity Church

These groups are open to all members and friends of Unity Church. If you are looking to connect with a group, please contact the person listed below, visit the church website at www.unityunitarian.org for meeting information, or call the church office at 651-228-1456.

A New Look at the Bible: Second Thursday of the month (December 11) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

Afterthoughts: This group meets after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (December 18) from Noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Evergreen Quilters: Second Tuesday of the month (December 9) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (December 27) from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760

Living With Grief Group: A group for people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (December 16) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, December 8 and 22, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

Unitots!: A drop-in playgroup for families (parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles) with kids through preschool age. Every Monday and Thursday, from 9:30 a.m.-noon, in the nursery. Contact Michelle Hill at michelle@unityunitarian.org

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne at jack.hawthorne@comcast.net.

December 9: *The Language of Flowers* by Vanessa Diffenbaugh
January 13: *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity* by Katherine Boo

Unity Bridge Club: Friday, December 5, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209.

Women's Retirement Group: The Women's Retirement group will meet once in December for a holiday outing to the American Swedish Institute. Contact Marg Kinney margkinney@gmail.com.

Young Adult Group: Potluck supper in the Center Room on December 16 at 6:30 p.m. Contact: Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org

Sangha Zen Meditation: Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. **Sangha will not meet on December 2.** Contact Ken Ford at kford5@comcast.net



Holiday Worship Information

Sunday, December 21 • Family Sunday

The Empty Present • 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 4:30 p.m.

As Christmas Day approaches the whole church family will gather to sing (SHOUT at 11:00 a.m.) carols, prepare ourselves to greet the child, and remember some of the nicest gifts we have ever received. Gifts like peace and joy and yes, even emptiness. The ministers will be joined by Director of Religious Education Rev. K.P. Hong for a festive celebration.

Sunday, December 21

Winter Solstice Celebration • 7:00 p.m. • Parish Hall

Come join us for a contemplative, family-friendly, Celtic-inspired ritual to mark the turning of the year as the darkness gives way to the growing light. This participatory ritual will include chanting, meditation, candle-lighting, singing, and cauldron jumping. Kids—bring animal masks and hand percussion (rattles, shakers, bells)! If you would like to participate as a ritual leader or if you have questions, please contact Lindasusan Ulrich at lindasusan@unityunitarian.org or 651-291-8551.

Wednesday, December 24

Find A Stillness • 10:00 a.m.

In the full rush of Christmas Eve morning we will gather in the quiet of Ames Chapel. There will be extended periods of silence to provide time for relief and contemplation. The service will include an invitation to join in communion.

Christmas Pageant • 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.

Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs narrate the story of the nativity as Unity Church's children and youth act out the story in the sanctuary. Families with children age three and under are encouraged to attend the 4:00 p.m. service. Registration information is available at right.

Christmas by Candlelight: Family Lessons and Carols • 7:00 p.m.

This service is a collaboration between Above Every Name Ministries and Unity Church. This is a service for the entire family, with carols and stories that children and adults will enjoy. Nursery care available for infants and toddlers.

Christmas by Candlelight: Lessons and Carols • 10:00 p.m.

Join worship leaders K.P. Hong, and Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs as we retell the Christmas story and celebrate the promise of peace within. If you are interested in singing with the choir during this candlelighting service, please contact Ruth Palmer at ruth@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x118.

Sunday, December 28 • One service only at 10:00 a.m.

Other People's Children — Lindasusan Ulrich

Hundreds of thousands of children languish in foster care across the U.S., but the weight of displacement and broken bonds is not borne evenly. Hallman Ministerial Intern Lindasusan Ulrich will examine historical forces, current conditions, and the complications of love that echo between the child welfare system and one family's decision to flee Bethlehem.

Sunday, January 4

Tolling of Bells • 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

We begin each new year with a memorial service for those who have died in the previous year. Everyone will have an opportunity to acknowledge those they've loved and lost.

Christmas Pageant and Pageant Choirs

All families with children and youth who are or have been recently enrolled in Religious Education are invited to participate in the annual Unity Church Christmas pageant.

Pageant information has been e-mailed to families and registration is available online at <http://www.unityunitarian.org/pageant-registration.html>. Registration must be completed by December 7. For more information about the Pageant contact Kelley Loughrey at kelleyloughrey@comcast.net.

The Adult Pageant Choir is open to all. The Children's Pageant Choir is open to children in third through sixth grade. For more information about the pageant choirs, please contact Ruth Palmer at the Church Office.

Sunday, December 14

Pageant Costume Fitting

Costume fittings at 10:15 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. in the Whitman Children's Lobby, lower level.

Sunday, December 21

Pageant Adult Choir Rehearsal

10:00–11:00 a.m., Choir Room

Pageant Children's Choir Rehearsal

10:00–11:00 a.m., Foote Room

Tuesday, December 23

Pageant Dress Rehearsal

12:45–4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 24

Pageant Performances

Pageant services are at 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. Performers and parents should arrive at 3:15 p.m.





Mitten Tree

Unity's holiday tradition of generosity begins again on December 1. Our little tree will stand in the Whitman Lobby on the lower level, waiting to be decorated with warm hats, gloves, scarves and—yes—mittens! All donated items should be new or like new. Children's winter items will be distributed to area families through Obama Elementary and Jeremiah Program. Adult items will be distributed through Amicus.

Mano a Mano Craft Sale

Are you looking for that perfect holiday gift? Or for a special winter-time treat for yourself? Be sure to stop by the Parish Hall on Sunday, December 7, to peruse the lovely wool, alpaca and cotton handicrafts on sale. Sweaters, scarves, gloves, caps, and more, all made by hand in Bolivia. Proceeds from the sale benefit Mano a Mano (as well as the craftspeople from whom they were originally purchased). Missing church on sale day? Crafts are always on sale at Mano a Mano's office. Details at www.manoamano.org.

Evergreen Quilters Annual Holiday Sale

Sunday, December 7 and 14, after morning services

Each year twenty-five Evergreen Quilters design and sew original items especially for your holiday gift-giving. Choose a gift for someone on your list, or treat yourself, to gift bags, table runners, table mats, zipper bags, tote bags, cards, scarves, small quilts, hot pads and trivets, wall hangings, ornaments and more!

With every one of your purchase, you win, but our whole community wins, too. One hundred percent of all the money you spend on purchasing these special gifts goes to help people in need. The non-profit programs that Evergreen Quilters donate to help dislocated, homeless, and hungry people. They help our neighbors in St. Paul find food and shelter, obtain education, and establish more stable lives. Donations are made to The Family Place, a day shelter for homeless families in St. Paul; Sharing Korner Food Shelf; and the Jeremiah Program, a transitional program providing housing for young mothers with young children who get assistance to continue their education, improve their working skills, and enhance their parenting skills. Occasionally Evergreen Quilters also contributes to non-profits in other parts of the world where people may be experiencing hardships. The more generous you are with your purchases, the more others will benefit.

Evergreen Quilters are members and friends of Unity Church who quilt or want to learn how to quilt, and who love to share their creativity and skills with each other and the wider community. All people of the church are welcome to join the group at any time. For information please contact Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760 or e-mail her at mwright1438@comcast.net.

Wreath and Cookie Sales!

Purchase your holiday wreath and treats from our high school youth in support of their pilgrimage to Boston. Wreath and cookie sales start Sunday, December 7, following each service and continue until all the goodies have been sold!

"Santa Pause" Free Childcare

Wednesday, December 10 • 6:00-8:30 p.m. • Parish Hall

Unity Junior High Youth and their parents offer their annual gift of time to parents of young children. Sign your child(ren) up for two-and-a-half hours of free holiday fun at church so that you can finish making gifts, planning gatherings or just take a moment's pause during this full season. Dinner, crafts, games and a movie for children ages 3 to 10. Advance sign up required to michelle@unityunitarian.org.



REGIFT...and REJOICE

Holiday Regifting Sale

Sunday January 11, 2015

***Donate your unwanted treasures!
Shop for fabulous regifted bargains!***

Did Santa bring something that's not your size, your style, or your idea of fun? Donate your brand-new but unwanted gift to Unity Church! We'll sell it to someone else, turning your discards into cash. Proceeds will benefit Unity's Mano a Mano Outreach Ministry Team.

What: Holiday Regifting Sale

When: Sunday, January 11, 2015

Where: Unity Church Parish Hall

Time: Right after each service

How it works: Bring your new, unused but unwanted items to the "regifting table" in the Parish Hall on Sunday, January 11, before either morning service. Estimate their value and place them on an appropriate table. We'll sell items at a discount at the Regifting Sale. Unsold items will be given to charity.

All proceeds from the Regifting Sale benefit the work of the Community Outreach Team that supports Mano a Mano International Partners. Mano a Mano builds clinics, schools and roads, and trains teachers, doctors and farmers in rural Bolivia.

Questions? Contact Barbara Benner at benne002@umn.edu or Unity Church at 651-228-1456.

Do people confide in you?

Take Marital First Responders Training

Saturday, December 13

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. • Foote Room

Unity Church has been the national launching pad for Marital First Responders. It's a training workshop for people who others open up to about troubles in their marriages and intimate partnerships. Marital First Responders are natural confidants, but they are sometimes unsure about how to be helpful, how to avoid taking sides, and how to steer friends and family members to the right resources.

Marital First Responder Training will help you be more intentional, skilled, and confident when a friend, coworker, or family member confides about relationship struggles. It's not about being a counselor but being a good friend to a person and a marriage.

The trainer is Bill Doherty, Unity member, University of Minnesota Professor, marriage therapist, and Director of the Minnesota Couples on the Brink Project. He is now spreading this training around the U.S., Great Britain, and Australia.

Training topics will include:

- Listening and empathizing without taking sides
- Offering helpful perspectives on relationships
- Challenging when needed
- Keeping good boundaries
- Helping people find the right kind of help

Our goal is 10% of Unity members trained as Marital First Responders, and we are nearly half way there!

An informal group of trained Marital First Responders at Unity Church meets quarterly, and you will be welcome to join it.

For information and to register, <http://maritalfirstresponders.com/classes>.

The fee is \$10 to cover lunch and refreshments.

Wellspring Wednesday

Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun. Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., followed by worship at 6:45 p.m., and an evening of rich programming beginning at 7:10 p.m. All are welcome. Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance.

Dinner: The cost for dinner is: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family, and can be paid by cash or check. (Children under the age two are free.) Reservations for dinner are not required. Financial assistance is available to cover the cost of dinners; contact Lisa Friedman by e-mail at lisa@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x107.

DECEMBER 3

What did you do in Bolivia? An Educational Pilgrimage

Jackie and Dave Smith

Last summer a group of educators and others from Unity Church and the community returned to Bolivia for a second teaching conference for rural teachers. Returning to Arani, the teachers expanded on relationships started in 2013, and are planning to return in 2015. Join participants from the summer 2014 team for a lively, interactive discussion about last year's trip. The discussion will include trip and workshop highlights, new learning for teachers, and emerging plans for next year's trip.

The Fine Art of Printmaking with Jean Velleu

Who have been some famous printmakers? What is an etching? What is a lithograph? What is a serigraph? Come hear artist Jean Velleu talk about printmaking and her own art. Jean writes: "The thing I have loved most about my art career is the close tie I have felt with my spirituality. There is something about creating a work that puts you in touch with your inner self. Nothing comes between you and the work. It feels like what is happening is flowing to you and through you from an unknown source. It is an adventure I would hope everyone could have." This season, Jean will sell her fine art prints to benefit Unity Church, where she has been a member since 1975. All you need to do is buy the print you like and make your check out to Unity Church in the amount you choose. Jean received her B.A. from St. Olaf College in 1952 and her M.A. in 1974. She served as an artist-in-residence in the Iowa Public Schools before returning to St. Paul.

Open Page Writing Session with Rev. Karen Hering

Wonder: Living with an Open Heart

Free; RSVP required to karen@unityunitarian.org

"I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing," wrote e.e. cummings, "than teach ten thousand stars how not to dance." As we enter the season of darkness and light, we reflect on the gift of wonder and how we keep it alive.

Saint Paul Performance Project

Come and see the performance piece created by Unity's talented high school students and Unity Children's Musical staff Mary Blouin Auffert, Nathan Eckstein, and Sandy Waterman. This original performance piece was created this fall at Unity Church and will also be performed out in the community during the month of December.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Gentle Meditative Yoga

This class truly is for every body. Come as you are and experience non-judgmental, non-competitive, lovely yoga. Youth ages 10 and up are welcome to come with an adult family member. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat, towel and water bottle. A few mats will be available for loan. Elen Bahr is a 200-hour RYT certified yoga instructor.

New Family Religious Education Orientation

Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

Tween Group (Grades 5-8): "Spirits, Stories, Faith, and Me"

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Travel to Bolivia!

From Patricia Ohmans

Mano a Mano Community Outreach Team Member



Do you love travel, adventure, and strange beauty? Are you interested in urban agriculture? Would you like to take a trip to a warm place this winter? Consider Cochabamba, Bolivia, a garden city where the temperature averages 75 degrees in February!

Mano a Mano is one of Unity's officially "commissioned" Community Outreach Ministry projects. Mano a Mano is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization based in Saint Paul that collects surplus medical equipment and supplies from local hospitals, and ships them to clinics in Bolivia. In the past 20 years, Mano a Mano has built 150 new clinics in impoverished parts of the country as well as more than 50 schools and housing units for teachers, roads and reservoirs. Mano a Mano's newest project is a demonstration farm to teach sustainable agriculture techniques to subsistence farmers.

Unity's community outreach team to support Mano a Mano is planning a week-long, group trip to Cochabamba, Bolivia, from March 14 to 22, 2015. We will visit the Center for Ecological Agriculture, as well as Mano a Mano clinics in poor urban communities and in remote villages high in the mountains. We will learn first-hand about the work of this incredible organization, by talking with Mano a Mano staff and volunteers, and villagers. Mano a Mano's Bolivian staff will give group members an unforgettable lesson on how health and development can be promoted—cheaply and effectively—in communities with very few resources.

Unity's adult members (age 15 and older) are invited to consider being part of this support delegation to Bolivia. The cost of the trip is approximately \$2,300 per traveler, including airfare. Bolivia is a safe, friendly country with memorable scenery, music, and handicrafts. We will enhance our trip with lectures by experts on social and political issues in Bolivia.

If you are interested in going on this trip, please join us for an informational meeting on Sunday, December 7, at 12:15 p.m., in the DeCramer Room.

Photo taken by 2014 pilgrims.

- **Thank you for a successful Bike Drive!**
- Thank you to the many members and friends who made the bike drive for the Center for Victims of Torture bike program such a success. If you have not yet filled out a donation form for a tax receipt, please contact Lisa Friedman.

Make Winter Warmer for Those Seeking Second Chances

From the Racial and Restorative Justice Team

Men and women released from prison face huge challenges on their way to rejoining society. Challenges start with finding a bed and enough to eat on the first day out—nothing compared to finding an employer and/or a landlord who will hire or rent to an ex-offender. Doing either is difficult without transportation, especially during the winter, and who would want to apply for a job or an apartment without the basics for personal grooming?

These little things mean a lot to those trying to make good after doing their time. That's why Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice Team asks you to help provide the following items for its community partner, Amicus, who assists those leaving prison in a time of need:

- Hygiene items such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, body lotion, deodorant, and shaving cream (all items should be unopened)
- New gloves, hats, scarves, and socks suitable for the job site
- Hand and foot warmers
- Bus passes or the cash to buy bus passes

The Racial and Restorative Justice Team will collect these items through January. On Sundays, please bring donations to the Racial and Restorative Justice table in the Parish Hall. Donations delivered during the week should be brought to Lisa Friedman's office.



MUSIC MINISTRY

Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer Director of Music Ministry



*Dwell on the beauty of life,
Watch the stars,
And see yourself running with them.*

—Marcus Aurelius



As we begin this month of wonder, your musicians are working to bring offerings of music that invite your imagination to seek out those "stars." Inward and outward, seen and unseen, still and falling, blazing or gentle... music gives us opportunity to find those "stars" in the joy, peace and, possibly, the healing and hope found in shared sound. Along with our dedicated and wonderful singers in the choirs, there is opportunity for you to be involved as singer or listener. We hope you might consider joining us in any of the following ways. Perhaps you might find just the right song to assist your very own "running with the stars."

Please feel free to be in touch with any questions you might have.

Sing at Unity Church on Christmas Eve!

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: 10:00 p.m.

It is just plain beautiful to sing, looking into the candlelight, lifting the sound of your voices into the darkened sanctuary that embraces all those present at the **Christmas Eve 10:00 p.m. Candlelight Service.**

Please consider joining us in the second year of this special choir. We sing simple but beautiful pieces, sometimes adding chimes. This year we will also have a recorder player with us in the balcony. Perhaps a time for your family to sing together!

REHEARSALS

Sunday, December 14 • 12:15-1:15 p.m. • Choir Room

Sunday, December 21 • 12:15-1:15 p.m. • Choir Room

Wednesday, December 24 • 9:15 p.m. • Warm-up Rehearsal, Sanctuary

You have the best seats in the house to watch the light being passed among the congregation and see it grow, row by row. Then we take the light from the congregation and pass it among our own candles in the balcony while everyone sings *Silent Night*. It is a moment of wonder.

Christmas Eve Pageant Choir: 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.

For almost 100 years, the Christmas Pageant has been at the heart of Christmas Eve at Unity Church. This is a wonderful opportunity for adults and children to sing together during this cherished tradition. The pageant is held twice on Christmas Eve, at 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.

REHEARSALS

Children's Pageant Choir • Sunday, December 21 • 10:00–11:00 a.m. • Foote Room
Kathleen Radspinner, Director

Adult Pageant Choir • Sunday, December 21 • 10:00–11:00 a.m. • Choir Room
Ruth Palmer, Director

If you or a member of your family would like to be a part of singing in either or both of these Christmas Eve choirs, please contact Ruth Palmer at 651-228-1456 x118 or ruth@unityunitarian.org.

Holiday Carol Sing Concert Dessert Buffet

Saturday, December 20

Sanctuary at Unity Church

6:30 p.m.: Carol Sing

7:00 p.m.: Holiday Concert
"Dancing Day"

Children's Choir, Women's Ensemble,
Unity Choir, Unity Singers

8:00 p.m.: Dessert Buffet

*Bring a holiday dessert to share!
These can be dropped off in the kitchen
before the carol sing and concert.*

The Unity Church Children's Musical

Calling all 6th, 7th, and 8th Graders

For the past 25 years, talented members of the Unity Church community have come together each year to write, compose, direct, choreograph, and perform a unique show for Unity Church. To find out more, come to the parent information meeting on Sunday, December 14, from 10:15-11:00 a.m. in the Robbins Parlor. This is the same information that was presented in November, so if you came to that one, you don't need to come to the December meeting.

Auditions and parent meeting for this year's musical are Sunday, January 4, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Performance dates will be February 26, 27, and 28, 2015.

Questions? Contact co-producers Kim Klose at klose001@msn.com or Dave Smith at david.smith52@yahoo.com.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Pitter-pattering Questions

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

From K.P. Hong, Director of Religious Education



Do the banks of a wild and chaotic river contain its turbulent flow, or guide it for the time being, shaping and being shaped by it into change and openness?

In its ordinary use, *chaos* speaks of disorder and confusion. But this would be far from the curious meaning given by those who observe with unqualified wonder the flocking of birds or schooling of fish, the rippling of sand or weather patterns forming hurricanes.

How does such self-organization, even beauty, emerge out of randomness and chaos? Plot a two-dimensional graph with one variable, explains chaos theory, and the line goes up and down apparently at random; but plot three variables simultaneously in computer space and chaos seems to meander like a river, never repeating itself, as forms and boundaries emerge that enclose what formerly appeared accidental and haphazard. Chaos theorists recognize this as a main feature of what they call *complexity*, the “dynamic behavior that never reaches equilibrium and in which many independent particle-like units or ‘agents’ perpetually interact and seek mutual accommodation in any of many possible way.” (Garnett Williams) Yes, admittedly a bit nerdy, but that may well be one of the best descriptions I have heard about what happens in religious education classrooms!

For if our sacred play with children is an attempt to arouse and guide the flow of life, we step into currents teeming with complexity. This is the complexity, the dynamic instability, experienced in the difference between two kinds of play with our children. There is a “*pretending as if*” play that asks children to assume adult roles and realities, pretending as if they were doctors treating an illness, pretending as if the teaspoon held lifesaving medicine. This is the child’s simulation of everyday reality where she eats, goes to school, and gets a checkup at the clinic. And who would debate that socializing children to function effectively in the world is essential for their livelihood? But there is another “*wondering what if*” play that aims for something far more dangerous than socialization or accommodation into established realities. “Wondering what if” is the emancipation of wonder, its uncompromising astonishment at the miracle of life in which kangaroos have pockets and a refrigerator-sized probe lands on a comet traveling 80,000 miles per hour. This is the radicalization of play and the child’s reimagination of the very topography and ground of life itself, wondering what if all the “the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight” from Selma to Ferguson.

Perhaps this is a retreat from reality and escape into fantasy? On the contrary, “wondering what if” enables children to confront reality without conceding to the totalitarianism that only one version of the story is permitted, that the course of their lives must flow within established banks, no coloring outside the lines. But dynamic instability is their chaotic birthright, to play at the edges of their and our knowing and being, and to overflow the banks that would confine their wonder. Of course our play with children necessarily holds both kinds of play, but I can’t help wonder about our own socialized preference for “pretending as if” play that trivializes (oh how cute!) or hides in the guise of “wondering what if” play. And I wonder about religious education and our covenant as teachers and guides, if we are more successful in our inclination at containing the chaotic flow of our children then to shaping and being shaped by the wild and turbulent flow of their wonder into a greater change and openness. Just wondering what if.

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

Religious Education Mark your calendar!

DECEMBER 2014

Wednesday, December 3: New Family Orientation, 7:10 p.m.; Tween Youth Group!

Sunday, December 7: Regular R.E.; High School Cookie and Wreath sales begin. Christmas pageant registration due.

Wednesday, December 10: “Santa Pause” holiday childcare event 6:00-8:30 p.m. (RSVP required)

Sunday, December 14: Regular R.E., Celebration of New Lives.

Sunday, December 21: Family Sunday (No R.E., nursery available) Carol Sing (9:00 and 4:30), Carol Shout (11:00)

Wednesday, December 24: Christmas Pageant, 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.; Family Lessons and Carols Candlelight Service, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 28: No R.E. classes — special activities for kids!

JANUARY 2015

Sunday, January 4: Regular R.E., New Workshop Rotation Cycle: “Divine Within”

Wednesday, January 7: New Family Orientation 7:10 p.m.; Tween Youth group and OWL resume

Sunday, January 11: Regular R.E.; Journey Guide – Passing of the Torch

Sunday, January 18: Story Sunday Grades 1-6 (MLK weekend)

Friday, January 23: Teachers Night Out! 6:00-8:30 p.m. (RSVP required, must be a current teacher)

Sunday, January 25: Regular R.E.; Jr. High Winter Semester classes begin!





What's New in the Library and Bookstall!

From Louise Merriam, Library and Bookstall Team

New Bookstall Titles

Did you know you can do your holiday shopping after church—without leaving the building? Check out these titles recently added to the Bookstall. Some are brand new; others are old favorites.



- *New Slow City: Living Simply in the World's Fastest City* by William Powers, 2014
- *The Promise* by Nicola Davies, 2014
- *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart* by Bill Bishop, 2009
- *Cries of the Spirit* by Marilyn Sewell, 2000
- *The Sacred Depths of Nature* by Ursula Goodenough, 2000

The Bookstall has gift certificates! Not only can you buy books and other items in the Bookstall, but you can also make it possible for someone else to do the same. Whether you buy a book directly or purchase a gift certificate, you are helping the Unity Libraries.

Library Additions – Whitman's Children's Library



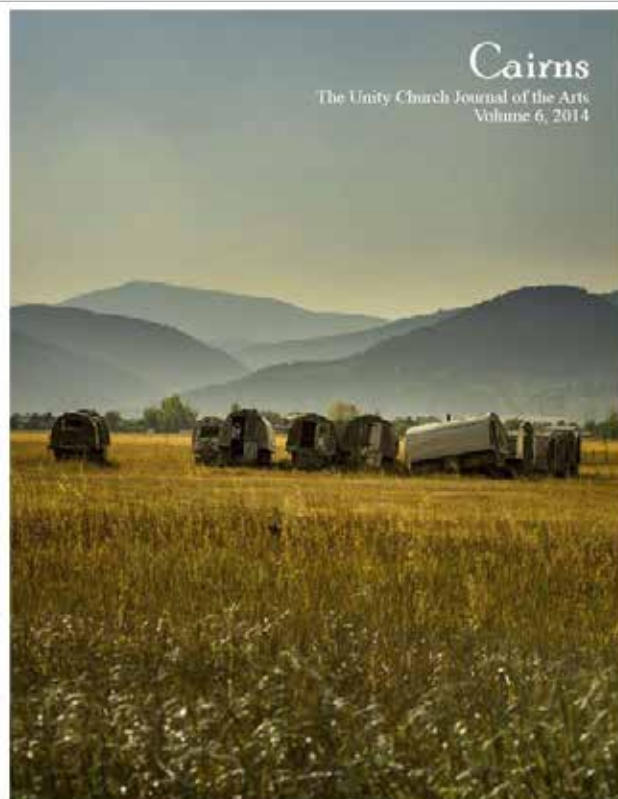
A lovely holiday title for children is *Dusk* by Uri Shulevitz (2013). It is the story of New York City at holiday time, revealing that the darkest time of the year may also be the start of something wonderful.

Other recently added children's titles include:

- *Riley Mack and the Other Known Troublemakers* by Chris Grabenstein, 2012
- *LaRue for Mayor: Letters from the Campaign Trail* by Mark Teague, 2008
- *Bang!: How We Came to Be* by Michael Rubino, 2011
- *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health* by Robie H. Harris, 2009
- *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown, 2005

Library Additions – Anderson Adult Library

- *Universalists and Unitarians in America* by John A. Buehrens, 2011
- *Sonata for Voice and Silence (Meditations)* by Mark Belletini, 2008
- *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide* by John A. Buehrens, 1999
- *The Longing for Home: Reflections at Midlife* by Fredrick Buechner, 1996



Coming December 2014

Check "This Week at Unity" or in the Bookstall for the Vol. 6 release date.

Open Page Writing Session



Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, Open Page writing sessions are opportunities to correspond with the "still, small voice within." Using stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, participants reflect on the month's theme in their own words and on their own pages. No writing experience is necessary.

Wonder: Living with an Open Heart

Wednesday, December 3 • 7:00-9:00 p.m.

"I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing," wrote e.e. cummings, "than teach ten thousand stars how not to dance." As we enter the season of darkness and light, we reflect on the gift of wonder and how we keep it alive.

This session free and will be held at Unity Church. RSVP is required to karen@unityunitarian.org

PASTORAL CARE AT UNITY CHURCH

Depression in your family?

Do you live with a young person who lives with depression? Do you sometimes feel like you are the only one who does? If you are interested in gathering with other Unity Church parents who also struggle with youth and young adults with depression, please plan to attend a gathering on Saturday, January 3, from 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Resources and strategies will be shared and lunch will be provided. Please contact Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org to sign up.

Join Unity's Caring Circle

An important part of the Pastoral Care program at Unity Church is connecting church members and friends in need with temporary or one-time services provided by Unity's Caring Circle. Services including delivering a meal, shopping for groceries and other needed items, assisting at memorial services, helping with home/yard care, helping with pet care (feed and walk), and providing snow removal service, childcare, transportation, and overnight lodging.

Help us expand the ministry of the Caring Circle by filling out the online form (<http://bit.ly/caringcircle>) and indicating the activities that you would like to assist us with. Forms will remain on file and a member of the Pastoral Care Team will contact you to request help with a service which you have indicated a willingness to provide.

Share a Joy or Concern

If you have a joy or sorrow, life-cycle event, or concern you would like to share with the Pastoral Care Team or congregation, please fill out the online form at <http://bit.ly/joyconcern> and a team member will contact you.

Struggling This Season? Let Unity Help.

For some people, the holidays can be a time of sadness, tension, and isolation in the midst of a culture focused on joy and goodwill. If you're struggling this season, please know that Unity Church's ministers and Pastoral Care Team are here for you. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 if you think you'd like to spend time with a member of the Pastoral Care Team or staff who has been trained in a ministry of listening and presence.

Unity's Pastoral Care Team

Unity Church Pastoral Care Team members are specially trained and formally commissioned members of the congregation who work with our ministers to lend support to parishioners in moments of challenge, crisis, or celebration. Interactions are confidential, and no information is shared unless a congregant indicates that he or she would like others in the congregation to be involved or informed.

Members of the Pastoral Care Team

- Visit church members in hospitals or nursing homes
- Call on new parents who may feel frustrated and exhausted in those first weeks after a baby arrives
- Check in with those who might be struggling with loss or change — be it the death of a loved one, the loss of a job or a pet, or the newness of having a child leave for kindergarten or college
- Provide respite for caregivers who may be tending elderly parents or injured, chronically ill, or disabled loved ones
- Connect members of the church community with helpful services such as: shopping and meal delivery, child care, pet care, home and yard care, and transportation

Pastoral Care Team Programs

Caregivers Group

Third Thursday of the month: December 18

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. Janne Eller-Isaacs and Pastoral Care Team member Cynthia Orange for an informal support group for caregivers. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs by e-mail at janne@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x106 if you would like to participate.

Living With Grief Group

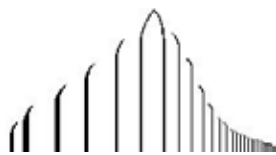
Third Tuesday of the month: December 16

On the third Tuesday of every month, Janne Eller-Isaacs will offer a group for people living with grief and loss. All are welcome to come to discuss issues related to the grieving process. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs by e-mail at janne@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x106 if you would like to participate.

Rides Ministry

Unity's Rides Ministry helps people get to Sunday worship. If you don't drive or don't have a car and could use a lift, please contact the main church number, 651-228-1456, and the volunteer or staff member who answers the phone can check to see whether any of our more than 60 volunteer drivers might be able to help out. And we can always use more volunteer drivers—for more information or to sign up as a regular or occasional driver, call 651-228-1456.





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

GINNY ALLEN, CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
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REV. ROB ELLER-ISAACS, CO-MINISTER
BARBARA HUBBARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
REV. LISA FRIEDMAN, MINISTER OF CONGREGATIONAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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**TIME SENSITIVE
MATERIAL**

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Wellspring Wednesday

Wellspring Wednesday will be held on December 3 (turn to page 10 for details) before it goes on winter break for the remainder of the month.

Dinner, worship, and programming will return on Wednesday, January 7!

Turning Over a New Leaf Raffle Fundraiser Update

The money has all been counted, the prizes have all been distributed, and we are pleased to report that the total raised from the raffle is \$16,000! Many thanks to all who purchased tickets, sold tickets, made cash donations, and donated prizes!

Annual Pledges and Year-End Gifts

2015 Operating and Capital Pledges

Many thanks to everyone who has made operating and pledges for 2015! **If you haven't yet pledged, please do so today!** Online pledging and forms for download are available at www.unityunitarian.org. **Thank you!**

Make a year-end gift to Unity Church!

As we come to the close of 2014, we look back with tremendous gratitude for the gift of community and the new possibilities that we witness each day. One tradition that we hope might continue during this busy season of giving is the tradition of year-end gifts to the church. If such a gift is possible for you, we invite you to make one now. Donations are gratefully accepted online at <http://bit.ly/2014yearend> (please select "other payment" and include "year-end" in the comments) or by contacting Barbara Hubbard at barbarah@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x116.

