

Waiting

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.

I write this 48 hours after 129 people were killed in Paris, 48 hours after 19 people were murdered in Baghdad, 72 hours after 43 people were blown up in Beirut, and as I write each word more lives are being destroyed by violence somewhere. Everywhere.

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope.

I write this only hours after Jamar Clark was shot in the head by police officers at the intersection of James and Plymouth. I write this in the eleventh month of a year in which 21 transwomen have been murdered in the U.S. I write this as hundreds and thousands of desperate refugees continue to drown, suffocate, starve to death.

Jamar Clark. Michael Brown. Tamir Rice. Romain Brisbon. Zella Ziona. Keisha Jenkins. Kajieme Powell. Yvette Smith. Aylan Kurdi. Ezell Ford. Eric Garner. Jasmine Collins. Gabriel Sanchez Velasquez.

Wait without hope, for hope would be hope for the wrong thing.

But *what* are we waiting for? We speak of truth. We speak of justice. Are these our most fervent hopes?

Wait without love, for love would be love of the wrong thing.

What are we waiting for? We speak of beloved community. We speak of interconnectedness. Are these the things our hearts long for?

I said to my soul, be still, and wait.

What are we waiting for??

You say I am repeating something I have said before. I shall say it again. Shall I say it again? In order to arrive there, to arrive where you are, to get from where you are not, you must go

by a way wherein there is no ecstasy. In order to arrive at what you do not know you must go by a way which is the way of ignorance. In order to arrive at what you are not you must go through the way in which you are not.

Perhaps we can't know what it is we hope for, what it is we love the most. Perhaps we won't see the birthing of a world of equity, liberty, and peace in this lifetime. Maybe we'll never see it. So we wait.

Do we wait for a savior? Do we wait for a judgment day? A revelation? A redemption?

No. We are our own redeemers. Let us remember that we are Unitarians, believing in the inherent worth and dignity of all human beings — *this* is how we love. Let us remember that we are Universalists, believing that all human beings can and will be restored to right relationship with each other and all of creation — *this* is our hope. But we must also remind ourselves that systemic, universal change happens slowly. These hopes we have, these loves we hold, these truths we seek take time.

But in the waiting we are not idle! We *cannot* be idle. In the waiting we have important work to do. We must reflect, remember, recover *who we are* and *who we are not*. In the waiting we are given time to confess and repent, to forgive and heal, to gather our strength and courage for all that is yet to come. In the waiting we prepare and plan, queue up resources, hone our skills, negotiate connections and do everything — *everything* — we can to ensure continued work and the eventual (hopefully?) success of an outcome we cannot imagine and will never see.

So what are we waiting for? There is much work to be done. Much work to be done while we wait.

I said to my soul, be still, and wait. There is yet faith, but the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.

There is yet faith. I have faith that while we wait for violence, greed, anger and fear to stop controlling the world we will do all that we can to ensure that it may be so. May it be so.

(The phrases in italics throughout this piece are taken from T.S. Eliot's poem "East Coker", from *The Four Quartets*.)

By Hallman Ministerial Intern
Shay MacKay with this month's theme team: Lisa Friedman, Ruth Palmer, KP Hong, Karen Hering, Rob Eller-Isaacs, Janne Eller-Isaacs and Danny Givens, Jr.

Waiting Theme Resources

BOOKS

When the Heart Waits by Sue Monk Kidd

The Four Quartets by T.S. Eliot

Poem: "I Am Waiting" by Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Seven Spiritual Gifts of Waiting by Holly W. Whitcomb

A Feminist Ethic of Risk by Sharon Welch

FILM

Pursuit of Happyness (2006)

The Fountain (2006)

YOUTH

The Snowman (1982 film)

book by Raymond Briggs

Waiting by Kevin Henkes

Waiting is Not Easy! by Mo Willems

Just Words



My standard garb this time of year is gray or khaki slacks, a button-down shirt (usually blue), a sweater vest and a sports jacket. These days, and for the foreseeable future, I wear a Black Lives Matter button on my lapel. It's only a gesture but it is a gesture of solidarity that opens conversations and helps make my commitments clear. Last week, dressed in my usual uniform, I went to visit a beloved member of the church as she lay dying. When I walked into the room her exhausted and adoring husband looked up from his chair by her bedside and asked, "What does your button say?" Just for an instant I was taken aback. What was I thinking bringing controversy into that holy moment?

I worried that he might feel I was being insensitive, that his wife's deathbed was no place for advocacy. He saw what it said and took it in stride. In that moment I realized that black lives matter is more than a slogan. To wear that button wherever I go, even and especially in the most intimate setting to which my ministry calls me is to be clear the work of ending oppression is an existential commitment. It has become part of who I am. It has become part of who we are. It is another way to say, "God bless you." When black lives matter, all lives will finally matter.

I imagine some of you are asking, "Does he really have to bring this up at Christmas? Can't he take that button and let us just enjoy the holidays?" Now I intend to enjoy the holidays and I hope that you do too. I've come to love the pageant and the services on Christmas Eve. I've cast off my old habit of disdain for all things Christmas and let the magic in. But the heart of the message for me, the new life I'm waiting for, the rebirth of wonder and light is braided now into the work to which I, and I pray we, are asked to give our lives. Like Joseph, you and I have yet to learn the largest lesson of the season. Friends, there are no other people's children.

— Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs

Spiritual Practice for Leaders

Saturday, December 12 • 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Rob Eller-Isaacs and Sarah Cledwyn

Effective leadership operates at the intersection of action and spiritual practice. One informs the other. Those in positions of leadership whether at church, work, or in civic life are too often driven by the expectations of productivity and accomplishment that can leave them off kilter and burned out. Spiritual practitioners can get so focused on their internal experience that they can be paralyzed or insular. Leadership grounded in practice keeps us focused and engaged, choosing our actions with intent and consciousness from the truth of our being. This workshop asks that we develop both the understanding and the discipline to integrate practice and action so that we might be more effective, better balanced, and more loving people and leaders.

Pledging Members: Free // Non-Pledging: \$25

To sign up, please contact Martha Tilton by phone at 651-228-1456 x105 or by email at martha@unityunitarian.org.

The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

John B. Emkovik

June 6, 1927 – September 4, 2015

Mary Katherine Kaul

March 13, 1940 – November 6, 2015

Nancy Solo-Taylor

January 23, 1958 –
November 10, 2015

In Celebration

Rosalea Brook Bickelhall

born one more redeemer

September 18, 2015

to parents

Megan Hall and Leo Bickelhaupt
and big brother Dylan

Edward Paul Galegher

born one more redeemer

October 30, 2015

to parents Emily and Joe Galegher

Soup Suppers

After the 4:30 Sunday Worship Service

All meals will offer vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies may contact madeline@unityunitarian.org to arrange to have a special preparation.

December 6: Potato leek soup and vegetable bisque

December 13: Chili

December 20: Carrot ginger puree

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Unity Church–Unitarian
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DECEMBER WORSHIP CALENDAR / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

December Sunday Worship Calendar

Sunday worship services are held at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. except where noted. *There is only one service at 10:00 a.m. on December 27. Sermon podcasts and archives are available online at www.unityunitarian.org.

December 6: *What Trust Can Accomplish*

In this season of anticipation and waiting, what can we trust to be born in life around us? Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Heidi Mastrud will explore the relationship between trust and waiting, and why this is such a demanding spiritual practice for many of us.

December 13: *Waiting as Practice*

Advent is the season of waiting. Children wait for gifts. Grown-ups wait for guests. And much of the world waits for new light. There is an art to waiting that Mary knew, an art that every pregnant woman has to learn. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Rene Meyer-Grimberg will reflect on that art and call us to the qualities of attention artful waiting asks of us.

December 20: *The Many Gifts of Darkness* Family Sunday

The whole church family will gather to sing the old carols and hear once again the story of Santa Lucia as we come together at the threshold of Christmas. In the darkest days of winter we celebrate the darkness even as we wait for light to come. Carol Sing at 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Carol Shout at 11:00 a.m.

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. The nursery is open for children under five years of age.

December 27: *Are We Still Slaughtering the Innocents?*

ONE SERVICE ONLY AT 10:00 A.M.

In a dream, God told Joseph to bring Mary and Jesus back to Israel because the threat was gone, the slaughter was over. But is it really? Hallman Ministerial Intern Shay MacKay and worship associate Rochelle Lockridge will lead a reflection on the violence and tragedy that continue to permeate our world.

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

Please turn to page 15 for information about holiday music offerings.



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 6: Carmen Pampa Fund

The Carmen Pampa Fund is the primary source of financial support for Unidad Academica Campesina, a college in rural Bolivia offering programs in agriculture, veterinary science, nursing, and education. Its graduates have become vibrant catalysts for change in a region that is among the poorest in Latin America. The college has been highlighted by the United Nations as a successful model of poverty education. Joan and Segundo Velasquez are staunch supports of the Carmen Pampa Fund.

December 13: SMRLS Project Hope

Project Hope is a Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS) outreach effort focusing on single persons living with mental challenges. Its purpose is to shorten these individuals' periods of homelessness by assisting in the location of affordable housing and in negotiations with landlords to keep target persons in their current housing. Unity Church members Martha Eaves, Bruce Beneke, and Sally Scoggins are tireless spokespersons for Project Hope.

December 20: Minnesota Prison Doula Project

The Minnesota Prison Doula Project is a prison-based pregnancy, birth, and parenting program at Shakopee Women's Prison and Hennepin/Ramsey Country Workhouses. Doulas offer incarcerated mothers one on one counseling and group support before, during, and after birth, including the difficult separation of mother and baby while mothers complete their prison time. Unity Church member Michelle Thomas is an advocate for this project.

December 27: Scholars of Minnesota—COPE Project

Scholars of Minnesota—Creating Opportunities for Post-Secondary Education's (COPE) mission is to assist underrepresented students in the community in obtaining educational opportunities, financial support, and other resources they need to reach their highest academic, professional, and personal goals. COPE arranges and provides after-school mentoring and college preparation for students in the Twin Cities metro area. The program activities include ACT/SAT college prep classes, college tours and fairs, financial planning, and an annual fundraising scholarship event. COPE is run by volunteers which includes board members, parents, community members and students.

The offering recipient for Christmas Eve services is the Ministers's Discretionary Fund. The offering recipient for the Christmas Pageant is chosen by the youth in the roles of the three kings and is a community non-profit organization.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / PLEDGE DRIVE REPORT

Reflections on Leadership

From Steve Harper, Trustee



There are many leaders in our church. Some, like the ministers and staff are very visible to all of us. Others, like the volunteers who lead welcome teams, cooking teams, religious education teams, community outreach teams, and the many other teams that make up our church do their work with equal enthusiasm but less visibly. One such

team of volunteers is the Board of Trustees. It is made up of nine individuals who serve for three years each to help shape the work that is expressed through the Ends statements developed by our faith community.

My three years on the board are done. During that time we have developed new Ends statements, shared experiences in examining our own racism, and had many conversations on what it means to be a covenantal, policy governance, community of faith. We have also begun the process of planning for the leadership transition in our not-too-distant future. All of this work, while tiring, is also deeply rewarding.

In the coming year, the board will wrestle with new questions and new issues. One key issue (which is not new) will be how to diversify the volunteer leadership of the church (including the membership of the board). This conversation will involve many members of our community as we seek to understand how to encourage new leaders to step forth — both those who are already leaders in the wider community as well as those who want to learn what leadership is all about. The board looks forward to this conversation as it is a vital part of how we continue to live out our community's mission in the world. Please join us.

Annual Pledges and Year-End Gifts

2016 Operating and Capital Pledges

Many thanks to everyone who has made pledges for 2016!

If you haven't yet pledged, please do so today! Make your pledge online at www.unityunitarian.org. **Thank you!**

Make a year-end gift to Unity Church!

As we come to the close of 2015, 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/yearendgift2015> (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.

What's it Worth?

A Report on our October Pledge Drive

From Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director



October was pledge month at Unity Church. Almost three hundred households had made multi-year pledges in 2015, which provided a great start for 2016. Some people served as canvassers, inviting others into conversation about what Unity Church means in your life. Others accepted that invitation and we heard about lively, deep conversations. Many others turned in pledge cards or

pledged online. Thank you, thank you! Then there are some who we are still counting on, but who we haven't heard from yet. It's not too late!!

As of November 16, a total of 602 pledges have been made for our 2016 operating fund totaling \$1,173,785. 556 pledges are from folks who also pledged in 2015. Of the 602 pledges, 41% remained flat, 45% increased and 6% decreased from 2015 to 2016, with an average increase of 6% and an average pledge of \$2,032. The remaining 8%, or 45 pledges, are new pledges for 2016.

Our original pledge goal for the 2016 operating fund was \$1,350,000 which would have allowed us to give staff members a salary increase, add a position in the religious education program, provide more facilities staff hours to maintain our busy building, fund additional administrative staff time, and increase our contributions to the UUA and to our racial justice efforts.

Based on the results of our pledge drive, we have revised our 2016 operating fund projections to \$1,279,000. If we receive the remaining 125 pledges to satisfy this goal, we will have exceeded our 2015 pledge base (with spring increases) by almost 6%, which is great news. The challenge is that we fell short of budgeted pledges in 2015 by \$30k and in order to maintain a virtually flat budget into 2016, we needed that increase.

The 2016 operating budget that will be proposed to the congregation at the annual meeting on November 21 does not include increases in staff salaries or hours, and in fact — we have had to eliminate a position (Office Manager) and reduce health insurance benefits for staff. If you haven't yet pledged for 2016, or would like to increase your pledge, follow the online link on our website.

Our ongoing capital pledges allow us to repair and maintain our sacred home with the care it deserves. Capital pledges are currently being used to design and install a sprinkler system in the sanctuary, repair roof and exterior wall issues that have led to water damage, and to protect the operating budget from debt service. Thanks to your generosity, we have received \$201k, \$241k, and \$204k in capital pledges for 2015, 2016, and 2017 respectively.

Waiting for Justice

From Peter Heege on behalf of Unity's
Anti-Racism Leadership Team

*Could it be? Yes, it could. Something's coming,
something good, if I can wait! Something's coming, I
don't know what it is, but it is gonna be great!*

— *Something's Coming* from *West Side Story*,
Leonard Bernstein

This season of waiting, of anticipation, of the waning and the return of the light, of ending and beginning again, is weighted with message. The words of Tony's song from *West Side Story*, with its mixed message of breath-held expectation and patience, speaks to me strongly of our racial justice and equity work.

We are starting to see progress in the social conversation. We are standing in alliance with our sisters and brothers in Black Lives Matter, and their message is beginning to have currency. Politicians of all shades are talking about income inequality, criminal justice inequity and the cradle to prison pipeline, hyper-military policing, white privilege, pervasive institutional racism. Some of their pronouncements are awful, others are encouraging and hope-giving.

How do we read these signs? Is this the beginning of the fullness of time we yearn for? Is the Beloved Community at hand?

As I write this, I am hearing the reports out of North Minneapolis that another unarmed young black man has been killed by Minneapolis Police. My answer to the queries above must be "No". There are faint glimmers of hope in a still very dark 350 year night of oppression and inequity. As much as we wish and await, the tide of white fragility and entrenched systemic inertia is very strong against the change we long for. This is the work of generations; those of us living now may well not see the fruition of our waiting. It will be for the young people we now support and are in covenant with, and for their children and grandchildren. We who are now doing this work need to accept the small successes and continue the heart-breaking work to pave their way.

December Parish Hall Artist

Barbara Evan

Barbara Evan received a B.A. in English from the University of South Dakota in 1968. After a long hiatus, she studied art—mostly design, painting and sculpture—at the University of Minnesota, receiving a second B.A. in Studio Arts in 1992. Barbara usually works abstractly using multiple layers of ovals, circles, grids, and dots, occasionally connected with lines that may or may not suggest objects. The lines speak to the reasoning brain, and the layering creates atmosphere that appeals to emotion; the idea is to stimulate both thinking and feeling at the same time, with feeling having something of the upper hand.

2015-16 Hallman Ministerial Intern

Shay MacKay



I've been thinking a lot lately about patience; more specifically, about how I could use more of it in my life. A couple of weeks ago, I was standing in the check-out line at Target, grumbling to myself about picking the "wrong" line. You know, the line that's not moving at *all* while those on either side appear to be zipping by; the line where the shoppers ahead of you have a handful of expired coupons to use, can't find their checkbook, or picked a damaged item and are now waiting for a replacement to be found.

Well, on this day, the line I had chosen wasn't moving because (in my opinion) the cashier was slow and distracted by chatting with her customers. As I impatiently shifted from foot to foot and sighed loudly while pretending to peruse the magazine covers in the rack, I eavesdropped on the conversation happening between the cashier and the customer in front of me. The cashier asked the woman about the cat litter box she was buying and I frowned and gave another sigh, anticipating an even longer wait.

And then I watched as the customer's head came up, her posture straightened, and her whole face lit up with a smile. She began talking about her daughter, whose cat was going to be the recipient of the many items she was buying. She told an amusing anecdote of the rambunctious cat and I found myself smiling as I was drawn into her story. The cashier laughed and nodded, maintaining eye contact and a gentle attentiveness as she continued to slowly slide items across the scanner and bag them.

When the story came to an end we were all laughing together and as the woman paid for her items and said goodbye, I realized the tension had left my body and the tight, frustrated knot that had lodged in my chest was gone. I had a smile on my face and I felt a million times better because of it; because a "slow" cashier had taken the time to ask a question, to really see the person in front of her; because sometimes while we are waiting a moment of grace occurs.

Maybe it's not always important to be done the fastest or get there the quickest. Maybe sometimes it's better to stop and breathe, smell the roses. Maybe sometimes we need to take the circuitous route rather than go in a straight line. And maybe, someday, after a lot of practice in patience and waiting, I'll be the person who can make someone's face light up when I take the time to ask about her daughter's cat.

Save the date!

Saturday, February 20 • 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

The Mysticism of Music:

A Retreat into the Spirituality of Sound

Facilitated by Hallman Ministerial Intern, Shay MacKay

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS / PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP

Fellowship Groups

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 10) 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 17) from Noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Evergreen Quilters: Second Tuesday of the month (December 8) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (December 26) from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760.

Living With Grief Group: For people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (December 15) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, December 7, and 21, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

Unitots!: A drop-in playgroup for families 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. All are welcome—even if you haven't read the book. Contact Jack Hawthorne at jack.hawthorne@comcast.net.

December 15: *Straight Man* by Richard Russo

January 12: *The Underground Girls of Kabul: In Search of a Hidden Resistance in Afghanistan* by Jenny Nordberg

Unity Bridge Club: Friday, December 4, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209.

Women In Retirement, The Choice Years: This group meets the second and fourth Thursday (December 10 and no meeting on Christmas Eve) of each month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org for more information.

Young Adult Group: Potluck supper and cookie baking on Tuesday, December 15, at 6:30 p.m., in the Center Room. Bring your favorite dish to a relaxed evening of good company and conversation. Contact: Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org

Sangha Zen Meditation: Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. Instruction is offered on the first Tuesday (December 1) beginning at 5:00 p.m. Contact Ken Ford at kford5@comcast.net

Welcome Words



"Each night a child is born is a holy night," writes Sophia Lyon Fahs, reflecting on Christmas. As we enter into this particular holiday season, in the wake of tragic local and worldwide events, we are called even more to witness to our shared humanity and the divine spark within each of us.

Unitarian Universalists embrace many traditions among us. Whether you are preparing your home for Hanukkah, the Solstice, or Advent, may you take the time to light a candle of hope and to pray for peace. And may your time with friends and loved ones be blessed. See you in church!

Rev. Lisa Friedman

Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement

Pathway to Membership Classes

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

Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers Sunday, December 13: 12:15-1:30 p.m.

If you have been visiting Unity Church 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. Together, we will explore the mission and vision of this church, as well as historical and contemporary Unitarian Universalism.

Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Inquiry

This winter and spring, Finding Yourself at Unity will take on a new format! Look for sessions to be offered on a regular basis on Sundays, which can be attended in the order that works for you. In these classes, 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, February 10: 7:15-9:00 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 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! There will be a special New Member recognition ceremony in February.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Left to right: David Schladt, Alissa Lyon, Ron Sundberg, Joan Duke, Deborah Ruth, Mary Dunn, Ruth Gramza, Steve Gramza

Joan Duke and Ron Sundberg have been active in their Lutheran church and now come to Unity seeking a liberal faith community. Ron participated in the 2009 New Orleans Pilgrimage and Joan came to Unitots ("Grandma Group") with their grandchildren. Both retired, they live in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood of St. Paul. They enjoy exploring Minnesota state parks with their kayaks and tent trailer.

Mary Dunn moved to South St. Paul from Pittsburgh, PA, with her late husband in 2009. It was a move that would prove to have a wonderful story of destiny to it and Mary sees her relationship with Unity Church as an important continuation of that story.

Ruth and Steve Gramza: Steve was born in Michigan and raised in North Dakota. He moved to Minnesota for work and met Ruth, who is a St. Paul native. They share a passion for rescuing animals and have three dogs and one cat in their menagerie. They were looking for an all-inclusive community where everyone is welcome, and are glad to call Unity Church home.

Jean Jordan was raised on a farm in northwest Iowa in the Lutheran tradition. Her career has been spent in K-12 education as a teacher and administrator. Her passions are social justice, the arts, education, books, and her family. She is a proud member of the gay community and has two sons, a wonderful daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren.

Alissa Lyon and David Schladt are both Minnesota transplants—David from Nebraska, Alissa from New England—and each moved to Minnesota for grad school about 10 years ago. David works in organ transplantation research policy at HCMC, Alissa in Medtronic's clinical research division. They now live in Columbia Heights and are looking forward to becoming more engaged in the Unity Church community.



Claire Newhouse considers herself to have been a member of Unity Church since birth, but only just recently signed the membership book. She has gone through religious education, Our Whole Lives, and Coming of Age. Unity has always been a strong community that she will hold in her heart forever.



Jeannine Robinett teaches voice lessons and tai chi classes, and sometimes a mixture of the two. When she's not busy with music or tai chi/qigong related activities, she enjoys reading, writing, and sunshine. She came to Unity Church because she needed a place where she could be stretched spiritually and intellectually.

Deborah Ruth is a retired social worker who in recent years worked exclusively in mental health. She is originally from Boston, but moved here from Seattle in 2005, after meeting her husband on the internet. Deborah has two grown children, one who lives locally, and three grandchildren. She is excited to be a part of the church!

Nora Potamkin suffers from emotional problems without any family. She feels that being at Unity Church has helped her greatly to deal with these issues. Her skills are artistic. She wants to help others to paint water colors, make collages, and learn knotting and knitting.

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HOLIDAY WORSHIP AND CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



Holiday Worship Information

Sunday, December 20 • Family Sunday

The Many Gifts of Darkness • 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 4:30 p.m.

The whole church family will gather to sing the old carols and hear once again the story of Santa Lucia as we come together at the threshold of Christmas. In the darkest days of winter we celebrate the darkness even as we wait for light to come. Carol Sing at 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Carol Shout at 11:00 a.m.

Monday, 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 have questions, please contact Katy Taylor at katy@katytaylor.com or 651-291-8551.

Christmas Eve • Thursday, 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 service, please contact Ruth Palmer at ruth@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x118 or see page 15.

Sunday, December 27 • One service only at 10:00 a.m.

Are we still slaughtering the innocents?

In a dream, God told Joseph to bring Mary and Jesus back to Israel because the threat was gone, the slaughter was over. But is it really? Hallman Ministerial Intern Shay MacKay and worship associate Rochelle Lockridge will lead a reflection on the violence and tragedy that continue to permeate our world.

Sunday, January 3

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

As we get ready for the holiday season, we are eager to invite your family to join us in the Christmas Pageant. A time honored tradition here at Unity Church for almost 100 years, we celebrate the season with our youth and ministers sharing with us the nativity story told in a tableau format accompanied by beautiful music from our children's and adult choir.

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 1 and all parents must sign up for a volunteer role when registering their child(ren). 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 13

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 20

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

Wednesday, December 23

Pageant Dress Rehearsal

1:00–4:00 p.m.

Thursday, 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.



Evergreen Quilters Holiday Boutique Fundraiser

Sunday, December 6, in the Parish Hall, after morning services

Each year twenty 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 totes, purses, scarves, table runners and mats, gift bags, small quilts, hot pads and trivets, notebooks, cards, and much more!

With every purchase you win, and our whole community wins, too! One hundred percent of sales go to help people in need. Evergreen Quilters donates to several non-profit programs that help St. Paul's dislocated, homeless, and hungry people; they help our neighbors find food and shelter, obtain education, and establish more stable lives. We donate 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 and services for young mothers with children. 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.

Mitten Tree

Unity's holiday tradition of generosity begins again on December 6. 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. Adult items will be distributed through Amicus.

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 6, following each service, and continue until all the goodies have been sold!

"Santa Pause" Free Childcare

Wednesday, December 9 • 5:30-8:00 p.m. • Parish Hall

Unity's 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.

Choir Holiday Concert Seeks Volunteers

Saturday, December 19

Volunteer Shifts:

5:30-7:00 p.m.: Set Up

7:00-8:00 p.m.: During Concert

8:00-9:00 p.m.: Serve/Clean-Up

Volunteers are needed to help before, during, and after the holiday concert. We are in need of a team of about 15 people to help greet guests and friends, organize dessert trays, and wash dishes. No training or previous experience is needed. If you are interested in helping, please contact Madeline Summers at madeline@unityunitarian.org.



REGIFT...and REJOICE Holiday Regifting Sale

Sunday January 10, 2016

**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 10, 2016

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 10, 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.

Two Learning Opportunities for Parents Offered by Unity's UU Families Group

Talking with Children About Death

Thursday, December 3 • 7:00-9:00 p.m. • Unity Church
 Along with sex, death is probably the hardest topic for parents to discuss with children. It forces us to confront our own mortality, no matter our age. Whether talking about the death of pets, grandparents, or strangers, the questions popped on us from the carpool backseat can leave many of us stumped. Maybe you feel fully confident in having these conversations with your children and would like to offer your wisdom. Or perhaps you'd like to experience the fruits of an in-depth exploration of the topic that the UU Families group has already done. Either way, we'd love for you to join us. Everyone will leave with new perspectives, valuable resources, and increased skill in having these important conversations with our children. Please send child care requests to michelle@unityunitarian.org by November 25.

The workshop will be led by Bill Doherty, U of M professor of family social science, and Unity Church UU Families leaders Amy Bryant and Betsy Hearn.

Talking with Children about Racial Justice: From Clumsy to Confident Conversations

As stories of racial inequality continue to capture headlines and the Unitarian Universalist Association commits to support Black Lives Matter, our kids will have questions about racial justice. As parents, we know it can be hard to find the right words to explain racial justice and how it affects our community and our nation. This is hard stuff: our children differ developmentally and we differ in our personal beliefs and attitudes. So we feel clumsy, our confidence waivers, the words don't flow, and maybe we hope they don't bring up the subject. If you have had this experience, or want to avoid it, join Unity's UU Families Group in a six-session intensive workshop where we will explore how to talk to our kids about racial justice. You will emerge with a unique and individualized way of talking to your children about racial justice, including how to connect with Unitarian Universalist values. The group will also locate resources and generate collective wisdom to be shared with other UU parents.

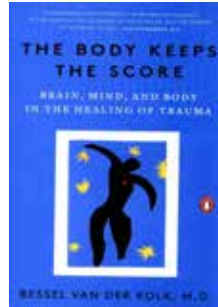
The workshop begins on Saturday, January 16, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and will meet on Wednesday nights from 7:15–8:45 p.m., on January 20, and February 3, 10, 17 and 24. Participants must commit to being present for each session. Facilitators will be Unity Church members Pamela Johnson and Betsy Hearn, using a "bottom up" and deeply interactive process designed by psychologist C.J. Peek. Limited to 10 parents. Reserve your spot now by emailing Pamela Johnson at pjohnso@comcast.net.



What's New in the Libraries and Bookstall!

From Shelley Butler, Library and Bookstall Team

We all know that our ministers are incredibly well read which is why we on the LBT always appreciate book recommendations that come from the pulpit. Here are a few titles mentioned this fall that you can find in the Unity Library and Bookstall:



***The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* by Bessel van der Kolk MD** (Penguin, September 2015)

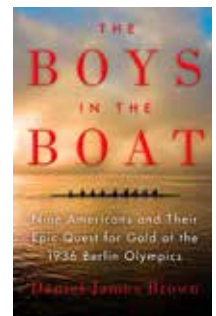
This highly acclaimed author has been described as, "A pioneering researcher [who] transforms our understanding of trauma and offers a bold new paradigm for healing."

***Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* by Atul Gawande** (Penguin, 2014)

Dr. Gawande, a surgeon, tackles an important topic that few in the medical profession are trained to deal with: not how to have a good death, but how to have a good life right up until the end. If you missed hearing him speak when he was in town this fall (I got to meet him!!!), watch TPT listings as they promised to air the event sometime soon.

***The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Olympics* by Daniel James Brown** (Penguin, 2014)

A #1 New York Times Bestseller about a crew of working class boys from Washington state who, against all odds, defeated not only the elite rowing teams of the the East Coast and England, but also the German team in Nazi Germany.



***Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nahisi Coates** (Speigel & Grau, July 2015)

This is the #1 New York Times Bestseller and National Book Award finalist that not only the ministers but everyone seems to be talking about, and with good reason. It has been described as "brilliant," "passionate," "profoundly moving," and "a searing meditation" and takes the form of a letter from a father to a son about the perils and pride in being black.

Lastly, I have no doubt that when it comes out this month (December), the ministers will recommend

Cairns Vol. 7, 2015!!!

Watch your Sunday insert and check the bulletin board for information about the release date and party!

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.

For the second year, the four-part Threshold series 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, January 23, from 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., and three additional Saturday mornings, 9:00 a.m.–noon: February 6 and 20 and March 5. The congregational blessing will occur on Sunday, March 6. The series is free to members; a fee of \$75 will be charged nonmembers at the time of registration.

Group size will be limited. Register early to reserve your place. Please e-mail Karen Hering (karen@unityunitarian.org) or put a note in her church mailbox with your name, phone, email or street address, and a sentence or two describing the threshold you have crossed or will be crossing soon.

Elders' Group

Reflection and Song

Tuesday, December 15 • 1:00–3:00 p.m. • Robbins Parlor
At 1:00 p.m., Rob Eller-Isaacs will lead us in some deep reflection with a spiritual practice called *Lectio Divina*. At 2:00 p.m., Ruth Palmer will join us for a holiday sing-along and snacks!

Young Adult Group

Join us on Tuesday, December 15, (please note a change to the 3rd Tuesday, due to the holidays!) for a 6:30 p.m. potluck and cookie baking in the Center Room. All are welcome! Contact Rev. Lisa Friedman (lisa@unityunitarian.org) to be added to the email list to receive Young Adult news and announcements.

Winter Solstice

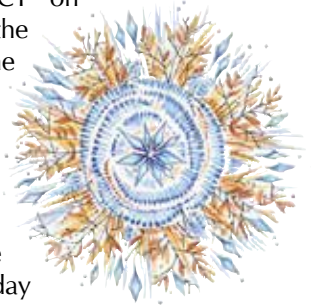
Reflection and Celebration

From Katy Taylor, Winter Solstice Celebration Coordinator
www.katytaylor.com

Winter. Snow. Cold. Ice. Below zero windchills...

We're used to this, aren't we? It's part of the extreme seasonal rhythm we know here in the midwest—the cycle that carries us from luxuriating in the (over)heat of summer to reveling, with plenty of warm outer gear, in the (over)cold of winter. We celebrate our extremes and our ability to not only withstand them, but enjoy them!

Winter Solstice, at 10:49 p.m. CT on December 21, invites us into the beginning of winter and marks the depth of the darkness. The light has been diminishing since summer solstice, until we reach this lowest point. Nature has made winter a bit easier for us in this way—even though winter is just beginning, the light will grow a little more every day after the 21st. This is something to celebrate!



How are you walking this journey into darkness? Having an annual invitation to move into darkness gives us a chance to circle back into it every year a bit more consciously. Perhaps the darkness is representing something difficult in your life. Or perhaps there is some unknown-ness arising, in which you can't see your way forward. Or perhaps there is some part of you that is hidden, pushed down, waiting for you to shine into some light on it...

Whatever the darkness represents to you, can you welcome it? Even embrace it?

Wintertime is the perfect opportunity to spend time with your journal and a cuppa, welcoming the darkness. Hunker down by the fire or snuggle up in bed, let yourself become quiet, and sink into the embrace of the darkness. Develop a relationship with this dark side. Turn toward it and say, "I am ready to open to you." "Show me what I need to see." Ask it what you need to know, and let the darkness speak. Write without editing, without trying to make sense.

If you take time to build a conscious relationship with the darkness this winter, you will be ready to grow more fully into yourself in the spring.

Another way to welcome the darkness is to join our Winter Solstice Celebration, 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 have questions, please contact me at katy@katytaylor.com or 651-291-8551.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY / WEDNESDAY YOGA

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. (Children under the age two are free.) Reservations for dinner are not required. All meals will offer vegetarian and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies may contact madeline@unityunitarian.org to arrange to have a special preparation. Email Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org for financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner. No one is turned away.

December 2

Dinner menu: Roasted bell peppers with rice pilaf stuffing, roasted potatoes, balsamic apple salad, sherbet

The Season of Giving: An All Ages Service Project

Come and join Unity Church members of all ages in helping others this holiday season. We will have opportunities to adopt other families for the holidays, support Amicus's Winter Warm Up Drive, and more.

An Infinite Expectation of the Dawn: Writing about Waiting

Open Page Writing Session with Karen Hering

Free; RSVP required to karen@unityunitarian.org

December in many world religions is the season of waiting — the quiet posture of expectation that opens our awareness not just to what we know is coming but, especially, to the unexpected. In this session, we'll reflect on cultivating a spirit of active waiting even as we march and work for change.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Therapeutic Yoga

This week's practice is great for those with chronic tightness, chronic pain, or who simply want to move their bodies more freely. The 60 minute-long practice takes place lying on the floor, with slow, subtle movements in the body and gentle breathing. We find this practice is best for adults, not youth. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat or blanket. There will be a few mats and blankets available for loan. Learn more about the instructor, Elen Bahr, at EveryYogi.com or email questions to elen@everyyogi.com.

Go: A Chinese Game

Join Unity Church member Bob Ruud for an evening of learning and playing the Chinese board game, Go. Anyone above the age of 10 is welcome to play. Bring your own board and set if you have one. www.usgo.org/what-go.

New Family Religious Education Orientation

This in-person session will orient families whose children are enrolling in Religious Education for the first time as well as welcome any returning families. Contact kp@unityunitarian.org if you plan to attend this orientation session.

Wednesday Yoga

with Elen Bahr continues in the holiday season!

December 9 • 7:00 p.m.

Holiday Season Relaxation Practice

In this 60 minute-long practice we'll use a combination of breathing techniques and slow, mindful yoga poses to bring calming energy to our minds, bodies, and spirits. Our focus will be on learning to relax the areas where we are most inclined to carry our stress — shoulders, backs, and hips. This session is suitable for a wide variety of body types, and there is no previous yoga experience required. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat or blanket. There will be a few mats and blankets available for loan. Suggested donation \$10, or pay what you can.

December 16 • 7:00 p.m.

Therapeutic Yoga

This week's practice is great for those with chronic tightness, chronic pain, or who simply want to move their bodies more freely. The 60 minute-long practice takes place lying on the floor, with slow, subtle movements and gentle breathing. We find this practice is best for adults, not youth. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat and blanket, if possible. There will be a few mats and blankets available for loan. Suggested donation \$10, or pay what you can.

Learn more about the instructor, Elen Bahr, at EveryYogi.com or email questions to elen@everyyogi.com.

Wellspring Wednesday Winter Break

Wellspring Wednesday is on Winter Break from December 9–December 30. Dinner, worship, and programming resume on January 6.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Go Solar With Us

Save our planet, save money, tell everyone!

From Aleks Kinclara, Community Solar Garden Campaign

Thanks to a 2013 Minnesota law encouraging community solar gardens, we may soon be able to get 100% clean, cheap, renewable solar electricity for our residences and our church. Once Unity's Community Solar Garden becomes operational, you may reduce your total carbon footprint by roughly 30% without spending a dime up front. If you subscribe promptly, you will also pay 9% less for electricity each month. Participation requires an Xcel account and a FICO credit score 700 or above. Church membership is not required. No solar panels are installed at your home, so this arrangement works for both renters and homeowners — even if you get no sun!

Converting to clean energy is urgent. Greenhouse gas emissions must quickly begin a steep decline to preserve a livable planet. On the basis of both total and per capita emissions, we in the U.S. bear much of the responsibility. CO2 emissions are 1.6 thousand tons per capita in India, 7.1 in China, and 16.4 in the U.S.

By eliminating the most common financial and practical barriers to residential solar electricity, Unity's Community Solar Garden can potentially reduce our combined CO2 emissions by over 1,500 metric tons annually. This is the equivalent of eliminating 806 tons of coal burned each year, or taking 316 cars off the road. Going solar together can be a powerful new way to affirm and promote "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." It says yes to life on this precious planet.

To make this historic turn to solar possible, Unity and several other metro UU churches have each partnered with local solar developer Minnesota Community Solar (MNCS) under an agreement carefully negotiated by the UU Solar Coalition with members from each church. Our partnership with MNCS puts in place the necessary financing, technical skills, solar installation sites, pollinator assurance, customer service arrangements, and residential subscription terms. The subscription terms have been tailored for UU congregations to create the most inclusive, barrier-free program possible. However, before construction begins, MNCS must receive enough signed subscriptions from us and timely solar site approval from Xcel.

Unity volunteers Paul Densmore and Aleks Kinclara will conduct the subscription campaign. In consideration of this campaign effort, MNCS will make a onetime payment to Unity Church based on total subscribed residential usage, yielding a potential cash windfall for social/environmental justice purposes.

Subscriptions will be available on a first-come, first-served basis for a limited time. Individuals representing more than seventy (70) Unity households have already put their names on the interested list. If you are interested, want a place on the list, have questions, or want to help, email your name, phone, and county of residence to Paul Densmore, unitysolargarden@gmail.com.

This program may sound too good to be true, but true it is. Spread the word, watch for meeting announcements, and see Paul or Aleks at a Parish Hall table after services.

Winter Warm Up Drive

Make Winter Warmer for those Seeking Second Chances

Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice Team is asking you to help provide the following items for clients of its community partner, Amicus. These necessities will be shared with people upon their release from correctional facilities, a time where support and care is critical to a positive community re-entry experience:

- New and unopened hygiene items such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste/brushes, lotion, deodorant, and shaving cream
- New gloves, hats, scarves, and socks suitable for the job site
- Hand and foot warmers
- Bus passes or the cash to buy bus passes

Please bring donations to the Racial and Restorative Justice table in the Parish Hall on Sundays. Donations delivered during the week should be brought to Lisa Friedman's office.

Travel to Bolivia with Mano a Mano in March

Are you interested in finding out more about how Unity Church supports health care and economic development in Bolivia, the poorest country in South America?

Learn first-hand about this work through a trip to Bolivia during March 12–20, 2016. Mano a Mano International Partners, one of Unity's commissioned Community Outreach Ministry projects, invites you to visit operating clinics in remote rural areas, see water reservoirs that help farm families improve their sparse diet and increase their meager incomes, and work alongside farmers as they learn to protect their natural environment. If you are interested in joining us or learning more, please contact Segundo at 651-324-8471 or Segundo@manoamano.org.

Be a part of Unity's Sustainable Living Group!

The next meeting of Unity's Sustainable Living Group will be on Tuesday, December 8, at 7:00 p.m. (room TBD). The group is considering ways we can promote sustainable practices for people in their homes through the church! Members of the team will also provide information about outside organizations that we will elect to partner with. Come be a part of this fun, creative experience! For more information contact Jessica Zimmerley at jjimm0813@gmail.com.

Pitter-pattering Questions

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

From KP Hong, Director of Religious Education



The image of a child crouching over a marshmallow on a table in front of them, face intense with concentration, is iconic in modern psychology. Over the last fifty years, the Marshmallow Test has become synonymous with impulse control, delayed gratification, patience, and qualities of self-regulation important for children's long-term success. The premise of the test is simple: you can eat one marshmallow now, or if you can wait (up to 20 minutes) you can have two marshmallows later. Some

children, of course, jumped at the chance to eat the first marshmallow as soon as the researcher left the room. Others wiggled and squirmed in their chairs, trying to restrain themselves but eventually giving in. But what fascinated Walter Mischel were children who were able to wait for two marshmallows, and the display of creative distractions to help them wait: from *"I'm going to push this stuff as far away from myself as I can...[or] turn around in my chair and look the other way"* to *"I'm going to sing little songs... [or] picture the marshmallows as clouds and not candy,"* described Mischel. Self-control was not simply a matter of sheer willpower but a cognitive skill that could be learned. And if you have been following Sesame Street in the last few years, you might have noticed something peculiar happening to Cookie Monster: a slow transformation in self-control, learning to wait, a new persona shaped by the consulting work of none other than Mischel.

Such strategic distractions now dominate the literature on the psychology of waiting and managing the experience of customers waiting in line. Certain strategies introduce environmental distractions, from magazines and reading materials in the waiting room to mirrors installed next to hotel elevators so guests can check personal appearance instead of floor stops. Other strategies introduce queuing information and what number the customer is in line, as uncertain waits feel considerably longer than certain waits. Still other strategies capitalize on the principle that people want to get started, handing out menus while waiting and instructing service staff to pass by the table as soon as customers are seated and say "I'll be with you in just a minute." How reassuring to know that we are not forgotten, and in-process waits somehow feel shorter than pre-process waits and like nothing compared to post-process waits that feel longest of all.

So we learn to manage our waiting and teach our children that patience and waiting will finally be rewarded and wishes fulfilled, not one but two marshmallows! Except that in this season of winter and barren earth — of the innocent who perished in Paris and places far too many to count, of starlight guiding magi on an uncertain journey to promise — I wonder about a different kind of waiting. A waiting that is not simply a function of our wishing but an obstinate practice of hoping wherein something will be fulfilled, but fulfilled according to the promises we risk with one another and not just according to our wishes. "Therefore, hope is always open-ended," says Fr. Henri Nouwen. "It was only when I was willing to let go of wishes that something really new, something beyond my own expectations could happen to me." For waiting in hope risks a wild, surprising possibility greater than any one person's wish, born and tested and sustained in relationships.

Where do our children learn to wait in hope, when the grammar of hope is one not easily learned and irreducible to willpower or cognitive strategies? Where do our children learn to wait in hope, waiting *with/on/for* one another to make real the impossible promises we risk? Is not this the meaning of beloved community?

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

Guest at Your Table

Guest at Your Table is an annual tradition in which Unity Church members nurture a spirit of gratitude and "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations" and support the work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (<http://www.uusc.org/welcome-to-guest-at-your-table>).

This year, Guest at Your Table highlights the empowerment of refugees and displaced people in the midst of humanitarian crises such as forced migration, large-scale conflicts, genocide, and natural disasters. As you gather at the family dining table over the holidays, please take a moment to figuratively invite neighbors in need — as guests at your table — through sharing their stories in the brochures provided. You can even set a place for the box and imagine a neighbor present with you. Then at each meal, your family "feeds" the box with money. Boxes will be collected Sunday, January 17, and all funds sent to the UUSC.

Please stop by the table in the Parish Hall on Sundays after worship to pick up materials. Contact religious education staff for more information.

December R.E. Calendar

December 2: New Family Orientation, 7:15 p.m. (Last Tween Group and OWL until 2016)

December 6: regular R.E.; HS Cookie & Wreath sales begin; Celebration of New Lives (9:00 a.m., RSVP required)

December 9: Santa Pause: holiday child care for children age 3 and older, see page 9

December 13: regular R.E.; HS Cookie & Wreath sales conclude

December 20: Family Sunday

Christmas Eve services: See page 8

December 27: One service at 10:00 a.m.; No R.E. classes but activities for school age kids, nursery care available

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries

Stars, you are the heavens' flock, tangling your pale wool across the night sky...

You appear, disappear by thousands, scattered wide to graze but never straying.

While I, a mere shepherd of these words, am lost.

Oh, what can I do but build a small blaze.

— Paulann Petersen

As we begin this month's worship theme of waiting, 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 and 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 "building of a small blaze." Please be in touch with any questions you might have (ruth@unityunitarian.org // 651-228-1456 x118).

One Voice Mixed Chorus presents: A Midnight Queer



Saturday, December 19

3:00 p.m., Hamline University

Sunday, December 20

3:00 p.m., Ordway Concert Hall

Join One Voice and host, poet, and activist Andrea Jenkins, on a musical journey honoring winter holiday traditions from across the globe including Chanukah, Kwanzaa, Pagan Solstice, Diwali, New Year, and Christmas. Jenkins and One Voice weave poetry and spoken word with music from composers as varied as Gabrielli, Vaughan Williams, Ysaye Barnwell and PDQ Bach, creating an enchanting, heartwarming experience. Details at www.ovmc.org.

Holiday Carol Sing, CONCERT and Dessert Buffet

Saturday, December 19

Carol Sing • 6:30

Holiday Concert • 7:00 • Candles, Stars, Light

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

Dessert Buffet (8:00)

We invite you to bring a holiday dessert, already cut, plated, and ready to serve and share! These can be dropped off in Parish Hall on your way in to sing carols and to enjoy the concert.



Sing with us on Christmas Eve

Christmas Pageant Choir

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

Children's Pageant Choir Rehearsal • 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. • Foote Room

Kathleen Radspinner, director

Adult Pageant Choir Rehearsal • 10:00-11:00 a.m. • Choir Room

Jeffrey Hess, director

CHRISTMAS EVE

Children's Pageant Choir • 3:15 p.m. • Foote Room

Pageant performances are at 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.

Adult Pageant Choir • 3:15 p.m. • Parish Hall

Pageant performances are at 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Choir

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6 AND 20

Candlelight Choir Rehearsal • 12:15-1:15 p.m. • Choir Room

Ruth Palmer, director

CHRISTMAS EVE

Candlelight Choir • 9:15 p.m. • Choir Room

Sing at the 10:00 p.m. candlelight service.

Perekotypole

Folk Music in the Diaspora

Natalie Nowytski

Mila Vocal Ensemble

In *Perekotypole* (Tumbleweed), composer Natalie Nowytski explores the poetry of her immigrant great-grandmother, Nadia Lan (pen name), in a new song cycle that is relevant to the current immigrant and refugee experience.

Nowytski and Mila will premiere the thirteen songs of *Perekotypole* on Friday, December 4, at 7:00 p.m., at MacPhail Center for Music's beautiful Antonello Hall. The show will be repeated on Saturday, December 12, at 4:00 p.m., at Unity Church. All are welcome! More information at milavocalensemble.com.





UNITY CHURCH—UNITARIAN

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2016 Unity Church Children's Musical!

For the past 26 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. Participating in the Children's Musical has been a rite of passage and transformative experience for many of our young people. If you have a 6th, 7th, or 8th grader, please consider whether this creative, fun, team-building experience might be right for them.

To find out more, come to **one** of the parent information meetings that will be held on Sunday, December 6, and 13. Both meetings will be held from 10:15-11:00 a.m., check the weekly bulletin for a room assignment. Auditions and parent meeting for the musical will be held Sunday, January 3, 2016, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Performance dates will be March 3-5, 2016.

Questions? Contact Kim Klose at klose001@msn.com.

Unity Church Women's Retreat

Saturday, January 30, 2016

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 3.

**candles
stars
light**

**Unity Church Holiday Concert
Saturday, December 19**

Carol Sing • 6:30 PM

Holiday Concert • 7:00 PM
Children's Choir, Women's Ensemble, Unity Singers, Unity Choir

Potluck Dessert Buffet • 8:00 PM
Bring a dessert ready to serve and share!