

## Wonder

*The life of a congregation is a rich community tapestry of people, programs, ministries and worship. We lift up the patterns of this tapestry at Unity Church with the threads of monthly themes woven through our worship and programming. These themes deepen our understanding of our own faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community.*

The values statement of Unity Church Unitarian reads: "In all we do, we strive to *embody* wonder, open-hearted engagement, and courageous action." We at Unity Church want to embody wonder. Think about that for a moment. Our society, not to mention the mundane tasks of everyday life, pressure us to narrow our view, to accept the world around us without question. Our mission statement asks instead that we stay curious, stay humble, stay active, stay astonished. Embodying wonder calls us to push back against the forces of routine, to stand against conventional wisdom, to look for the extraordinary, to claim, as songwriter Peter Mayer says, that "everything is holy now."

As Unitarian Universalists, wonder, expressed as a questioning spirit, is a core tenet of our faith. Our Fourth Principle calls us to make "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning" central to our own lives and to our church communities. We are a faith full of questions and everyone is encouraged to ask them.

Sometimes our questions lead us to a Google search or a quick check of Wikipedia. Other wondering goes deeper, taking us to places where answers are perpetually unanswerable, impossible to quantify or know for certain: "I wonder what happens after we die." "I wonder if there is a divine force in the world." This is spiritual wondering about what makes us holy, what makes our lives, and our deaths, worthwhile. Google cannot supply the answers.

Unitarians and Universalists have long questioned received wisdom and calcified tradition. Many of the greatest UU thinkers, though immersed in the dominant paradigms of their time, used their sense of wonder to see cracks in the system and wiggle their way through to a different understanding.

Universalist pioneer Hosea Ballou, for example, wondered why people worshipped an angry God. He read the bible closely, and when he could not find evidence for a God who promised eternal damnation, Ballou made a rational decision to embrace universal salvation instead. His sense of open wondering led him to a radical new understanding of the holy. New England Transcendentalist Unitarian Theodore Parker similarly combined a penchant for facts and data with a wonderment about life's deepest questions. Parker's theological wonderings spurred him to deny Biblical miracles and question the literal authority of the Bible and Jesus. His wonder changed the shape of Unitarian thought.

If one aspect of UU wonder rests in the Fourth Principle, a different understanding of wonder can be found in the Seventh Principle, "respect for the interdependent web of all existence." This wonder often comes easier when we are outdoors. As nineteenth-century naturalist John Muir wrote, "few are altogether deaf to the preaching of pine trees." Environmentalist Rachel Carson, best known for her transformative book *Silent Spring*, made a forceful argument for the role of the natural world in promoting wonder. Carson believed that we needed to "turn again to the earth and in the contemplation of her beauties to know the sense of wonder and humility." When we "turn again to the earth," we will be surprised. And humbled. Again and again, wonder and humility find themselves paired.

Maybe that is because wonder is the antithesis of control. Awe takes us away from our own ego, reminds us that we are part of something much greater than ourselves. The majesty of snow-capped mountains, the tiny feet of a newborn baby, the perfectly held note at the end of a song — each one can all evoke

a kind of stunned silence, a loss of words. In this sense, wonder cannot be spoken about, but only be spoken from. Moments of awe may make us forget the questions and just feel a profound sense of wonder at what surrounds us.

Ultimately, wonder means paying attention. Wonder is a spiritual practice helped along by structured opportunities. To make meaning of our lives' biggest questions and our most difficult and exciting experiences, we need places and people who encourage us to ask the unanswerable questions, to ponder the beauties and uncertainties of life. Church allows us a space to be comfortable with wondering and not knowing, a chance to explore mysteries we cannot explain, to practice vulnerability and open ourselves to new questions. Our faith community offers us a gracious container where wonder can flourish.

*Hallman Ministerial Intern  
Kathryn Jay with this month's theme team: Drew Danielson, Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs, Ken Ford, Lisa Friedman, Karen Hering, KP Hong, Ruth Palmer*

## Wonder Theme Resources

### BOOKS

*The Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague* by Geraldine Brooks (2002)

*Ten Poems to Change Your Life* by Roger Housden (2001)

*Infinite Wonder: An Astronaut's Photographs from a Year in Space* by Scott Kelly (2018)

### CHILDREN'S BOOKS

*How the Grinch Stole Christmas* by Dr. Seuss (1957)

*Wonder* by R. J. Palacios (2016)

*Everywhere, Wonder* by Matthew Swantson (2017)

# JUST WORDS / WHEEL OF LIFE

## Just Words



It is more synchronicity than coincidence that our advent theme this year is wonder. This past spring the Board of Trustees helped us to articulate new Ends Statements that are intended to guide our congregation's life for the next five years. They are promises we make to one another and the world about how we want to grow and change. The "Global Ends" by which we focus and against which we evaluate church life can be seen as a set of nested bowls. The largest bowl is a statement of our values. Next comes mission, and then and only then the five-year aspirations.

The last two iterations of the Ends have not included reconsideration of either the values or the mission of the church.

This year the Board decided that the time was right to bring those core statements of congregational identity into close alignment with the congregation's aspirations. After listening carefully to hundreds of members of the church and taking time to talk with a number of our key partner organizations, the Board wrote this:

Unity Church-Unitarian honors the ambiguity and uncertainty in the search for greater truth, meaning and equity. In all we do we strive to embody:

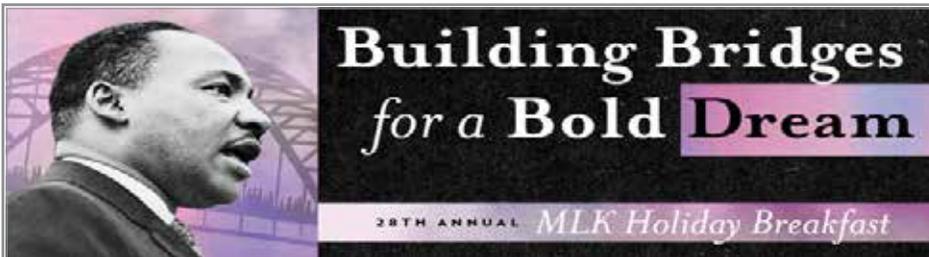
- Wonder
- Open-hearted engagement
- Courageous action

These represent the irreducible values without which we would not be Unity Church. The word wonder, in particular, seems to me to signal a growing openness to the marvels of intuition and awe. Wonder opens the door to humility in an era that calls us to be instruments of hope during a time when too many are too often living at the edge of despair.

May the turning of the year and the blessings of the holy days to come bring us closer to wonder, open-hearted engagement, and courageous action in the interest of the love that's always waiting to be born.

Yours in wonder and in faith,

Rob Eller-Isaacs



### Annual MLK Holiday Breakfast

**Monday, January 21 • 7:00–9:30 a.m. • Location TBA**

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 Don Lemon, anchor, CNN Tonight. 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. Details and registration are online at <http://interfaithaction.org/mlk>.

## The Wheel of Life

### In Memoriam

**Beatrice Elizabeth Weschcke Asfeld**  
April 30, 1923 – October 18, 2018

### In Celebration

Congratulations to youth leader  
**Sophie Currie**

who was welcomed as a  
luminous leader by the  
Unitarian Universalist Association.

## Sabbatical

### Rev. Lisa Friedman



**Rev. Lisa Friedman,**  
Minister of  
Congregational  
and  
Community  
Engagement

As I enter into my seventh year at Unity Church and my 22nd year of ministry, I am deeply grateful to Unity for granting me sabbatical time this year, in two parts. My first sabbatical time will be November 20-February 28, part two will come next summer. The concept of sabbatical is rooted in the word Sabbath — a time to step away from the routines of work for reflection and renewal. During my time away, Madeline Summers and Kathryn Jay will be coordinating my areas of ministry — you will be in excellent hands! Thank you for your support and for our shared ministry — I will miss you and look forward to catching up in March, when I return.

# DECEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES

## December Worship

Sunday worship services are held at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. except where noted. Religious Education for children and youth is offered at all three service. Sermon podcasts and archives are available online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org).

### December 2: *Miracles Abound: Science and Wonder*

In these days when scientific fact is up for debate by politicians, let us take a moment to remember how scientific inquiry is grounded in the magic of wonder and discovery. Join Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Kevin Harris as they celebrate the essential role of curiosity and uncover the miracles that abound all around us in the natural world.

### December 9: *Letting Wonder Have Its Way*

We tend to think of spiritual practice as a conscious, focused discipline. But for those of us who need to cultivate humility surrendering to wonder can help us to grow beyond our need to control and judge the world. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Maima Fant will offer a service urging us to let wonder guide us as we lean into the winter holy days.

### December 16: *Cultivating a Practice of Wonder*

Wonder is at the core of an open and curious heart. How do we stay open and grounded, especially in the season where we are told over and over again that all we have to do is purchase happiness and it will be ours. Join Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Lia Rivamonte as they work to cultivate a practice of wonder.

### December 23: *Holy Families*

Services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. only

Don't miss our Christmas Family Sunday service! The service will begin with a carol sing-a-long. Our infamous carol shout will be held during the 11:00 a.m. service. The ministers will preside, old stories will be told, and good cheer will be shared by all.

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 30: *The Stories We Tell, the Stories We Forget* One service only at 10:00 a.m.

A well-told story can change the world. But what happens to the stories which get forgotten? Hallman Ministerial Intern Kathryn Jay and worship associate Bob Lies will celebrate a famous family who escaped Bethlehem to safety, and wonder how the story changes when we remember the other families left behind to weep for their children.

## Christmas Eve Services

Turn to page eight.

## December 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 2: TU Dance School

TU Dance School, founded in 2011, reaches through diverse dance traditions to uncover the connective power of dance. Located on the Green Line in St. Paul, the school provides programming for dance artists and students of all ages, regardless of race, class, sexual orientation, gender identification, body type, or ability to pay. Nearly half of the teachers and participants are people of color. Approximately 40% of the students receive full or partial scholarships. Unity's Anne Parker is on the board of the TU Dance School.

### December 9: Face It Foundation

Millions of men experience depression, but far fewer seek help. The Face It Foundation, founded in 2009, gives men the support they need to face depression, take control of their recovery and get their lives back. Generous donations of organizations and individuals ensure that all services and resources are free for the men who need them. Unity's Steve Harper serves as a volunteer facilitator for a bi-weekly peer support group.

### December 16: Indigenous Roots

Indigenous Roots is a collective of primarily East Side St. Paul artists dedicated to building, supporting, and cultivating opportunities for indigenous peoples and communities of color, and to promote and practice holistic well being through arts, culture, and tradition. Today's collection will go directly to the youth of Wakinyan Luta Oyanke, a group of forty Lakota singers and dancers, to purchase music and dance outfits. Unity's Maggie Lorenz is one of the directing artists at Indigenous Roots.

### December 23: Open Hands Midway

Open Hands Midway fills the food security gap in the Midway district of St. Paul by serving free noon meals and distributing food to those in need. Clothing, household goods, and personal hygiene supplies are also available. A nurse is available weekly to check vitals and deal with health concerns. Open Hands provides over 15,000 meals annually. Today's collection will support the noon meal program. Unity's Barbara McKernan is an Open Hands volunteer.

### December 30: Minneapolis Crisis Nursery

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

*Please consider submitting a nomination for the Generosity Ministry. Complete the short nomination form online at <http://bit.ly/ucgenerosity>. It couldn't be easier!*

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES / STEWARDSHIP

## Witnessing Wonder

From Nancy Evert, Trustee



Wonder is one of the core values in our new Ends Statements, 2019-2023. Trustees heard a shared yearning for, and appreciation of, experiences of wonder as we participated with so many of you in the visioning sessions for the new Ends. I feel wonder when I recognize my small part in the complicated, beautiful, interdependent, and constantly renewing world around me.

And, I say with honesty, that Unity's annual meeting in mid-November had several wonder-filled moments for me. This was the 147th (!) annual meeting of our congregation. No one who created our church is around to participate in it now. Yet, we feel a kinship with those who came before us, and a duty to those who will follow. Our Executive Team presented an update on the kaleidoscope of ministries sustained by our congregation. None of us could participate in even a significant fraction of all that is offered. Yet, together, with our pledges and our time, we make so many important things happen each week. And, we heard Lisa Friedman and K.P. Hong of the Beloved Community Staff Team report on the many opportunities for reflection and insight the team hosted this year to identify white privilege and prepare for a more multicultural future.

As a Board of Trustees, we celebrated the broad and enthusiastic participation of the congregation in creating our new Ends Statements. We shared appreciation for the wealth of inputs — from the visioning sessions, the “love” letters written at Sunday services, Religious Education observations, and meetings with groups with whom we make common cause.

There was plenty more going on. Executive Director Barbara Hubbard presented for approval the proposed operating and capital budgets for 2019 — reflecting the values and committed generosity of our members. We sought — and were thankful to receive — the congregation's approval of amended Bylaws that are updated, clear, and consistent. And, we thanked the 374 people who completed the congregational survey in 2018. The results of the survey — and the many comments that were offered — provide key inputs for both the Executive Team and the Board. (An overview of the survey results is available on Unity's website.)

The congregation elected two new Trustees — Clover Earl and Jackie Smith — and re-elected outgoing Board Chair Justin Cummins to a second term. We wholeheartedly thanked outgoing Trustees Bailey Webster and Terry Linskey for their service. The Board's new officers, Chair Jennifer Tong and Secretary Jill Van Koolwijk, began their terms at the conclusion of the congregational meeting.

We also heard from our senior ministers, Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs, about their planned retirement in the summer of 2020. And, all of us applauded the Executive Team and the church staff for their extraordinary and dedicated service throughout the year.

And, I felt wonder — at the continuity and renewal of Unity Church over its long history, at the enormous role of Rob and Janne in shaping the church during their 20 year ministry and at our ability to plan for a future with new leadership, at the willingness of so many to pledge money and to commit time to lay leadership, at the impact of church programming on our spirits and our broader community, and, at our renewed commitment to together inspire and experience more wonder in this beautiful and complicated and tragic world.

*If you would like to contact Trustees, read the annual report, or take a look at the revised Bylaws, please visit <https://www.unityunitarian.org/board-of-trustees.html>.*

## Annual Pledges and Year-End Gifts

### 2019 Pledge Drive

Many thanks to everyone who has made pledges for 2019! **If you haven't yet pledged, please do so today!** Make your pledge online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org).

### Consider a year-end gift!

As we come near the end of 2018, we look back with tremendous gratitude for the gift of community and the new possibilities that we witness each day. One way that the congregation is sustained financially is through the tradition of year-end giving. If such a gift is possible for you, we invite you to make one during the month of December.

Donations are gratefully accepted online at <http://bit.ly/yearendgift2018> (please select "other payment" and include "year-end" in the comments) or by contacting Barbara Hubbard at [barbarah@unityunitarian.org](mailto:barbarah@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x116.

Thank you for your generosity in sustaining and stewarding the church and our larger Unitarian Universalist movement for the future!



# MINISTERIAL INTERN / STATES OF INCARCERATION

## Hallman Ministerial Intern: Kathryn Jay



I am not a morning person. I've gotten better over the years, but as a kid, I was always the last one up in my family, an early morning straggler who grumped and whined as I got ready for school.

There was only one exception to this pattern. Every Christmas morning I woke up first, no alarm clock needed. I was wired, awake, ready to go.

You might be asking yourself: What does this have to do with this month's worship theme of wonder?

In what is probably an inappropriate admission for a soon-to-be UU minister, when I think of wonder, I think of Christmas. Specifically, Christmas presents. While I know that cultivating a sense of wonder helps us counter rampant, soul-destroying consumerism, Santa Claus still matters to me. Even now, remembering childhood Christmas mornings evokes a physical feeling of wonder. I was enchanted by presents.

Every Christmas, I woke up with a start before dawn. I made sure not to wake up my sisters or parents as I crept down the hall toward the living room. The hallway had a door that we never closed — except on Christmas morning. I paused at that closed door for as long as I could stand it, enjoying a feeling of suspense that made my whole body shake with excitement. Anticipation and wonder combined: What awaits behind the door?

While I finally opened the door, making sure it didn't creak, I stood in the threshold, letting the wonder of the moment wash over me. The white twinkly lights on the tree. My favorite ornaments. That special pine-scented Christmas smell. The joyful reassurance that Santa had returned again.

When I was a kid, Santa did not wrap presents. (My mom worked full-time.) Instead, Santa left presents in kid-specific piles next to the Christmas tree, each pile topped by an identifying stocking. Everything was immediately revealed.

Vibrating with excitement, I sat down and carefully removed the content of my stocking. Then I looked at the presents in my designated pile. Finally I moved on to my sisters' piles. I don't remember ever caring that much about what I got, or making comparisons. Instead, I felt overwhelmed with joy when I was alone in that living room. I lay down on the floor, stared up at the tree, surrounded myself with presents. I took that feeling of wonder — the feeling that someone had done this for me — into my soul. It felt more holy than any Christmas service in my childhood church ever did.

Gradually, the intensity faded. I sat up. I put everything back into my stocking, made sure the presents were in a tidy pile. Then, I stood up, closed the hallway door, and went back to bed. My mom had to shake me awake for the family celebration.

While I think it is important to not conflate this season's wonders with things money can buy, maybe there's room for the excitement gifts can bring. My private Christmas ritual depended on the bounty that Santa provided, but it also touched a deeper sense of wonder, an appreciation for the beauty of season. The tree, the pile of presents, my sense of anticipation all created a path into heartfelt gratitude and joy, and nurtured a feeling I carry with me still.

Please feel free to contact me at [kathryn@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kathryn@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x109.

## States of Incarceration

November 20–February 18  
Minnesota History Center

States of Incarceration is a national traveling exhibit that explores the roots of mass incarceration in our own communities in an effort to open a dialogue on what should happen next. The exhibit was created by over 500 students and others deeply affected by incarceration, including University of Minnesota students who examined settler colonialism and the high rates of incarceration for Native Americans in Minnesota. Events are free and open to the public. [www.mnhs.org/calendar](http://www.mnhs.org/calendar).

### The Great Spirit Within the "Hole": Culturally Focused Prison Education

Saturday, December 1 • 4:00 p.m.  
AIM Interpretive Center  
An exhibit telling the story of the culturally focused prison education and re-entry programs run by the American Indian Movement (AIM).

### Art in the Era of Mass Incarceration

Wednesday, December 12 • 6:00 p.m.  
U of MN Walter Library, Room 402  
Join Nicole R. Fleetwood, associate professor of American Studies at Rutgers, as she discusses contemporary art by current and former incarcerated people.

### Emerging Leaders

Monday, January 8 • 7:00 p.m.  
Minnesota History Center, St. Paul  
View the exhibit and join for an evening of stories with local leaders who have experienced incarceration.

### Families Impacted by Mass Incarceration

Monday, January 29 • 7:00 p.m.  
Minnesota History Center, St. Paul  
A discussion on how incarceration impacts communities and families.

### Reflective Circle

Friday, February 5 • 7:00 p.m.  
Minnesota History Center, St. Paul  
View the exhibit and stay for a reflective circle led by Restorative Practices People of Color Collective.

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

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

## Welcome New Members



From left to right: Carol Angell, Dana Mardock, Walt Gordon, Susan Temple, and Amy Brown

As a longtime UU, **Carol Angell** found Unity Church quickly after she moved here. In July, Carol followed her daughter, a UU minister, and her family when her daughter was hired at White Bear UU Church. Carol retired from a 40 year social work practice in San Diego. Here, she enjoys her two year old grandson, exploring the city, and connecting at Unity Church.

**Amy Brown** and her younger son William have been attending Unity Church for the past five years and are grateful for the beloved community. She is the co-founder of Workutopia Consulting and is currently advocating for paid family leave for all workers.

**Walt Gordon** visited Unity Church because of the BLM banners, Circle of Peace, and Above Every Name. He's staying for the inspiring Ends, Chalice Circles, like-hearted people — and the rich music, authentic words, and restful silences of the worship. Walt's volunteer passion is co-facilitating Alternatives to Violence Project workshops in Minnesota prisons. He and his partner, Mary Hinz, live in St. Paul.

**Dana Mardock** is a former Bapticostalluthertarian with an evangelical Quaker heritage. It has been a long journey home to the Whole and Divine wonderfulness that is and has always been within her. This journey has landed her among this loving community where she has found home and family. Unity Church has created a space that is exactly what Dana needed — a community that, as is spoken aloud at every service, really is helping her to find and keep her balance in a very unbalanced world. Thank you to all who have and continue to play a part in that for her!

**Susan Temple** started attending Unity Church right after Trump was elected, looking for community and a deeper spiritual connection. She found both, and music, too! She loves all of the wonderful musical offerings, and has joined the Unity Choir. She recently made the switch from kindergarten teacher to life coach, and is committed to supporting folks who are experiencing life change.

### Mentoring at Unity: A Deeper Path to Connection

Unity Church has a mentor program available to all visitors and new members. A mentor serves as a guide and a resource in the congregation. They pledge to meet at least once a month face to face, and be available for ongoing questions and advice for at least six months. If you have questions, or would like to request a mentor, please stop by the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall or email Kathryn Jay at [kathryn@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kathryn@unityunitarian.org).



Eric Sampson and Marian Kramer

**Marian Kramer** and **Eric Sampson** feel like they have been members of Unity Church for a long time and are thrilled to finally make it official. Marian grew-up attending Unity with her family and introduced Eric to Unity when they were married here in 2007. They attended casually in 2012 when they moved to Saint Paul from California, and now attend (or attempt to attend) regularly since the birth of their twin boys in 2015. They love the community, the Religious Education program, and finding time for spiritual engagement amid their very full lives raising kids and holding full-time jobs. Marian is a licensed Professional Geologist with expertise in the oil industry and environmental consulting. Eric is a software developer with Red Wing Shoes.

### 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.

# WELCOME WORDS / YOUNG ADULTS

## Welcome Words



**Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement**

As I begin my sabbatical time this month, I wish you moments of wonder and stillness in this holiday season and a courageous and creative start to the New Year. This congregation is an inspiration to me in how to lead open-hearted, committed lives that make a difference in the world. Thank you for the ministry you create together, each and every day! I will return from part one of my Sabbatical in March. While I am gone, Hallman Ministerial Intern Kathryn Jay will oversee the ministries of membership, adult religious education, and community outreach with the skilled help of Madeline Summers. Please be in touch with Kathryn regarding how Unity Church can walk this journey of faith and engagement with you. Blessings and much gratitude to you all!

## Pathway to Membership

Sign up for Pathway to Membership classes at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Kathryn Jay, Hallman Ministerial Intern, at [kathryn@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kathryn@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x109. 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.

## Finding Yourself at Unity A Deeper Inquiry

Finding Yourself at Unity is offered on a regular basis on Sundays, from 10:20-11:15 a.m., in the Ames Chapel. These sessions can be attended in the order that works for you and will offer participants the opportunity to share part of their religious journey and get to know the programs and ministries of the congregation. Childcare is available in the nursery.

- December 2: Worship and the Liturgical Year
- December 9: Religious Education for Children, Youth, and Adults
- December 16: Unitarian Universalist History
- December 23: Building Tour
- December 30: No class

## Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

**Wednesday, January 16 • 7:15–9:00 p.m.** ~ also offered ~  
**Wednesday, March 20 • 7:15-9:00 p.m.**

Have you been considering membership at Unity? 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 concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church!

## Not-Knowing

**From Ray Hommeyer, Young Adult Group**

A peer recently said to me, "Google has ruined conversation." I was struck by this comment and realized that, more specifically, Google at my fingertips has impacted my practice of wondering. This triggered a memory: I was about 10 years old, sitting around our campfire and became captivated by the beauty and power of the flames. "How does fire exist?!" I exclaimed softly, enamored. My friend quickly supplied the scientific answer. I felt embarrassed by my ignorance and not-knowing, but I also felt frustrated. I hadn't wanted to know how fire is explained scientifically, I had been in a state of wonderment and was trying to name the feeling and share the experience.

Wonder, both as surprise of the beauty and cruelty this world offers, and as an act of imagining what our world could be, is key to practicing faith. In an age when we can find answers in a matter of seconds any time of day, taking the time to wonder is incredibly important. Reading fiction is one way I open myself to wonder. Being part of the generation to have grown up while the Harry Potter books were being published, many of us in the Young Adult Group love the Wizarding World. (We've gotten together outside of our regular meetings for Harry Potter-themed trivia nights!) Some of our conversations have referenced the podcast *Harry Potter and the Sacred Text*, the catchphrase for which is "Reading Fiction Doesn't Help Us Escape The World, It Helps Us Live In It."

When else do adults practice the type of wonder that is visionary, that helps us act as John Lewis invites on the podcast *Becoming Wise*, as though Beloved Community already exists now? I continue to be grateful for fiction and all that it offers, and I am learning that church, especially the sharing of our joys and sorrows, is a time when I'm able to feel into Beloved Community.

In the Young Adult Group, we start with two check-in questions that frame the sharing of our joys and sorrows: How is it with your soul? Where in your life have you experienced the Holy? The most recent post on our young adult blog, *Staying a Beat Longer*, starts to unpack the first question and what we mean by soul. Reflecting on the latter question, I've noticed that listening to stories of the Holy in people's lives often invites in wonder. Inherent in moments of the Holy is a not-knowing, an embrace of the Mystery of this world. Engaging in moments of ritual, like regular check-in questions and the lighting of the chalice, helps us to hold the complexity of not-knowing.

In a culture where certainty is commended and knowing well-practiced, I am grateful for church: for the moments when we come together, recognizing our interconnectedness, celebrating Mystery, and practicing wonder. It's no wonder we keep coming back, again and again, to be together and share in what is Holy!

To learn more about Unity's Young Adult Group, check out our blog by Meggie Exner: <https://stayingabeatlonger.com/>. For more information or to join our Thursday evening gatherings contact KP at [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org).



## 2018 Unity Church Christmas Pageant

From Kelley Loughrey, Pageant Director

By now we are gathering our flock and making sure we have a multitude of the heavenly hosts, a full choir, and plenty of shepherds to keep watch as we bring you our 99th Unity Church Christmas Pageant on Christmas Eve. All registration information, schedules, reminders, and even the songs for the Children's Choir are listed on our website at: <https://www.unityunitarian.org/christmas-pageant.html>. Please visit the site to learn about our centennial pageant and how you can share your memories.

I am often asked this time of year if there is another way to see the Christmas Pageant, as so many families are out of town or already busy by 4:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. We do not have a current video recording of the pageant, and I am wondering, would you watch it if it were available to you? If the pageant was ever held on another date, would you be interested and available to join us? I am asking this as we plan for the centennial and would love to hear from you. Please send me an email and share your thoughts: [kelleyloughrey@comcast.net](mailto:kelleyloughrey@comcast.net).

KP and I had the most intriguing conversation recently after he spoke to our COA class about the nature of a higher power. We began talking about how the retelling of the Nativity story is one way to reflect on what it means to be Unitarian Universalists and explore the mystery of spirituality. We wondered, is that what the then minister Fredrick May Elliot intended when he put the pageant together in 1918-1919? I don't know the answer to that, but here is a thought about how the pageant is more than a Christian story, a look through a UU lens...

What is an act of faith? Imagine being a Magi and you are told to join two others from different countries, different races, and different beliefs to go on a pilgrimage, across the desert, following a great star in order to see this child that has been so talked about. The stories came from shepherds, who were told by angels of this miracle in a manger. When they find the child with his young parents, they kneel down and worship this gift before them, so much more than the baby is the mystery that surrounds this sacred experience. And, even though they were summoned by the ruler Herod to go on this journey, he has threatened to destroy the child. So they must choose what to do, to keep this wonder, this baby and family safe, or obey Herod. They assess the risk and their options. They choose to create a safer place for all, so they leave their homes, risking the wrath of Herod. And they depart, another way into the countryside. What would you have done?

As we do every year, we look forward to seeing you soon and celebrating the holiday together.

## Centennial Pageant

Tuesday, December 24, 2019 — Mark your calendars!

Yes! We are fast approaching 100 years of heavenly hosts, shepherds, and kings who seek out the beloved Child under the evergreens! The pageant centennial team is asking you to share your memories and photos (especially photos) from the past 100 years. Please email documents and images to Kelley Loughrey at [kelleyloughrey@comcast.net](mailto:kelleyloughrey@comcast.net) or drop off treasures at the Holly Avenue reception desk labeled "For Kelley: Pageant History." If you have any interest in collaborating on the centennial, please be in touch! Kelley Loughrey, 763-607-7520 (call/text).



## Holiday Boutique

Evergreen Quilters  
and Mano a Mano

Sunday, December 2 and 9

9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. • Parish Hall  
Mano a Mano will have goods for sale after the 4:30 service.

- Artisan-made knitted and woven sweaters, totes, shawls, scarves, hats, tablecloths, and more from Bolivia
- Hand-sewn and quilted table runners, wall-hangings, zippered bags, purses, ornaments, and other gift items made by Evergreen Quilters
- 100% of the proceeds from the sale will benefit the communities that these two organizations support
- Cash and checks preferred, but credit cards are also accepted

**Evergreen Quilters** is a group of church members and friends who collaborate on quilting projects and share knowledge, creativity, and skills with each other and the wider community. The group sells their hand made items and contributes the money to help homeless and hungry people in our community.

**The Mano a Mano Outreach Ministry Team** supports the work of Mano a Mano International, connecting our church community to communities in rural Bolivia. Money from the sale of items will help bring in speakers, sponsor trips to Bolivia, and help build schools, roads, and medical clinics in Bolivia.

## Mitten Tree

Our little mitten 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. All items will be distributed through Amicus.





## Holiday Service Information

### Wednesday, December 19

*Blue Holidays Service* • 6:30-7:30 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 Kathryn Jay at [kathryn@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kathryn@unityunitarian.org).

### Friday, 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@katyrtaylor.com](mailto:katy@katyrtaylor.com) or 651-363-1877.

### Sunday, December 23 • Family Sunday

*Holy Families* • Services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. only

Don't miss our Christmas Family Sunday service! The service will begin with a carol sing-a-long. Our infamous carol shout will be held during the 11:00 a.m. service. The ministers will preside, old stories will be told, and good cheer will be shared by all.

### Christmas Eve • Monday, 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](http://www.unityunitarian.org). Want to sing in a pageant choir? See the box 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 KP 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, see the box at right and contact Ruth Palmer at [ruth@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ruth@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x118.

### Sunday, December 30

*The Stories We Tell, the Stories We Forget* • 10:00 a.m.

A well-told story can change the world. But what happens to the stories which get forgotten? Hallman Ministerial Intern Kathryn Jay and worship associate Bob Lies will celebrate a famous family who escaped Bethlehem to safety, and wonder how the story changes when we remember the other families left behind to weep for their children.

## Sing with a Choir on Christmas Eve

### Children's Pageant Choir

Rehearsal: Sunday, December 16  
10:15 - 11:00 a.m. • Foote Room  
Kathleen Radspinner, director

On Christmas Eve meet at 3:15 p.m. in the Foote Room. Pageant performances are at 4:00 and 5:30.

### Adult Pageant Choir

Sunday, December 16  
10:15-11:00 a.m. • Choir Room  
Jeffrey Hess, director

On Christmas Eve meet at 3:15 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Pageant performances are at 4:00 and 5:30.

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Choir

Rehearsal: Thursday, December 20  
7:30 p.m. • Parish Hall  
Ruth Palmer, director

On Christmas Eve meet at 9:00 p.m. in the Choir Loft. Sing at the 10:00 p.m. candlelight service.

If you are planning to sing with the 10:00 p.m. candlelight choir, contact Ruth Palmer at [ruth@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ruth@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x116.

## Food Shelf Collection

*Holiday donations are needed!*

- boxed stuffing
- instant potatoes
- cranberries
- gravy
- sweet potatoes
- pumpkin pie filling
- cornbread mix
- pie crust mix
- broth
- canned vegetables

Wicker collection trunks are located at the Portland and Holly entrances and all donations support families served by the Hallie Q. Brown food shelf. Thank you!

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## Open Page Writing Session

*Wonder: Living with an Open Heart*

**Sunday, December 2 • 1:00-3:00 p.m.**

**RSVP to [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org)**

As we enter the season of lengthened nights, we reflect on the gift of wonder and how we keep it alive. Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, Open Page writing sessions are invitations to correspond with the "still, small voice within." Using stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, and provided prompts, participants reflect on the month's theme in their own words and on their own pages. No writing experience is necessary. Bring something to write with and on; the rest will be provided!

\*NOTE: this session is on a Sunday afternoon!

## Recovery from White Conditioning

Recovery from White Conditioning meets each Wednesday, from 6:00-7:00 p.m., in the Gannett Room. Regarding racism, Ta-Nehisi Coates said, "It's as if I had a problem with alcohol...That's a different conversation in that I have to confess... that there's something in me... that I will always have to cope with that... that I will always have to deal with that. The honesty that takes is profound." It is the hope of this group that the 12-Step journey encourages you to live out profound honesty and courage. Come any time, as you are.

## Racial Justice Movie Night



### Rabbit Proof Fence

**Friday, December 14 • 7:00 p.m. • Robbins Parlor**

*Join Unity Church members and friends for an ongoing film series to further our growth in the understanding and challenging of white supremacy and structural racism. Popcorn will be served and there will be time for conversation.*

At a time when it was Australian government policy to train aboriginal children as domestic workers and integrate them into white society, young Molly Craig decides to lead her little sister and cousin in a daring escape from their internment camp. The film features a fine soundtrack by Peter Gabriel.

## Fellowship Groups

**AA Groups:** Unity Church hosts **12-step programs** in partnership with local AA, Alateen, and Al Anon groups. Alateen meets Mondays, 6:00-7:00 p.m., Science Room; Al Anon meets Wednesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Science Room; Fresh Air AA meets Thursdays, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Anderson Library.

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

**Caregivers Group:** An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (December 20), noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Elders Circle:** Meets the third Tuesday of the month (December 18), 1:00-3:00 p.m., Center Room.

**Evergreen Quilters:** Second Tuesday of the month (December 11), 7:00-9:00 p.m., and fourth Saturday of the month (December 22), 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright, 651-698-2760

**Families Living with Mental Health Challenges:** A support group for families living with mental health challenges. Meets the first Saturday of each month (December 1), 9:30-11:30 a.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Kung Fu:** Saturday mornings in the Body Room, 10:00 a.m.-noon. Recommended for ages 15 and older. Contact Bryan Kujawski, [barney.kujawski@gmail.com](mailto:barney.kujawski@gmail.com)

**Living With Grief Group:** For people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (December 18), 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Men's Retirement Group:** Monday, December 3 and 17, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Tom Zell, [tomzell@me.com](mailto:tomzell@me.com)

**National Alliance on Mental Illness** support group for young adults with a mental illness meets on the first, third, and fifth Sunday of each month, 6:30-8:00 p.m., COA/OWL room.

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

**Recovery from White Conditioning:** Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m., Gannett Room. Contact: Dayna Kennedy, [daynamelissa@icloud.com](mailto:daynamelissa@icloud.com)

**Textile Arts Group:** Meets the first and third Wednesday of each month (December 5 and 19), 7:00-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc. Contact: Linda Mandeville, [lindamandeville41@gmail.com](mailto:lindamandeville41@gmail.com)

**Unity Book Club:** Second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne, [jack.hawthorne@comcast.net](mailto:jack.hawthorne@comcast.net). December 11: *The Martian* by Andy Weir

**Women In Retirement:** Meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month (December 13 and 27), 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Friedman, [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org)

**Young Adult Group** (ages 18-35, approximately) meets every other Thursday (December 13 and 22), 6:30-9:00 p.m. Contact KP Hong, [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org)

**Zen Meditation:** Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Ames Chapel. Instruction offered December 4 at 4:30 p.m. Contact KP Hong, [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org).

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY / ART TEAM

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 6:50 p.m., and an evening of rich programming beginning at 7:15 p.m. Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance.

**Dinner:** \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family. (Children under age two are free.) All meals will offer vegetarian and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies may contact [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org) to arrange for a special preparation. Email Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) for financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner.

## December 5

*Dinner: Butternut squash lasagna, greens salad, dessert*

### **Spiritual Photography: Finding Wonder in Photos**

Join Hallman Ministerial Intern Kathryn Jay in using photography to reflect on this month's theme of wonder. The session will start with a visio divina practice to help participants see more deeply, and then explore how taking pictures helps us to experience more wonder in our everyday lives. If you have a photo that represents wonder for you, please bring it with you. (On your phone is fine!)

### **Sharing the Holidays with the CLF Prison Ministry**

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) has almost 900 members who are currently incarcerated. They communicate with CLF solely through the mail which involves a lot of folding, stuffing, and addressing of envelopes! Join Unity member and CLF staff member Hannah Franco-Isaacs to send out correspondence courses to UUs in prison.

### **Your Voice in the Congregational Survey**

Come hear key insights the board gained from the congregational survey completed last May. This was the final survey on this set of Ends, since we now have a new set of Ends for the next five years. How do we view our progress on those Ends? What have the trends been over the last five years? How has the survey information influenced the work of the Board and the Executive Team? We'll answer these questions and more.

### **New Family Religious Education Orientation**

Led by Director of Religious Education, KP Hong, this session is for families new to Unity Church who would like to learn more about religious education.

### **Textile Arts**

This group meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 7:15-8:30 p.m and is open to textile creatives of all ages. Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc. Contact: Linda Mandeville at [lindamandeville41@gmail.com](mailto:lindamandeville41@gmail.com).

### **Yoga for Healing**

Use gentle movement to activate and explore some of the 108 sacred sites within the body, called marma points (marmani). Marmani are similar to acupressure points, as activating them provides a healing connection to all of our internal systems. All are welcome. Please bring a yoga mat if you have one, a few will be available for loan. Chair yoga is always an option. Those unable to attend this class may contact Elen to learn about individual sessions: [elen@elenbahr.com](mailto:elen@elenbahr.com).

### **Learn and Play Go**

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.

### **Tween Party (Grades 5-7)**

During the final Wellspring Wednesday of the year, the Tweens are going to party! Meet in the Center Room at 6:00 p.m. for dinner, then enjoy games, activities, surprises, and *so much fun!*

## DECEMBER

### Parish Hall Artist

#### Lithography by Kurt Seaberg

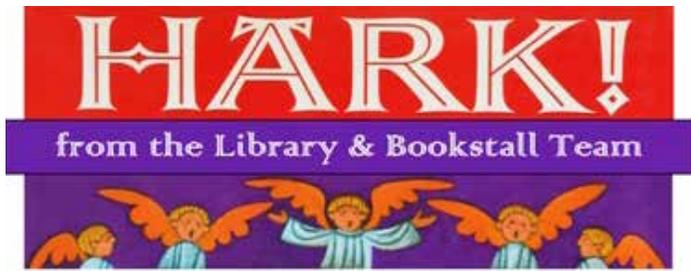
Kurt Seaberg loves the way the texture of the stone preserves the liveliness and spontaneity of the drawing, as well as the numerous possibilities the medium of lithography offers to further transform and manipulate the drawn image. Kurt writes, "Being a printed form, it makes my art and what I am trying to communicate more available to others. One of the tasks of the artist is to remind us where our strength and power lies in beauty, community, and a sense of place. Nature has always been a theme and source of inspiration in my work, in particular the spiritual qualities that I find there. My hope is that my art will evoke the same feelings that arise in me when I contemplate the mystery of being alive in a living world: humility, gratitude, and a sense of wonder before what I believe is truly sacred."

## Art Share

The space by the "coffee window" in the Parish Hall is where you can get acquainted with another member of Unity Church. There, you'll find art, a statement about the art and a photo of the person who's sharing the art. Art Share's goal is to encourage members of the congregation to know each other better and to enrich the focus on art at Unity Church.

Choose your favorite piece of art: your creation, your child's creation, or something you love. Sign up on the calendar by the "coffee window." A member of the Art Team will contact you with details. Your piece will be displayed for two Sundays along with your statement of why it's a meaningful piece and your photo. Questions? Please contact Marty Rossmann at [rossm001@umn.edu](mailto:rossm001@umn.edu).

# LIBRARY AND BOOKSTALL / THRESHOLDS



## 'Tis the Season of Cairns and a New Parker Palmer Book

From Shelley Butler, Library and Bookstall Team

Breaking News: *Cairns: The Unity Church Journal of the Arts* turns ten! People often say, "*Cairns* just gets better and better every year," as a form of high praise, but I never quite know how to respond. It's always been good, and each issue contains words and images worthy of your time and attention, and Vol. 10, coming out this month, is no exception. If you have missed a year or two, find all volumes of *Cairns* in the Bookstall and the Anderson Library.

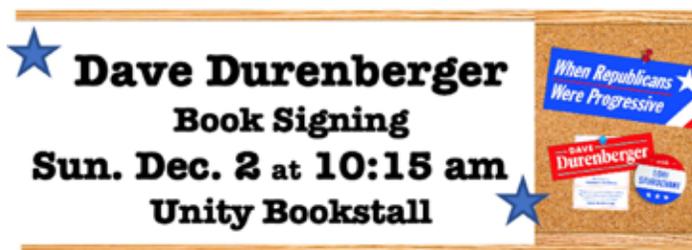
### Cairns Release Party

Sunday, December TBD, 2018

Watch for notices of an actual date.

*On the Brink of Everything: Grace, Gravity, and Getting Old* by Parker Palmer, 2018.

Parker Palmer will turn 80 next year, and who better than this beloved spiritual leader to turn to for perspective on growing old. For Palmer, writing is a way of collaborating with life. Now, as he contemplates "the arc between our own sunrise and sundown," from the vantage point of being "closer to the brink of everything," he is collaborating with aging. Grateful for all that has come before, he is also grateful for the benefits of age. And here is something you don't hear every day: "I like being old." Find this and other books by Parker Palmer in the Unity Bookstall and Anderson Library.



## 2019 Thresholds Group

Offering community, support for times of change.

*If you are in the midst of or on the brink of a major life change, the Thresholds Series is an excellent opportunity to find community support, spiritual practices, explorations in poetry and art that can uplift your soul. I recommend it to anyone encountering fear, sadness, loss or even joy upon embracing a 'threshold' to be crossed in their lives.*

— Paul Gade, 2018 Thresholder

The 2019 Thresholds series still has a few openings for the group starting mid-January. If you are crossing a threshold in your life — a change in relationship, work, home, roles, identity or abilities that feels like a turning point, chosen or not, consider participating in the 2019 program. The facilitated small group meets four times, January – March, with two more optional sessions focused on creative projects.

*I highly recommend the Thresholds group to anyone who is on the cusp of a life change and wants support to do it with as much grace as possible. It provides a safe space in which to explore the emotional impact of significant life transitions of many different kinds. I found in it a spirit of kindness and empathy, and creative activities that helped us step over our thresholds from what was, to what one is becoming. It was a chance for my soul to catch up with me before making decisions about what's next.*

— Clover Earl, 2018 Thresholder

Group size is limited and pre-registration (and a commitment to attend all four sessions) is required. The series is free to members, and \$100 for nonmembers. The group meets Saturdays, January 19, February 2 and 23, and March 9. For more information or to register, e-mail Karen Hering ([karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org)) or put a note in her church mailbox. Include your name, phone, email or street address, and a sentence or two describing the threshold you have crossed or will be crossing soon.

*I found it supportive and inspirational to be held in a group of tender people who were in their own "between time." The whole body approach — with mental, emotional, physical and spiritual modalities helped to open my heart to new possibilities. Now I'm more able to move forward — even if the path ahead is not clear.*

— Laurel Sandberg, 2018 Thresholder

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## Food for Thought (and your soul)

From Dale Howey, Sustainable Living Team

*We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.*  
— Chief Seattle

I grew up in a full house with six other siblings crammed into two tiny bedrooms. We had a very loving but stressed and stretched single mom, and we ate everything. Peas dumped into the spaghetti? No problem.

I like to think of the Earth as our single mom. She is tired and has a lot of mouths to feed. Our arms are constantly outstretched wanting all the goodies from the store, tossing the peas in the trash. Mom is not too happy with us. We need to eat the peas, too. The easiest step you can take today to combat climate change is to eat all of what you buy.

A 2014 Environmental Protection Agency study identified that Americans throw away more than 38 million tons of food per year into landfills. Another way of looking at that is that each day of the year, the United States could fill a college stadium with the food wasted that day. Approximately 43% of all food waste happens at home.

What are the costs? The United States spends 165 billion dollars per year to produce food that is never eaten, 20% of all methane emissions come from food dumped in landfills, and 25% of our freshwater is used to produce food that is wasted. Meanwhile, 43 million people in the United States live with food insecurity.

Want to do *more* about food waste? Visit <https://www.epa.gov/> for tips about how to better manage personal food consumption. Topics include reducing wasted food at home, planning tips for shopping and buying wisely, prep tips for how to process fresh fruit and veggies so they do not deteriorate, and storage tips (have a freezer and use it!). Just type any of these topics into the search bar at [EPA.gov](https://www.epa.gov/) and find loads of information.

Sometimes my cooking isn't up to snuff and my girls curl their noses up, "Dad, what is that?" "That" (non-edibles) is sometimes going to happen despite our best efforts, but there is always the composter!

Unity's Sustainable Living Team meets the third Sunday between morning services and one evening the first week of each month. Please contact Anna Newton [unitysustainabilityteam@gmail.com](mailto:unitysustainabilityteam@gmail.com) with questions.

## Gun Sense Ministry Team: Mark your 2019 calendar!

**Tuesday, January 8: Welcome legislators back to the Capitol.** Protect Minnesota will hold an event in the rotunda that afternoon. More details closer to the date.

**Wednesday, January 23: Wellspring Wednesday Workshop to make "Broken Heart Valentines."** These valentines will each feature a victim of gun violence. Work together with other Unity members to make these hand decorated messages.

**Thursday, February 14: Lobby day at the Capitol.** Meet and lobby your legislator. We will present all legislators with a Broken Heart Valentine.

## Prepare a Meal at the Jeremiah Program

Unity Church volunteers organize a group to purchase, prepare, and serve meals for families on the evenings when Jeremiah Program moms attend life skills classes. Volunteers come in at 4:00 p.m. to cook and prepare the meal and begin serving the meal at 5:15 p.m. Volunteers are needed: 1/17/19, 3/19/19 and 4/18/19. Volunteers, including families, teenagers, and children above the age of six, are welcome! Contact Karen Buggs at [buggs745@hotmail.com](mailto:buggs745@hotmail.com) to sign up.

## 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 during 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

This collection continues 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 Kathryn Jay's office.

# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

## It's a Wonderful Life

From Drew Danielson, Coordinator of Youth and Campus Ministries



Teen aged boys hanging with their buddies don't freely admit to being overcome by wonder. More typically, they are apt to express profound boredom with anything anyone else could possibly have to say, which they knew you were going to say, and everyone knows all about that anyway. This is of course not just teen aged boys — it's girls as well, and come to think of it, there doesn't seem to be any age group that solely possesses this attitude. Still, no one expresses it quite as vehemently or as well as those boys!

"Dad — we know! And it's stupid anyway!"

KP spoke with COA youth and their mentors in mid-November, about how we civilized humans tend to pull back and make our worlds smaller as we mature. As we encounter new and rare things that challenge our world views and our self-concept, we withdraw — first into our self-aware minds, and then into our more narrowly defined self-concepts (ask KP to give you the lecture, it's fantastic and I can't retell it and I probably understood it wrong anyway). The world gets more confusing so we try to limit new questions or ideas. Our own aging, and increasingly more complex encounters shake up our bodies, our hearts, and our established ways of understanding. Soon without knowing it, we've retreated into a hard little nut of who we believe we are. Even as the wondrous and inexplicable dance right before our eyes, we hastily turn them away.

And we would all just do this in the name of self-preservation, if we didn't every once in a while come up against something that breaks open that shell and makes our hearts grow three sizes that day!

There it is, because of course what I think of in all of this, is about Christmas, and the Grinch.

KP's story didn't leave us all destined to be Grinches. Because it is also possible, and actually common, for humans to somehow, suddenly or over a long time, happily or with great pain, flow out of their narrow and withdrawn state and to take on a world and an understanding that is so much bigger! That embraces so much and so many. With a heart that is big and vulnerable, and yes, fully open to wonder.

It came without boxes, it came without bows! It doesn't come from a store — somehow it means so much more. It will come as long as we are WE and as long as we have hands to grasp! Cue the bells and the egg nog and lots and lots of joyful singing!

As I'm thinking about Tower Club, I'm imagining those boys looking at me as I say all this, with perhaps wonder in their eyes, probably with something else as well. A cluster of green furry creatures, clutching their smart phones, cackling cynically. But I do want them, and all of us, to learn to feel that wash of excitement and joy, filled with unabashed wonder at how the gifts of love and compassion and care and concern and openness and acceptance really do create a magic and wonder-full world.

It is Holy. Don't look away.

## December Religious Education Calendar

Sunday, December 2: Regular RE; Cookies & Wreath sale

Wednesday, December 5: New Family Orientation, 7:15 p.m.; final meeting of Tweens (party!) and Wellspring Wednesday until January 9

Sunday, December 9: Regular RE; Cookies & Wreath sale; Celebration of New Lives ceremony (9:00 a.m. service, if you plan to participate, RSVP required to [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org))

Wednesday, December 12: Santa Pause holiday childcare 5:30-8:00 p.m. (for ages 3 and older, RSVP required to [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org))

Sunday, December 16: Regular RE; no COA

Sunday, December 23: Family Sunday: Christmas (all children worship in Sanctuary, nursery care available)

Monday, December 24: Christmas Eve services: Finding a Stillness 10:00 a.m.; Children's Pageants 4:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.; Family Lessons and Carols 7:00 p.m.; Candlelight Service 10:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 30: No RE Classes (one service 10:00 a.m.); activities for school-age kids, nursery care available

## Tween Party (grades 5-7)

**Wednesday, December 5**

**6:00-8:30 p.m. • Center Room**

During the final Wellspring Wednesday of the year, the Tweens are going to party!! The group will eat together at 6:00 p.m., then enjoy games, activities, surprises and so *much fun!!!*

Tweens is led by Ray Hommeyer, contact them with questions at [ray@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ray@unityunitarian.org).

## Santa Pause

**Wednesday, December 12 • 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](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org).

# MUSIC MINISTRY



## Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries

*After winter's meditation gates of nature burst apart;  
Comes the springtime's inspiration, flowing from the ready heart.*

— Charles Anthony Silvestri

I've missed being in the balcony! After five months of renovation work on our Noack organ, I've recently been able to again claim my usual perch in the organ loft. Here, I see from a different perspective, all the meeting and greeting, together and seeking, familiar and new found friendships... all held in the embrace of our sanctuary. It is, for me, a continual sense of wonder to see the threads of so many lives come together, share, entangle, then separate again, hopefully richer from the being together. That is very much the conceptual journey of music, all that entwining of different sounds, separating out of the unique lines and blending it all into its enriched wholeness. As the choirs prepare for our Holiday Concert on December 15, it is with deep gratitude that I see the way they blend, not only the sound of music, but their lives in order to create an evening of joy, beauty and, yes, gathering in that wonder that is community. We hope you will join with us to add your warmth to this evening of family weaving and community embrace. Come celebrate with us!

I am forever indebted to the generous spirits that have contributed their gift of singing, their heartfelt gifts of self throughout these many years. You are each a gift to me and so many in this community... always singing from your "ready heart."

**HOLIDAY CONCERT**  
**Saturday, December 15 • Unity Church**

**6:30 PM.: CAROL SING**  
Led by Jeffrey Hess and Mindy Eschedor

**7:00 PM: CONCERT**  
"All Our Hearts Rejoice"  
Children's Choir, Unity Choir, Unity Singers, Women's Ensemble,  
Steve Lewis & Elizabeth Giffin (percussion), Kathy Kraulik (piano)

**8:00 PM: DESSERT BUFFET**  
We invite you to bring a holiday dessert to share!

## 2019 Children's Musical Parent Meeting

For the past 29 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 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 on Sunday, December 9, from 10:00-11:00 a.m., in the Anderson Library. The musical is scheduled for March 7-9, 2019! Stay tuned for more information. Questions? Please contact co-producer Dave Smith at [david.smith52@yahoo.com](mailto:david.smith52@yahoo.com).

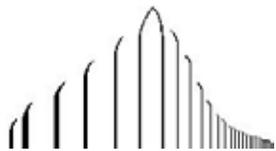
*Interested in singing with a choir at Unity Church on Christmas Eve?*

*Turn to page nine.*

*Save the Date*

## Celebrate Ruth Palmer

Mark your calendars for the evening of May 11, 2019, when we will have the opportunity to celebrate our dear Ruth Palmer and the enormous impact she has had on our musical and spiritual lives. Jake Runestad and Dale Warland have each been commissioned to write a piece in honor of Ruth as she starts her retirement. These pieces will be premiered that evening, with a reception following the concert. More information will be coming as the day approaches, but for now, save the date!



# UNITY CHURCH—UNITARIAN

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JENNIFER TONG, CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
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## THE GATHERING Unity Church Women's Retreat *Transformed by Fire — Claiming Our Strengths* Saturday, January 26, 2019 • Unity Church Keynote speaker: Rev Kate Tucker

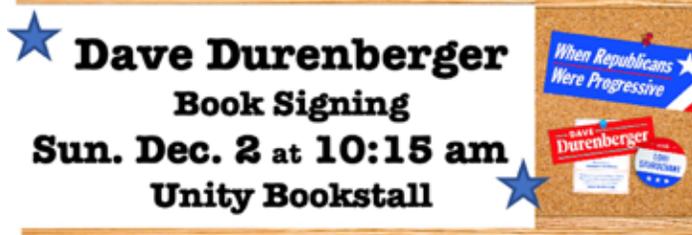
Rev. Kate Tucker is Minister Emerita of First Universalist Church, Minneapolis, where her focus was spirituality, pastoral care, and small group ministry. In retirement Kate serves as a spiritual director and takes part in a range of ministry projects. Kate has an abiding interest in the ways (as Rumi puts it) turning toward what we love saves us.

Join us for a day-long retreat — including programs, food, massage, music, and spiritual practice — as we reflect on how life transforms us and our sources of strength that keep us going.

*The world asks of us  
only the strength we have, and we give it.  
Then it asks more, and we give it.*  
— Jane Hirshfield

Recognizing that gender is not binary, this retreat is open to all individuals who self-identify as female. Registration begins Sunday, January 6. Watch for details on the Unity Church website and in the Parish Hall on Sundays.

★ **Dave Durenberger**  
**Book Signing**  
**Sun. Dec. 2 at 10:15 am**  
**Unity Bookstall** ★



## Cairns Vol. 10

THE UNITY CHURCH JOURNAL OF THE ARTS

**RELEASE PARTY THIS MONTH!**  
**WATCH FOR NOTICES OF THE DATE!**



## December Holidays Worship and Events

*Turn to pages 8-9.*

