

REPAIR

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.

The Advent season is quickly upon us, which invites us all to look inward and around us, while we reflect on the spiritual practice of waiting. And I'm not sure if this is true for you, but at least for me, it feels like every year the Christmas holiday season begins earlier and earlier and earlier and as a result our personal practice of waiting is extended just a little bit further! On top of that, this year, perhaps more than most, the Christmas season feels like an exceptionally emotion-filled time of anticipation and worry for what exactly is to come. We just ended one of the most divisive and difficult presidential elections in modern history. It feels as if the fabric of our country has been deeply torn, perhaps like never before. Many of us are still reeling from the conflicting emotions that have emerged in its aftermath. We are now faced with questions of how we will choose to live and love through the waiting, how we will choose to be together in the *meantime* as we reimagine a way forward together as individuals, as families, as a religious community, and as a nation.

Serendipitously, we enter a month reflecting on the theme of repair. For some of us the holidays are difficult in their own right because it may be one of the few times each year we gather with family members who may have differing political or religious beliefs. This year, the tension we might feel around the shared family table decorated with red and blue polka dots is amplified by the larger tension in society, that larger sense of a divided country where the path to come together is not very apparent at all. And where do we even begin? What does repair even look like in our lives of faith today?

Author Elizabeth Spelman offers us a way forward in her book, *Repair: The Impulse to Restore in a Fragile World*. In it, she suggests that too often in our lives, when things go awry, we seek to restore something rather than repair it. Simply put, the difference between the two is that to *restore* something, we seek to return it to its original state, whereas *repairing* something has an inherently adaptive purpose of rediscovering its function in a new form. For example, in 1963, our church building was devastated by a major fire that heavily damaged the sanctuary. A group of leaders were convened to determine what to do. Some in the group wondered, "Should we restore the sanctuary to what it was like before the fire?" And others suggested, "What if we repaired the sanctuary, instead? This way we could add a large skylight where the fire destroyed part of the roof. Then we could let the light shine." And so the congregation chose to let the light shine in, and repaired the sanctuary in a way that honored this part of our history as a congregation.

In December, we are invited to reflect on the theme of repair. This might look different for each of you. Perhaps it's practicing deep listening both within ourselves and to others. Or maybe repair is about nurturing a spiritual practice of open-heartedness, where we can approach one another and nurture safe and meaningful relationships at Unity Church and beyond these walls. Some of us might be thinking about how conflict is addressed in our daily lives and how we might find ways to sit more comfortably with conflict and to then move through conflict to live lives of greater integrity, service, and joy. However you approach this theme, it is a blessing that we are able to do this sacred work together.

In this *meantime*, in this time that feels pregnant with unbelievable anticipation, we are also offered the gift of the nativity story to guide our days. Two thousand years ago, a babe was born in a precarious time of instability and fear, but the birth symbolized the hope and possibility of a repaired world. We often say at Unity Church, every time a child is born there is one more redeemer. This is as true today as it was then. Therefore, even in our waiting, we must remember that something is happening in the meantime. Even in our hope for the birth of another redeemer, we are awakening to the work we can do now in the meantime. May each moment of Advent be another invitation to repair, to mend, to find new strength, and to recommit again to that holy eternal truth: you are not alone. Together, may we listen deeply to who and what and where we are called to be in the world, as we live in the meantime, where hope and repair are not only possible, but ready and aching to breakthrough into this world.

Ministerial Intern Nic Cable with this month's theme team: Jessica Clay, Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs, Lisa Friedman, Karen Hering, KP Hong, and Ruth Palmer

Repair Theme Resources

BOOKS

Repair: The Impulse to Restore in a Fragile World by Elizabeth Spelman
Broken for You by Stephanie Kallos

MUSIC

Adagio for Strings by Samuel Barber
I Need You To Survive by Hezekiah Walker

POETRY

"The Low Road" by Marge Piercy

JUST WORDS

Just Words

In the wake of the Presidential Election our dear friend the Rev. Jim Gertmenian, Minister Emeritus of Plymouth Church in Minneapolis, posted the following on Facebook. I share it with his permission. These words provided the framework for a powerful congregational gathering on the Wednesday evening after Election Day. They also provide a road map for us to make our way from solace to renewed solidarity. Jim's post struck me as a gift I wanted to offer to you.

FROM DESPAIR TO NEW RESOLVE: Despair is a perfectly understandable and reasonable response . . . for a short time. It's honest, and the pain is real. But at the end of that short time, we have to lay despair aside because before long it becomes a wasteful self-indulgence. Once, when everything was going wrong in my life and I was feeling embattled and sorry for myself, a friend said, "Get down off the cross, Jim. We need the wood." I was letting my self-absorption get in the way of more pressing work. What I love about the responses of so many of my friends to yesterday's election is that, even in their grief, and even though they are not yet ready to move on, they know that moving on is what we eventually have to do. The time will come. And soon.

A TRIAGE OF EFFORT: Our first priority has to be this: to identify those most at risk from the ill effects of a Trump presidency and to stand resolutely with them. Churches may need to revisit the idea of declaring their buildings as "sanctuary," and protect undocumented immigrants who are at risk of deportation. Christians and Jews will need, through intentional personal and institutional relationships, to proclaim and live into our solidarity with Muslims. (And, if the whispers of anti-Semitism begin to be more widely heard, Christians and Muslims will need to stand similarly with Jews.) LGBTQ+ people need to know that their straight allies will never abandon them. Women need to know that the men in their lives see the empty core of the kind of manhood Donald Trump has embodied and that we won't stand for it being fed to our male children. The list goes on . . . In short: those of us who aren't directly in the firing line of Trumpism need to de-prioritize our particular and personal complaints and stand in the gap with those who are.

WHAT IT MEANS TO "HEAL" THE NATION: Yes, we have to come together with those who disagree with us and who now wield the power. But this cannot be some kind of fake amity that overlooks our differences. "They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, crying 'Peace, peace' where there is no peace." (Jeremiah 6:14) True healing begins with a fearless analysis of where and how deeply we are divided. Healing demands that when it comes to our opponents we adopt an attitude of humility and an openness to respectful dialogue without abandoning our core values and primary alliances. For progressives, our primary alliance is with those who are most at risk from current economic and social systems. It is only from that unmovable base that we can truly enter into healing with those who have opposed us.

LOVE. Look . . . of all the personal messages I received this morning, three that really got to me — that really helped me — basically said only this: "I love you." No more needed be written. Love for our compatriots in loss is how we get through this. That love is so tough, so resilient, so redemptive, that we can face anything together. And it is the seed of the even more demanding love, love of enemies. We need to talk further about enemy-love, because we're going to be tested on that one.

Friends as we quiet our hearts for the holidays, as we enter into the season of waiting, I am more than ever grateful for the gift of the church in my life. I'm grateful for you and for your children. And I'm grateful for the teachings, that call us to live into the obligations implied by our claim to believe in "the inherent worth and dignity of every person," even and especially the child just now waiting to be born.

Blessings abundant,
Rob Eller-Isaacs

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Mira Ann Eller-Furgeson

born one more redeemer

October 30, 2016

to parents

Jessie Eller-Isaacs and

Andy Anderson-Furgeson,

big brother Lewis Pete,

and grandparents

Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs

In Memoriam

Judy Gundersen

August 23, 1954 –

November 11, 2016

Flowers for Worship

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

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DECEMBER WORSHIP CALENDAR / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Sunday Worship

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.

December 4: *Love Begins With Listening*

There is a particular way to wait that leads through solitude and silence to a larger love. It begins with listening. It wakes us up. It needs our full attention. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Angela Wilcox offer an opportunity for us to hone our waiting skills.

December 11: *The Bark Heals the Scar*

Every living tree tells a story of its life. From its fibrous wood and bark we learn of storms, droughts, lightning strikes, and animal nests. Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Kevin Ward will explore the lessons to be found in the natural world about healing and repair.

December 18: *Las Posadas Family Sunday*

This year, in addition to the carol sing at 9:00 and 4:30 and the carol SHOUT at 11:00, we will enter into the Las Posadas tradition. Las Posadas (the Inns) tells the story of Mary and Joseph as they search for a place for their baby to be born. Might our church be a place of special welcome in the dark mid-winter days?

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 25: *My Lord, What a Morning!*

10:00 a.m. only

Christmas Day has come again and we are greeted with another chance to be together in community. Ministerial Intern Nic Cable will lead us in a service of gratitude and contemplation for what we will do with this precious gift that comes with the new dawn.

January 1: *Hallman Ministerial Intern Jessica Clay*

10:00 a.m. only

January 8 • *Tolling of Bells*

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.



Turn to page 8 for a complete listing of Christmas Eve worship services.

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.

December 4: *Restorative Justice Community Action*

Restorative Justice Community Action (RJCA) provides community-based restorative justice services in Hennepin and Ramsey counties. RJCA facilitates conversations between individuals who have committed misdemeanor or low level felony offenses, and community residents impacted, in an effort to identify mutually agreed upon restitution. Individuals who complete the RJCA process are able to make amends, keep a conviction off their record, minimize contact with the criminal justice system, and plot a positive path forward. RJCA is a local non-profit agent implementing Unity's commitment to racial and restorative justice.

December 11: *Avenues for Homeless Youth*

Avenues for Homeless Youth is a transitional housing program for twenty youth, ages 16-20. Its North Minneapolis location, staffed 24 hours a day, provides basic shelter needs, meals, intensive case management, health and wellness care, independent living skills, and help with education and employment help. The average stay at Avenues is between 90 and 120 days. Avenues also manages a host-family program for homeless, queer-identified youth, the majority of whom are people of color.

December 18: *Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance*

The mission of the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA) is to unleash courageous leadership and collective power to build a just and loving world. MUUSJA offers live workshops, trainings, and UUA youth programs, and has seen statewide capacity increase through online justice convenings and covenant groups. Unity Church member Sherri Knuth serves on the MUUSJA Board. Many Unity Church members are donors and program participants.

December 25: *Ministers' Discretionary Fund*

The Ministers' Discretionary Fund provides the ministers a means by which they are able to respond to a world with a wide variety of needs.

Sunday Soup Suppers

Soup suppers are served each Sunday after the 4:30 p.m. service. Donations to off-set the cost of ingredients are gratefully accepted!

- December 4: Red bell pepper puree with baked potatoes
- December 11- Chili
- December 18: Southwest chicken (or veggie)
- No soup December 25: One service only at 10:00 a.m.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / PLEDGING / UUA



Reflection from the Board

From Bailey Webster, Trustee

I'm writing this a week out from the election. I have been listening to the news more than usual. I have heard many people say they are doing a self-imposed media blackout because the constant rehashing of the election and its implications for the future of our country and our world are too much to bear. This perspective is understandable, and I respect it. I have been listening, however, as a way to work through my own emotions. As a way to move through the stages of grief. As a means of bearing witness. And as a way to stay angry.

The other morning I heard Kerri Miller interview Brit Bennett, author of the debut novel *The Mothers*. Ms. Bennett is 26 years old and African American. The interview naturally turned to the election and people's reaction to the outcome. Ms. Bennett said she got two sets of reactions from friends she talked to. Her white liberal friends met the news of the election with shock, disbelief, and anger. Her black friends didn't show much surprise at all, but rather resigned disappointment. The sentiment coming from them was, "Why are all of these white people so surprised? We have known all how pervasive racism, bigotry, and hatred are in our country." And when I heard that, I felt shame.

I felt shame that I am one of the shocked and enraged white people. That I was genuinely flabbergasted that so many college-educated white women voted for Donald Trump. That I thought we were so much closer to realizing the Beloved Community than we really are, as a country. As one of the other board members said in our last meeting, "I feel naïve."

Janne gave a sermon on gratitude for the principles of our Unitarian Universalist faith the Sunday following the election. Reflecting on her words, my shame slowly turned to gratitude. Gratitude for a community and a faith where it is *possible* to be so naïve; where we are doing the real work of building the Beloved Community; where it is difficult to imagine that much of the world outside is so terribly, tragically different. Gratitude to be serving on the Board of Trustees of such a community.

And here is where I get stuck on this month's theme: repair. It would be easy (and naïve) enough to write about repairing a broken world, political system, society. The truth is, to repair something implies that it was whole to begin with. And as Brit Bennett so poignantly pointed out, it wasn't whole before. That's why we say "building the Beloved Community," not "fixing it."

What we *can* repair, I believe, is our broken hearts. In the safety of our beloved church, we can shed our tears and express our fears. And then we can take the privilege of our shock and outrage with us into the world, to repair broken relationships, broken dreams, and broken promises. After all, the work to be done is still fundamentally the same. Our sense of urgency is on overdrive, and that only bodes well for our efficacy.

Annual Pledges and Year-End Gifts

2017 Operating and Capital Pledges

Many thanks to everyone who has made pledges for 2017! **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 2016, 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/yearendgift2016> (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.

MidAmerica Regional Assembly 2017



Finding Our Partners: Faith In Action

April 28-30, 2017

Oak Brook, Illinois

In spite of our small numbers in the national religious scene, Unitarian Universalists have been at the forefront of every significant social change in our nation's history. Now, more than ever, we need to work with partners to have an impact in our cities, states, and country.

The Keynote Speaker will be Rev. Dr. Lee Barker, President and Professor of Ministry at Meadville-Lombard Theological School.

If you are interested in attending the conference, volunteering, or learning more about Unity's Denominational Relations Team, please contact Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org.

Details: www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly.

2017 Unity Church Board of Trustees

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CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS / PASTORAL CARE

Congregational Survey Results

From the Board of Trustees, with gratitude to Bill Etter and Laura Park

In May 2016, 407 people filled out the congregational survey. This is a record number of participants, and we are so grateful to all of you who participated! Respondents answered questions about the extent to which they saw our church's Ends statements (www.unityunitarian.org/mission-and-ends.html) being true. The survey results can be found online (<http://bit.ly/2016ucusurveyresults>) and they summarize what the survey has shown us about our congregation, both this year and over the past several years. Here are some of the results that stood out for us:

- The congregational survey is the board's primary way of knowing whether we're making adequate progress on fulfilling the vision of shared ministry represented by the Ends. In addition, the Executive Team reviews the results of the congregational survey at their annual retreat as part of setting their yearly priorities. The very positive results on this survey tell us that we are, indeed, making appropriate progress on our Ends.
- We see improved performance on every End when we compare the 2016 results to both the 2015 and the 2014 results. The largest gains span the entire spectrum of Ends, including "within" Ends ("Embrace our identity as Unitarian Universalists and live out the principles of our shared faith in our daily lives"), "among" Ends ("Sustain and encourage each other in love") and "beyond" Ends ("Participate actively in the larger Unitarian Universalist community").
- Loyalty to the church, as measured by the question "Would you recommend Unity Church to a friend or relative?" is at its highest level since we started the survey in 2007.
- However, evaluations tend to be lower for people who said that they or someone in their family identified as a person of color. Four of the five largest gaps were in the "Beyond" Ends (for example, "Live out our commitment to racial reconciliation and to dismantling racism"). The board and Executive Team believe that this means we still have important opportunities to enhance our ministries so that our Ends advance well for everyone, and we will continue to pay attention to how families of color see our progress.
- We also examined the impact of our programming on our sense of spiritual growth and maturity. Many of you report that Unity's programming has a significant positive impact on your spirituality, with the music program, pilgrimages, worship and meditation, and children's religious education having the highest impact.
- We decided not to include the Spirit Map portion of the survey this year because the results of this tool tend to be stable over time. However, we still continue to pay close attention to the 2015 results of the Spirit Map because they identify the church's Signature Strengths and Key Opportunities in the area of spiritual growth and development. This is information that Unity's staff find really useful in focusing our programming.
- We pay close attention to the written comments that people include. Every comment is read and categorized, and staff members follow up with congregants when appropriate. We appreciate the fuller picture of our ministries these comments give us and will be using them to guide how the board shapes next year's congregational conversation about our future together, conversation that will ultimately help the board refresh our Ends statements.

We'd like to know your thoughts about the survey! Look for trustees identified by the red ribbon on their name tag or find contact information online (<http://www.unityunitarian.org/board-of-trustees.html>). If you have questions about the structure and content of the congregational survey, email Bill Etter at better61@gmail.com.

Blue Holidays Service

Friday, December 16

7:00-8:00 p.m. • Ames Chapel

Join us for this contemplative service for all who are lonely, grieving, and hurting during the holidays. Come and be with others in the community as we take gentle care of our tender hearts together. Childcare will be provided. Questions? Contact Jessica Clay at jessica@unityunitarian.org.

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 form at <http://bit.ly/joyconcern> and a team member will contact you.

If you prefer to speak directly with a minister, please contact Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x106.

WELCOME WORDS / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Welcome Words

Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement



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 strength 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 strength 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, the moments of grace and repair. 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. Blessings of the season to you and yours!

Pathway to Membership Classes

Sign up for Pathway to Membership classes 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 11 • 12:15-1:30 p.m. ~also offered ~
Wednesday, January 4 • 7:15-8:30 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.

Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Inquiry

Finding Yourself at Unity is now offered on a regular basis on Sundays from 10:15–11:15 a.m. in the Ames Chapel. These sessions 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. Childcare is available in the nursery.

December 4: Pastoral Care

December 11: Religious Education for Children, Youth, & Adults

December 18: Holidays and Celebrations at Unity Church
Please note that there will not be classes on December 25 or January 1. Classes will resume on January 8.

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

Wednesday, January 25 • 7:15-9:00 p.m.

This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry and concludes with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book and join the church!

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, visit the church website, or call the church office at 651-228-1456.

A New Look at the Bible: Second Thursday of the month (December 8) 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 15) from noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Evergreen Quilters: Second Tuesday of the month (December 13) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (will not meet Christmas Eve) 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 20) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, December 5 and 19, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

Textile Arts Group: Bring your knitting, crocheting, tatting, embroidery, and cross stitch. All ages and levels of experience are welcome! First and third Wednesdays (December 7 and 21), 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact: Linda Mandeville at lindamandeville@aol.com.

Unitots!: A drop-in playgroup for families with kids through preschool age. Monday and Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-noon. 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. Upcoming discussions:

December 13: *The Human Stain* (American Trilogy #3) by Philip Roth

January 10: *My Life on the Road* by Gloria Steinem

Unity Bridge Club: The Bridge Club will meet on Friday, December 2, 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 8 and 22) of each month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. 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 6) beginning at 5:00 p.m. Contact Ken Ford at kenfaure@gmail.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



New members, l-r: Kayla Johnson, Hans Haage, Bernie Troje, Vicki Lofquist, Maxine Behm, Jon Behm, Ann Russell



New members Bruce and Sue Behrends

Maxine and Jon Behm live in St. Paul with their nine-month old daughter Lila and three fur babies (one dog, two cats). Maxine was welcomed into Unity Church as a baby 30 years ago and both she and Jon are honored to now raise Lila in such an inclusive, social justice oriented, and vibrant community. Maxine works as an occupational therapist in an integrative, wellness-focused setting for those with chronic conditions and is passionate about her work. Jon works as a project manager for a design/technology company. He is also a photographer and an avid music enthusiast. Maxine and Jon share a love of traveling to places off the beaten path, yoga, reading, craft beer, trivia, and spending time in nature.

Bruce and Sue Behrends recently moved back to St. Paul after a 37 year hiatus in Litchfield, MN. They were long time members of a small UU Church in Willmar. They are looking forward to the challenges and rewards of belonging to a larger fellowship.

Kayla Johnson grew up in Lino Lakes MN, along with four siblings and plenty of family pets. She has been pursuing a nursing career since the time she could walk. She finds peace in nature and seeks out trips to Lake Superior for its divine spirit and beauty. She is a Pinterest enthusiast, always ready to start a new crafting project. She finds purpose in mindfulness meditation practices and helping others. She has been looking to set roots down in the community since she moved to Saint Paul in 2014. She has come to find Unity Church the place for those seeds to grow. She is looking forward to new challenges and experiences as they arise.

Originally from Wausau, WI, **Hans Haage** is a former journalism major who is now becoming a counselor, finishing a degree at Metropolitan State University. He has hosted radio shows, is a frequent camper and paddler in the summer, and feels most spiritual when he's in the presence of Lake Superior. Saint Paul feels more like home than anywhere he has ever lived and he is so grateful to live here and extend his family to now include Unity Church!

Vicki Lofquist is a nonfiction writer and is married to a photographer. Two years ago she retired from Metropolitan State University. In an earlier career she worked in public

radio at the University of Minnesota. She was drawn to Unity Church for its commitment to social justice and its roots in Transcendentalism.

Ann Russell and her husband Steve have been married forty-seven years and have three children and four grandchildren, the joy of their lives. Unity Church has united Ann's professional interests in ethics and spiritual growth. With membership, she hopes to continue that journey and the integration of her Catholic heritage.

Bernie Troje graduated from Cretin High School and St. John's University. He taught English and journalism for 32 years at Mounds View High School. He and his wife, Pam, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary August 6. They have three sons, seven grandchildren, and live in Como Park. He likes to read, hike, sail, and ski. He volunteers at Amicus, the Boy Scouts, the Ignatius Volunteer Corps, and St. Paul Monastery. Most importantly, he is very happy to have found a spiritual home at Unity Church. Each Sunday he becomes more convinced of that as he attends the services and classes.

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



Holiday Worship Information

Friday, December 16

Blue Holidays Service • 7:00-8:00 p.m. • Ames Chapel

Join us for this contemplative service for all who are lonely, grieving, and hurting during the holidays. Come and be with others in the community as we take gentle care of our tender hearts together. Childcare will be provided. Questions? Contact Jessica Clay at jessica@unityunitarian.org.

Sunday, December 18 • Family Sunday

Las Posadas • 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 4:30 p.m.

This year, in addition to the carol sing at 9:00 and 4:30 and the carol SHOUT at 11:00, we will enter into the Las Posadas tradition. Las Posadas (the Inns) tells the story of Mary and Joseph as they search for a place for their baby to be born. Might our church be a place of special welcome in the dark mid-winter days?

Wednesday, 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 • Saturday, 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. Participant information is online at www.unityunitarian.org. Want to sing in a pageant choir? Turn to page 15.

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, turn to page 15 and contact Ruth Palmer at ruth@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x118.

Sunday, December 25 • One service only at 10:00 a.m.

My Lord, What a Morning!

Christmas Day has come again and we are greeted with another chance to be together in community. Nic Cable will lead us in a service of gratitude and contemplation for what we will do with this precious gift that comes with the new dawn.

The Unity Church Christmas Pageant

From Kelley Loughrey,
Pageant Director

The Unity Church Christmas Pageant is a beloved tradition that unites us in celebrating family, faith, children, and beautiful music. This is a simple and humble telling of the Nativity story with only evergreen trees as our backdrop. The script, created by Unity Church minister Frederick May Eliot (1917-37), is acted out in tableau with our co-ministers reading the story while pageant choirs — both children and youth — sing the traditional carols. Our youth bring forth a cast of angels, kings, shepherds and acolytes. There are no speaking roles as legend has it a pageant director did away with those when a shy, young angel could not remember her lines. Over the past 97 years, hundreds of Unity Church youth and families have been deeply connected to the pageant ritual, building lasting friendships and lifelong memories.

Each year, as I stand at the back of the Sanctuary and the darkness sets in as the choir begins singing *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, I am reminded what a beautiful experience it is to behold. We hope you will join us this year! As an actor, choir member, or audience guest, we invite you make the pageant part of your Christmas Eve tradition and to ponder in your own heart the divine spark that is part of each child born one more redeemer.

All Unity Church children and youth — from kindergarten through 12th grade — are welcome to participate in the pageant. Details, dates, and registration are available online at www.unityunitarian.org. Performances are on Christmas Eve at 4:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Please contact me with any questions by email to kelleyloughrey@comcast.net or phone/text at 763-607-7520.



HOLIDAY GIVING AND RECEIVING



Christmas Pageant 100th Anniversary

In 2019 the Unity Church Christmas Pageant will celebrate its 100th anniversary! A Pageant Centennial Team will be formed in 2017 to help plan this special event. We'd like to start with collecting stories and photos of from pageants past. Please contact Kelley at kellyloughrey@comcast.net to share your memories and to help with planning for our future celebration.

Mano a Mano Craft Sale

Sunday, December 4 • Parish Hall

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 4, 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).

Mitten Tree

Unity's holiday tradition of generosity begins again on December 4. 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 4, following each service, and continue until all the goodies have been sold!

Evergreen Quilters Holiday Boutique Fundraiser

Sunday, December 11 and 18, in the Parish Hall, after morning services

Each year 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, scarves, table runners and mats, gift bags, small quilts, hot pads and trivets, notebooks, cards, ornaments, and much more! Cash, checks, and credit cards accepted!

With every purchase, you and our whole community has a happier holiday! One hundred percent of the total of your purchase goes to help people in need. Evergreen Quilters donates to several non-profit programs that help St. Paul's dislocated, homeless, and hungry people. Your purchases 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; the Jeremiah Program, a transitional program providing housing, education, job training and parenting support for young mothers with children; and a food shelf.

Evergreen Quilters are members and friends of Unity Church-Unitarian 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. For information please contact Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760 or e-mail her at mwright1438@comcast.net.

Santa Pause Free Childcare

Wednesday, December 14 • 5:30-8:00 p.m. • Parish Hall

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 8, 2017

***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 8, 2017

Where: Unity Church Parish Hall

Time: Right after each service

How it works: Bring your new, unused but unwanted items to the "regifting tables" in the Parish Hall on Sunday, January 8, before any service. Estimate each item's value and place it on the 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.

MINISTERIAL INTERNS

Hallman Ministerial Intern: Jessica Clay



December is typically my favorite month. The month in which I tend to hibernate, comforted by my holiday decorations filled with memories and by movies I have watched over and over again. This year feels different. There is a grief, a feeling of holding my breath for fear of what is to come in January, yet breath is life and so breathe in and out I must.

When my grandmother fell and broke one of her ribs this past summer she realized quickly that her breathing was important to her healing. With each breath she would have a sharp pain and the impulse was to take short breaths. Her doctor explained to her that in order for her rib to heal and her lungs to remain healthy she needed to take full deep breaths several times per day, despite the pain. She then breathed with intention for the next few months as she tended to the repair of herself.

As we look to enter this season of advent and consider our December theme of repair, taking deep breaths is so important. We must first acknowledge the pain that is present, and then breathe through it as we say “yes” to life over and over again.

As I plan to decorate my house, start watching my favorite holiday movies, and sing my favorite songs, my heart is feeling tender. For many people, the holidays bring up a lot of sadness and isolation, whether from seasonal affect disorder, reminders of the loss of loved ones, or from perfectionism driving us towards expectations. Often the urge can be to put on a brave or cheery face despite these feelings. Know that this church is a place where your full self is welcome, especially in this time when we need each other.

I will be leading a Blue Holidays service on Friday, December 16 (see page 8), for those of you that need a place of quiet and rest, a place to take those deep painful breaths. This will be a contemplative service with candles, singing, and silence to soothe our tender hearts. All are welcome.

My hope is that in the midst of all that is happening you will find moments of comfort, of repair, and of joy in the month ahead. As we breathe in and out together, as we share our favorite memories, as we share in the fullness of who we are and the fullness of our fears, may you find love holding you like a warm blanket when it is snowing outside.

Tuesday Meditation at Unity Church

Join us Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. in Ames Chapel. Meditation instruction is offered at 5:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month. Please notify Ken Ford at kenfaure@gmail.com if you plan to come for instruction.

Ministerial Intern: Nic Cable



In early November, I went to the Oceti Sakowin Camp in North Dakota to join in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Over 500 clergy and religious leaders gathered for a powerful expression of our strength together united for indigenous and environmental rights. Upon my return, so many of you have

expressed your care and curiosity for me and about how the trip went. And my response was pretty similar for all those I spoke to: “It was emotional. Disorienting. Beautiful and tragic. But hopeful.” So much has happened since returning from Standing Rock, which has amplified and centered these feelings for many of us in our lives. For me, at least, the theme of gratitude became a tremendous spiritual challenge when life suddenly seemed out of sorts, upside down, frighteningly unfamiliar on November 9. But this disorientation, whether at Standing Rock or in this post-election world we live in together, is an invitation for all of us to reorient and recommit our hearts to those values and convictions that animate our very lives in the first place.

Repair invites us back together through the storm to create something wholly (holy) new. It is an opportunity to redefine our covenant with one another at Unity Church in a way that honors our relationships together. As we enter the Advent season, as winter draws near, may we be filled with the courage to be vulnerable in our reorienting journey ahead. The Beloved Conversations program that many folks at Unity have been a part of has come to a close, but the embodiment of these principles of racial equity and dismantling white supremacy in our lives is only going to continue. All of us are needed on the journey ahead; all of us have something to offer as we consider a way forward. I am buoyed by the love of this community rallying together and in our steadfast commitment to living into our values even on these short and cold days of late fall.

Kung Fu at Unity Church

Unity’s UU Kung Fu practice group, *The House of the Upright Ox*, approaches martial arts as spiritual practice focused on resolving conflict on multiple levels. *Hung Gar Kung Fu* is a Chinese martial art which emulates the moment and disposition of the Tiger, Snake, Crane, Dragon, and Leopard. Practice is led by Unity Church member Bryan Kujawski who has been practicing and teaching martial arts for many years. This free class meets on Saturday mornings in the Body Room from 10:00 a.m.-noon, and is for any level of experience, ages 16–106. You can simply show up! Questions? Contact Bryan at bryan.kujawski@capella.edu.

Crossing and Blessing Our Thresholds

Are you crossing a threshold in your life — a change in relationship, work, home, roles, identity or abilities that feels like a turning point, whether you've chosen it or not? Our lives are full of thresholds — times of 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.

If this describes your own life now, consider joining the 2017 Threshold series, a facilitated small group for reflecting on the changes in our lives and discovering the support that comes from exploring our thresholds in the company of others. (NOTE: Group size is limited and pre-registration is required.)

"We all go through challenging transitions but we don't have to do it alone. The Thresholds experience was clarifying and good for the soul!"

The Threshold series "provided me with companions and compatriots, and well-timed doses of inspiration in a time of need," said Janet Bisbee who participated in last year's group. "We all go through challenging transitions but we don't have to do it alone. The Thresholds experience was clarifying and good for the soul!"

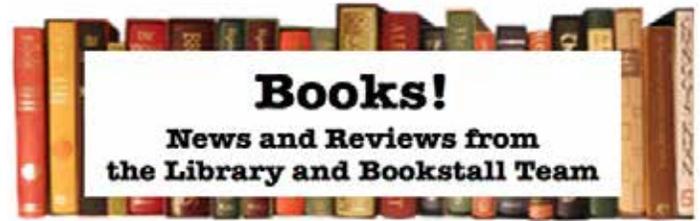
In a supportive small group facilitated by literary minister Karen Hering, each participant reflects on the threshold they're crossing while accompanying others in crossing their own. Using conversation, guided writing, and a variety of non-writing activities both playful and serious, the group considers the meaning, risks and possibilities present on our thresholds.

"The Crossing Thresholds series was my first experience with any group at Unity Church . . . and I felt a profound connection with those in the group, the basis of which was kindness and deep respect - on a level I've rarely experienced," said Bob Albrecht, another 2016 participant. "I believe we had unusual synergy. I made several beautiful new friends and felt thoroughly enriched by the program."

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 7, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., and three additional Saturday mornings, 9:00 a.m.-noon: January 21, February 11 and 25. The congregational blessing will occur on Sunday, February 26. The series is free to members; a fee of \$100 will be charged nonmembers.

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



Anderson Library Says Goodbye to Checkout File (and catches up to the 20th century)



Who knew that there are over 1,000 ideas on Pinterest of what to do with vintage library checkout cards including creating Christmas ornaments and a checkout card necklace? This is good because we now have over 1,000 checkout cards no longer in use. Checking out a book in the Anderson Library is easier than ever, and the new and improved catalog will tell you

if a book you are looking for is checked out or on the shelf. Stop by the Anderson Library on Sunday morning and find a friendly volunteer ready to show you the new catalog and checkout system!

Need a boost for your spirit? Consider Cairns! Cairns: The Unity Church Journal of the Arts, Vol. 8 Consider this: *I fancy I become a partner in creation as each new day begins.*

Or this: *I can too / pen a happy poem; / here comes one right now ...*

Or... *Annie stood on the stairway and said loudly, "Be still and know that I am God!"*

And this (detail of a larger painting):

**Cairns Vol. 8
ON
SALE
THIS
MONTH!**



Think about it: a no-stress holiday gift that gives twice! Purchase a Unity Bookstall gift certificate on a relaxed Sunday morning over coffee in the Parish Hall, and you have not only found the perfect gift for a friend or family member but your purchase supports Unity libraries!

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY / CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

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 in the Ames Chapel 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.

December 7

Dinner: Tofu lettuce wraps with cabbage crunch and roasted garlic green beans. Cost: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5-12, \$2/child ages 2-4, and \$20/family.

Christian Fellowship at Unity Church

The diversity of theological beliefs at Unity Church is a beautiful thing. Join Rev. Tom Duke, Pastor Danny Givens, Jr., and Ministerial Intern Nic Cable, as we explore what it might look like to create space for nurturing Christian identity and practice at Unity Church.

Mother/Daughter Film: *Little Women*

Please join Unity Church moms and daughters (grades 6 & up) on the second Wednesday of the month for a female focused film. The following month, we'll discuss the previous month's film during dinner. Feel free to join us for all films or just one. Contact Elizabeth Wrobel at wrobelsmith@hotmail.com.

Nonviolent Communication in the Holiday Season

Join Jon and Susan Vaughan-Fier for an introduction to non-violent communication and how it has impacted their lives. This session will engage the model of Nonviolent Communication by Marshall Rosenberg. Participants will leave with skills to bring into their daily lives during this busy and sometimes stressful season. No previous NVC experience necessary.

New Family Religious Education Orientation

This session with Rev. K.P. Hong, Director of Religious Education, is for families new to Unity Church who would like to learn more about religious education for children and youth.

Yoga Movement and Mindfulness: Review of the Niyamas

As we wind down Wellspring Wednesday in 2016, we'll review the Niyamas from the five previous weeks: cleanliness, contentment, self-discipline, self-study, and surrender. Bring a yoga mat if you have one. There will be a few extras available.

Textile Arts

Bring your knitting, crocheting, tatting, embroidery, needlepoint, and cross stitch for an evening of fellowship and service.

Learn to Play the Chinese Game of Go

Anyone above the age of 10 is welcome.

Tween Group

Join Unity's tweens for an evening of fun and fellowship in the last Wellspring Wednesday of 2016!

Wellspring Wednesday is on break from December 14–28. Dinner, worship, and programming resume on January 4.

Holiday Hush

Turn your holiday rush into holiday hush this season with a retreat in daily life offered by Spiritual Director Sarah Cledwyn. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, join with others in holding our center of peacefulness and gratitude. Participants will receive a weekly dose of calm from the meditation cushion at Grow Soul with reflections, practices and inspiration that you can encounter at your own pace and in the realities of your own life. Opportunities for community support through a closed Facebook group will give participants an extra level of connection if they so desire. Give yourself the gift of a reflective and intentional holiday season. More information and sign up at www.GrowSoul.com. Questions? Contact Sarah at sarahcledwyn@gmail.com or 651-699-9948.

Recovery Ministry

Tuesday, December 13 • 5:00-6:30 p.m. • DeCramer Room.

Join us for a monthly gatherings of sharing poetry, readings, and our own stories. This group is for anyone who self identifies as being in recovery. If you feel you qualify, then you do and are welcome. This is a supportive group within this church community to meet people where they are and build connections. If you have questions or to request child care, please contact Jessica Clay, Hallman Ministerial Intern, at jessica@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x 109.

Young Adult (ages 18-35) Potluck

Tuesday, December 13 • 6:30 p.m. • Center Room

Join ministerial intern Nic Cable for a holiday potluck and a chance to meet other young adults at Unity Church! All are welcome for an evening of fun and fellowship. Contact Nic with any questions at nic@unityunitarian.org.

Unity Book Club

The Unity Book Club meets on the second Tuesday of each 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. Upcoming discussions:

December 13: *The Human Stain* by Philip Roth

January 10: *My Life on the Road* by Gloria Steinem

Elders Circle

Join us for our elders circle holiday celebration. We will be meeting in the Robbins Parlor on Tuesday, December 20, from 1:00-2:30 p.m. Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministry will be joining us for music and merriment. Refreshments will be provided; all are welcome. Questions contact jessica@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x109.

Free child care is available, with one-week advance notice, for all church-sponsored activities. Contact Michelle Hill at michelle@unityunitarian.org.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY / MLK HOLIDAY

Make Winter Warmer for People Seeking Second Chances

From Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice Outreach 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 employment and a home. 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 washcloths, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand lotion, deodorant, dental floss, razors and shaving cream (all items should be unopened)
- New winter coats, gloves, hats, scarves, boots (men's) and socks suitable for the job site (sizes XL and above always needed)
- Hand and foot warmers
- Bus passes or the cash to buy bus passes

The Racial and Restorative Justice Team will collect these items through December and continuing 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 Rev. Lisa Friedman's office.

Help Provide a Meal for Jeremiah Program Families

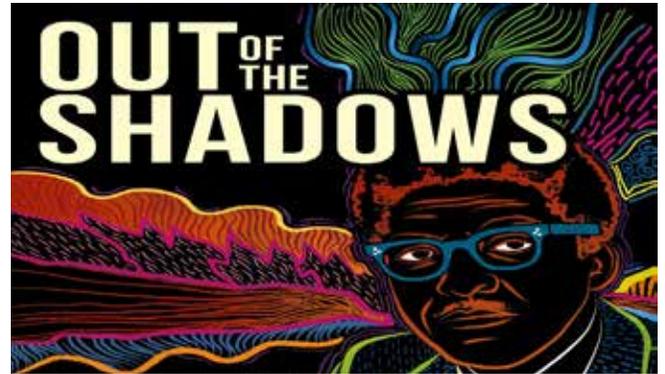
Help cook a meal at The Jeremiah Program (932 Concordia Avenue, St. Paul), a residence and education program for single moms and their children. Meals are provided before evening classes and volunteers are needed to help with preparation on these dates: Thursday, December 15; Tuesday, January 24; Thursday, February 16; Tuesday, March 21; Thursday, April 20. Contact Karen Buggs at 651-297-0111 or buggs745@hotmail.com.

One Voice Mixed Chorus Presents

Out of the Shadows

Tickets are now on sale: www.ovmc.org

Saturday, January 14 • 2:00 p.m. • Ordway Concert Hall
Sunday, January 15 • 3:00 p.m. • Ordway Concert Hall



Celebrate MLK weekend 2017 with One Voice! *Out of the Shadows* is a concert honoring the work of African-American artists and activists, and featuring the world premiere of One Voice's largest commission ever, *The Man Behind the Dream*, a new choral work by Cincinnati composer Steve Milloy. This commission honors the life and work of openly gay civil rights activist Bayard Rustin, a mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, who was pushed to the margins of the movement due to his sexuality.



Annual MLK Holiday Breakfast

Monday, January 16 • 7:00–9:30 a.m.

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer

285 Dale Street N, St. Paul, MN 55103

Each year, the General Mills Foundation and UNCF present an annual MLK Holiday Breakfast at the Minneapolis Convention Center to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year's keynote will be presented by author and civil rights activist Myrlie Evers-Williams.

With the help of countless volunteers, Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul hosts breakfasts at nine neighborhood locations, featuring a live broadcast of the General Mills event as well as a hot breakfast and local programming. Unity's neighborhood location is Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. For more information and to register for the event, please visit <http://interfaithaction.org/mlk>.

Pitter-pattering Questions

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



From KP Hong, Director of Religious Education

The celebrated journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates reignited the debate and drew overwhelming attention with his provocative piece “The Case for Reparations” in *The Atlantic* (June 2014):

One cannot escape the question [of reparations] by hand-waving at the past, disavowing the acts of one’s ancestors, nor by citing a recent date of ancestral immigration. The last slaveholder has been dead for a very long time. The last soldier to endure Valley

Forge has been dead much longer. To proudly claim the veteran and disown the slaveholder is patriotism à la carte... We were not there when Woodrow Wilson took us into World War I, but we are still paying out the pensions. If Thomas Jefferson’s genius matters, then so does his taking of Sally Hemings’s body. If George Washington crossing the Delaware matters, so must his ruthless pursuit of the runaway Oney Judge... The idea of reparations is frightening not simply because we might lack the ability to pay. [It] threatens something much deeper — America’s heritage, history, and standing in the world... Reparations — by which I mean the full acceptance of our collective biography and its consequences — is the price we must pay to see ourselves squarely [and the] potential to expand the American political imagination.

Whatever the political im/possibility of enacting reparations, Coates intensifies our resolution — both pixelated clarity and moral determination — to face ourselves squarely and see black poverty as a product of public policy and private theft effected by racism. And that without prophetic imagination necessary for a redistribution of capital, there is little hope for racial justice. Yet too often, an attitude that persists in our culture is an appeal to *fairness* when the demand is for *justice*, for *opportunity* when the claim is for *redress*. Perhaps nowhere else is that appeal as evident than in our support of access to education. For almost twenty years now, there has been hyper-scrutiny on increasing educational access and securing a degree, yet countless University of Phoenixes have shown that access is no panacea. *Brown v. Board of Education* was conceived as a means for justice, not its end. Black college graduates in step with their non-black cohorts face labor market conditions where they fall among people least likely to get a call back because of a “black” name or negative credit check or criminal conviction. The unemployment rate for black recent college graduates nearly tripled between 2007 and 2013 (from Jones and Schmitt, *A College Degree is No Guarantee*, 2014).

Education as a political tool is as profoundly necessary as it is insufficient against the cumulative effect of structural racism. In fact, decades of research show how education *reproduces* inequality, rewarding money and privilege at every level of learning, classrooms, schools, and districts, to say nothing of the effect of racism on intellectual property, innovation, the creation of intellectual capital and intellectual culture necessary for racial justice. Which brings me to pause, breathe, and remain absolutely clear about our sacred work with children. Religious education is fundamentally a category of *ministry* rather than of education, and that ministry is not a service profession but a holy pursuit. There is no recruiting of volunteers assigned to task completion, but a courting of suitors called to love children toward their life purpose. That religious education is fundamentally not about the transmission of knowledge but the relentless formation of a peculiar kind of people who dare to repair the breach. Isn’t this the breathtaking impossibility of our work? What else is faith for if not to be defeated, again and again, by such impossible odds?

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

2017 Children's Musical

For the past 27 years, talented members of the Unity Church community have come together 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, consider whether this fun, team building experience might be right for them.

To learn more, please come to the parent information session between the 9:00 and 11:00 services in the Anderson Library on December 11. The musical is scheduled for March 2-4, 2017! Stay tuned for more information. Questions? Please contact Co-Producer Louise Livesay-Al at louiselivesay@yahoo.com.

December 2016

Sunday, December 4: Regular R.E.; Cookie & Wreath Sale (see page 9)

Wednesday, December 7: Last Tween, OWL, and Wellspring Wednesday until 2017

Sunday, December 11: Regular R.E.

Wednesday, December 14: Santa Pause, 5:30-8:00 p.m. (see page 9)

Sunday, December 18: Family Sunday

Saturday, December 24: Christmas Eve services (see page 8)

December 25: No R.E.; one service only at 10:00 a.m.

Save the Date

Teacher Orientation

Religious Education Teacher Orientation is offered for those who are teaching second semester and have not yet attended orientation. Information to RSVP is forthcoming. Please attend one:

- Wednesday, January 11
6:30–8:30 p.m.
- Saturday January 14
10:00 a.m.–noon

MUSIC MINISTRIES

Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries



*What can I do but build a small blaze and
feed it with branches the trees let fall:
that twiggy clatter strewn along the ground.
And lichen crusting such dead limbs
glows sliver, glows white.
The earth-food for a fire so unlike and like
your own.
Oh, what can I do but build a small blaze.*

— Paulann Petersen
Oregon Poet Laureate

As we enter into our annual December journey into the holiday season, realizing many stories but focused on that great story of hope and birth centered in a baby representing new life, I ask, "How?" — especially after the events of the election. December's theme is repair. Again, I ask, "How?" — especially when I see and feel so much pain, confusion, and fear. And then, I look deep into my very middle, and am inspired by all those things that lift up the beauty in this world, in us. My response has to come from being nurtured by and focused on what is beautiful. Why? So that I can offer the best of myself in the efforts of repair, both personal and of this world. "Building a small blaze" is what each of us can do in our individual ways. These words, taken from an anthem which will be sung by the Unity Singers in December, just hit that "middle spot" looking for answers.

In that vein, Unity Choir is singing another piece, also in December, that shares words of Michelangelo taken from his writing "On Beauty." Again, this text embraced by music written by Kurt Knecht, moves me to tears as it speaks of "starlike eyes"... not to avoid but to sustain what I know to be the best of us... the beautiful, the sacred. Beauty in action, thought, and artistic expression. May this holiday season bring you moments which feed your own "small blaze."

*Mine eyes that are enamored of things fair
And this my soul that for salvation cries
May never heavenward rise
Unless the sight of beauty lifts them there.
Down from the loftiest star
A splendor falls on earth,
And draws desire afar
To that which gave it birth.*

*So love and heavenly fire and counsel wise
The noble heart finds most in starlike eyes.*

— Michelangelo

Sing with us on Christmas Eve



Christmas Pageant Choir

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

Children's Pageant Choir Rehearsal

10:00 - 11:00 a.m. • Robbins Parlor

Kathleen Radspinner, director

Adult Pageant Choir Rehearsal

10:00-11:00 a.m. • Choir Room

Ruth Palmer, 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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15 AND 22

Candlelight Choir Rehearsal

7:30 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.

Come and sing for this meaningful service! If you are planning to sing with the 10:00 p.m. candlelight service choir, contact Ruth Palmer at ruth@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x116.

Go Tell It!

Saturday, December 10, 2016

Holiday Carol Sing • Concert • Dessert Buffet

6:30 p.m.: Carol Sing

7:00 p.m.: Holiday Concert, "Go Tell It!"

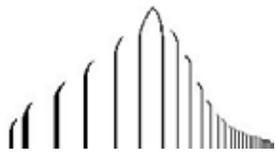
Children's Choir, Unity Singers, Unity Choir, Women's Ensemble, joined by trumpet, oboe, and string quartet!

8:00 p.m.: Dessert Buffet

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. Donations of non-perishable food items will also be gratefully accepted.

2017 Children's Musical

For youth in grades 6-8. A parent information meeting will be held on December 11. See to page 14 for details.



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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Go Tell It

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10
Unity Church-Unitarian

6:30: CAROL SING

7:00: HOLIDAY CONCERT
Children's Choir, Unity Singers, Unity Choir, Women's Ensemble
Joined by: trumpet, oboe, string quartet

8:00: DESSERT BUFFET
Bring a dessert ready to serve and share!

December Worship and Events

Turn to pages 8-9 for details!

Please note! On Sunday, December 25, and Sunday, January 1, there will be only one service at 10:00 a.m.



THE GATHERING Unity's Women's Retreat

Saturday, January 28, 2017 • Unity Church

Join us for a day-long retreat — including programs, food, massage, music, and spiritual practice — as we reflect on the wholeness of our lives.

Registration begins Sunday, January 8 — watch for details!

If you are interested in helping with The Gathering or have a class or other program you would like to propose offering at the retreat, please contact Rev. Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org.