

## Compassion

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 faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community.

*If you cannot sing like angels, if you cannot speak before thousands,  
you can give from deep within you. You can change the world with your love.*

— "Love Will Guide Us" by Sally Rogers

When Shakyamuni sat himself down underneath a Bodhi tree to discover the root of suffering, he likely did not anticipate that single insight would develop into a world-wide religion. Nor did he anticipate that December 8 would be a day celebrating that insight. In the United States, Buddha's Enlightenment Day is not given much attention, getting lost in the Christian celebrations of Advent, Christmas Eve and Christmas, and other celebrations such as Hannukah and Solstice. Yet, it was Buddha's insight, that all life is suffering and that compassion arises as a desire to want others to be free from suffering — is one of the most important themes for December — the beginning of the "holiday season."

From a Buddhist perspective, compassion has more than one meaning. *Metta* expresses the desire to extend friendliness and goodwill to all people. *Kuruna* is also a form of compassion and kindness, but it is much more challenging to put into action. *Kuruna* is engaging with another's suffering. *Karuna* is having the insight to withstand the zone of immense human suffering. It is having the wisdom of those who rise above heartbreak, yet not get caught up in despair.

This month of December is a complicated time of year. It's a time when we may desire to be more generous, giving to causes that

we don't pay as much attention to throughout the year. We may see this as a month to practice compassion for all beings — including ourselves! At the same time, many of us may also feel less "comfort and joy" as we contemplate the enormous suffering in our world right now. The horrors we are witnessing in Israel and Palestine, the ongoing invasion of Ukraine, the political chaos and anarchy of Haiti, and over 100 million refugees fleeing from poverty and violence around the world. How to feel compassion for people we don't know and may never meet? Is there a difference between empathy, sympathy and compassion?

The Buddha understood the well of suffering as the first Noble Truth. Imagine then, suffering as a person who has fallen into the bottom of a deep well. Sympathy is like standing above the well and feeling sorrow for the person who has fallen into it. Empathy is sympathy but takes it one step further. Empathy would be like rappelling down the well and sitting with the person, providing comfort and care. Compassion is both feeling sympathy and empathy but also points to the way out of the well. It says, "Let's practice this together, until we both are free." It is becoming what Henri Nouwen called "a wounded healer." Nouwen acknowledges that our healed wounds can also help others heal. Buddhism

takes this dictum one step farther, to feel compassion and to practice in a way that can redeem pain, because there can be no *karuna* without acknowledging another's suffering.

There is an oft-quoted saying, "Be kind, everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle." Although the authorship is unknown, the sentiment is a good one for us to remember, especially when the light grows less, the cold begins, and our ability to feel *karuna* for our fellow human beings grows thin. This month, have compassion for yourself, for what you need and — have compassion for the person next to you — whether in the store or the pew. Practice breathing in suffering, breathing out love. It is in this way which we can — as the hymn goes — "change the world with our love."

*Written by Rev. Kathleen Rolenz  
with contributions from  
Rev. Lara Cowtan, Drew Danielson,  
Tom Duke, Rev. KP Hong,  
Rev. Andrea La Sonde Anastos,  
Nelson Moroukian, and  
Rev. Kathleen Rolenz*

### Theme Resources

For further reflection on the theme of compassion, please see this month's spiritual practice packet, available online at [unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html](http://unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html).



## Reflections on Interim Ministry

**Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Interim Senior Minister**

When is it easy to have compassion for someone? When is it hard? That's the conversation I've been having in my head lately as we enter into this month's theme. When I witness my grand twins having meltdowns over trivial things, it's easy to feel compassion for them. They're just kids! When someone hurts my feelings and feels truly remorseful, it's not difficult to feel compassion, for I know that I, too, have hurt others and have asked for forgiveness. How then, do I — do we — actually *practice* compassion? If compassion means "to suffer together" or "to suffer with" it requires something of me — of us — doesn't it?

Earlier this month, the executive team wrote and then asked staff the congregation to enact our new nut policy. It's a policy which we should have had in place some time ago, but it was recently brought to our attention when we realized how life-threatening nuts can be to those who have allergies. While we can't promise to be a nut-free building, what we did promise was to ensure that anything served at all-church events will be free of nuts *and* we'll have ingredient lists available for those who have other allergies and food sensitivities.

In a recent conversation I had with a church member, they wondered about other sensitivities. What about fragrances, such as perfumes, cologne, dryer sheets, laundry detergent that can provoke a migraine? What about those who are allergic to animal hair and pet dander? How can I make food for a potluck that considers those who are lactose-intolerant, gluten-free, vegan and prefer ingredients used to be cruelty-free? How far should we go to police people's choices?

When I think about coming to church with the hopes of being mindful of all of the above limitations, I can easily become overwhelmed. Fine! The child in me wants to say "I'll just stay home!" But when I think of particular people, I start to make different choices. Do I really need to spray myself with perfume knowing that it might trigger Sue's migraine? Would I want my friend Evin to have serious intestinal troubles because I didn't want to print out an ingredient list? If having compassion means to "suffer with," then your struggles are mine. Which means that some of the things which I love and cherish may have to change. As much as I love my mother's cranberry relish with walnuts, I won't bring it an all church potluck. So what I'm learning is not that it's an imposition — but rather — an opportunity to "walk (or roll) a mile in another shoes (or chair.)."

Throughout this interim time, I've introduced the idea of creating a congregational covenant (which is further explained in the article on this page). The congregational covenant is a way which we say to one another "because I value you — and because I value this community — I'm willing to stretch myself. I'm willing to shape my behavior in order to be in relationship with you — that is, the you that creates the "we" in community.

See you in church!

Love,  
Kathleen

## The Wheel of Life

*In Memoriam*

**Alex Guthmann**

September 23, 1988 – November 2, 2023

## Interim Ministry: Looking Ahead

**January Read: *Transforming Conflict: The Blessings of Congregational Turmoil* by Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley**

On Saturday, February 3, and Sunday, February 4, Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley will offer a workshop and sermon on the themes of her book *Transforming Conflict*. During Wellspring Wednesday that week, Rev. Rolenz will offer a program to orient members with the main themes of her book. Pick up a copy at the Bookstall or online, read it in January, and then — let's talk!



### Congregational Covenant

At the November 4, 2022, Next Steps presentation, Rev. Rolenz suggested that Unity Church could benefit from creating a congregational covenant. Also known as a covenant of healthy relations or right relations, this covenant describes the values we uphold in community and the behaviors that make for healthy relationships among members of a covenanted community.

Since then, there have been two additional workshops on creating a congregational covenant and a team to help Unity Church live into that covenant.

In January 2024, you will be asked to engage with a month-long opportunity to respond to one question: *What is one behavior you do or have observed someone else doing that builds multigenerational, multicultural and multiracial Beloved Community?* You'll be able to respond on Sunday mornings, online, and in other programmatic ways. Be thinking *now* of how you might respond to this question. More details in January!

# DECEMBER SERVICES

## Sunday Worship Services

December 3: *The Advent of Compassion*

Rev. Kathleen Rolenz | 9:00 and 11: 15 a.m.

Livestream at 9:00: [youtube.com/watch?v=LVWQht4QoqW](https://youtube.com/watch?v=LVWQht4QoqW)

This Sunday marks the beginning of Advent. One of the lesser known holidays in the United States is Bodhi Day — the day celebrating the Buddha's enlightenment. How might these two important traditions meet, greet and learn from one another? What insights might we discover about growing in wisdom and compassion, especially as we head into this holiday-heavy season?

December 10: *Who's Human? Who's Right?*

Rev. Kathleen Rolenz | 9:00 and 11: 15 a.m.

Livestream at 9:00: [youtube.com/watch?v=mprrEfl1M74](https://youtube.com/watch?v=mprrEfl1M74)

Given the recent conflict in the Middle East, as well as other conflicts around the world, there has been much talk about human rights. On the 75th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, we'll explore the meaning behind the declaration and its relevance in the midst of today's conflicts.

December 17, Family Sunday: *On the Road with a Hidden God*

Rev. Lara Cowtan | 9:00 and 11:15 a.m.

Livestream at 9:00: [youtube.com/watch?v=EreYlreO7Bw](https://youtube.com/watch?v=EreYlreO7Bw)

On this Family Sunday, we celebrate Los Posadas, a recounting of the story of the journey of Mary and Joseph to seek safe refuge. The doors that close and open on our paths may reveal hope and the holy in unexpected places. This Sunday includes our carol sing (and shout)! On Family Sundays, children experience the service together with their families in the Sanctuary. A story for all ages and activity books related to the stories and sermon help children to engage in the experience of worship. Nursery care is available.

December 24: Christmas Eve

*Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown*

Rev. Lara Cowtan | 10:00 a.m.

Sanctuary and livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=JXE1EHp3Nus](https://youtube.com/watch?v=JXE1EHp3Nus)

In this service we will celebrate the contemplative side of Christmas, with some wisdom from Charlie Brown about the complexities of the holiday season. With music by Vince Guaraldi, Schroeder and Ahmed Anzaldúa.

*Christmas Pageant*

4:00 and 5:30 p.m. | Sanctuary

This rich tradition dates to 1919, when Unity Church minister Frederick May Eliot compiled the script and music for our retelling of the Christmas story. Whether you are new to our pageant, or you have been part of it for years, we look forward to gathering together in the Sanctuary on Christmas eve.

*Service of Lessons and Carols*

9:00 p.m. | Sanctuary and livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=Sjgpg0Xz\\_6I](https://youtube.com/watch?v=Sjgpg0Xz_6I)

A time of lessons and carols, hearing the familiar Christmas story, singing, and lighting our candles against the night. Join us one and all for this special evening of memory and hope.

December 31: *The Space Between*

Rev. Lara Cowtan | 10:00 a.m.

Sanctuary and livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=A0aNGSI1KQ](https://youtube.com/watch?v=A0aNGSI1KQ)

On the eve of a new year, we'll reflect on what has come before, where we are, where we want to go, what to leave behind and what to reach for.

## Vigil for Peace: Palestine and Israel

Wednesday, December 6

5:00 - 5:45 p.m. | Ames Chapel

Rev. Lara Cowtan will lead a vigil to hold space for grief, anger, hope and healing as we struggle with the complexities of emotions about the war in Israel and Palestine. All are welcome to join this time of meditation, reflection, prayer and sharing.

## Blue Holidays Service

Thursday, December 21

6:30 p.m. | Ames Chapel

For some, the holidays accentuate the sorrow, loneliness or despair we may carry. Join Rev. Lara Cowtan and Ahmed Anzaldúa for an evening chapel service of poetry, music, meditation and sharing.

## Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 24

4:00 and 5:30 p.m. | Sanctuary

Whether you are new to our pageant, or you have been part of it for years, we look forward to gathering again in the Sanctuary on Christmas eve.

Details including registration for pageant cast and children's choir are online at [unityunitarian.org/pageant.html](https://unityunitarian.org/pageant.html). Questions? Please reach out to our director, Kelley Loughrey at [kelleyloughrey@comcast.net](mailto:kelleyloughrey@comcast.net).

## Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday worship service, please contact Suki Sun at [sunflowerselflove@gmail.com](mailto:sunflowerselflove@gmail.com).

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES



## Board of Trustees Announces Unity's Next Executive Director

**Mary Baremore, Trustee**

By now, many of you have heard about the board's selection of Laura Park as Unity's next executive director. We are excited to welcome Laura into her new role starting February 1, 2024, and thought it might be helpful for you, Unity's stakeholders, to understand the process the board undertook to advance Laura into this new role.

According to Article V of Unity's Bylaws, the board of trustees is responsible for establishing an executive leadership structure and for the recruiting and hiring of its leaders (the ministerial search team is a committee appointed by the board to conduct a search. The congregation votes on the candidate the team brings forward). Members of this leadership team report directly to the board. The leadership team at Unity currently includes Interim Senior Minister Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Minister of Faith Formation Rev. KP Hong, and Executive Director Barbara Hubbard. Rev. Kathleen will be leaving Unity next summer as part of our transition to new ministerial leadership. Barbara informed the board recently that she will be retiring from Unity, effective in March 2024.

Earlier this year the board, together with Barbara and the executive team, updated the responsibilities of the executive director. The aim was to examine the roles and functions of that position as it currently stands and to help envision and prepare for someone new in the role. Part of that examination involved the acknowledgement that Barbara has worn many hats over her years at Unity. Plans are underway for some of her responsibilities and duties to be delegated to other staff and for new staff to be hired.

While this was going on, the transitions team of the board began to consider whether to initiate a large-scale search to fill the position of executive director. Would we launch a local, regional, or even national search? What would be our time frame? We considered the current employment landscape and thought of the challenges we faced in hiring and training someone possibly unfamiliar with Unitarian Universalism, church leadership, and Unity Church especially (notably, our policy governance framework). While considering the possible challenges, we also contemplated the gifts a person with a new perspective would bring.

Barbara has offered to stay on to train and make ready the next executive director. She has been at Unity since 1998 and holds considerable institutional memory; we are grateful to her and want to take full advantage of the time and effort she has offered.

Our consideration was made more complex by Unity's current search for a new called minister. This is an important time in the church's history, and we would like the transition from our interim minister to our new settled minister to go as smoothly as possible. We realized that trying to bring in two entirely new executive leaders at the same time was going to be a daunting challenge for them, for the board, and for the congregation.

When the board learned of Laura's interest in serving Unity in this new way, it seemed right for us to pay attention. Her background, experience, and familiarity with our beloved church seemed like the right mix of skills and abilities that are needed at this time. She has deep knowledge and experience with Policy Governance, including a book published on the topic. She has the experience and commitment to living out antiracist and multicultural principles and furthering

that work in the congregation. Moreover, she has the trust of the congregation.

We also considered the needs of Unity's third member of the executive team, Rev. KP Hong. Shared leadership, as it's crafted at Unity, is covenantal and co-equal. It is three legs of a three-legged stool. KP is and will be the executive team's key building block in the smooth transition and functioning of Unity's leadership. We had to examine how we would invest in our relationship with him and respect his, as well as Kathleen's and Barbara's, judgement and input. The executive team supported Laura's application for the position wholeheartedly.

Following a formal application and interview process, Laura was selected unanimously by the board of trustees.

The board is confident Laura will be a quick study with Barbara as she learns more about the inner workings of Unity's finances, development, HR, operations, and staff supervision. Laura also has experience in some of these key areas from past employment. Barbara will introduce Laura to Unity's important contacts like our bankers, brokers, auditors, and insurance agents.

We are excited about Laura's advancement to executive leadership at Unity, while also admitting that we are wistful as we consider saying goodbye to Barbara Hubbard, who has been a servant leader of this congregation for over 25 years. Please watch for announcements at church and in publications about celebrations of beginnings and endings coming in the new year.



# MINISTERIAL SEARCH TEAM



## What's Up and What's Next?

Jennie Smith, on behalf of the Ministerial Search Team

### What's up?

Thank you to everyone who joined us for cottage meetings, Rev. Kron's visit and everyone who stopped by the Ministerial Search Team (MST) table in the Parish Hall.

We held 23 cottage meetings in October, with about 250 attendees (including those who attended more than one meeting). About 55 members of the congregation joined us for Rev. Kron's session October 28 and both services were well attended on October 29.

Also, thank you to everyone who completed the annual survey. We are reviewing the survey and cottage meeting notes and both will be valuable guides during the next stages of the search! We have also been writing the congregational record that shares an overview of Unity Church, what we are looking for in a minister, and gives an overview of our past, present and our hopes for the future. This document will be shared with potential applicants on the UUA portal on December 1. It will also be available to the congregation after potential applicants have had a chance to review it.

During his visit, Rev. Kron reminded us that we are not one story, but millions of stories. Summarizing our millions of stories into one congregational record document has been both challenging and joyful. There is so much passion for Unity Church and our ministerial search. Thank you for getting involved.

### What's next?

- Join us Saturday, December 2, for a workshop on Engaging Awareness, Disrupting Dominance. We'll practice moving from our individual wants, into how to make choices in service of the collective "we." See the details on this page.
- The 2024 MST looks forward to hosting the previous two search teams for lunch and conversation in December. We can break bread and learn from their experiences and advice. We look forward to celebrating the invaluable work they did and learning from them as we prepare for the next phase of the search.
- In January, the MST will begin reviewing applications.
- In February and March, we'll conduct interviews.
- In April, we'll hold a candidating week and the congregational vote.

### What can you do?

- Attend the December 2 workshop.
- Look for updates on our progress in the newsletter, email and bulletin board.
- Continue to reach out at our Parish Hall table or through email to [mst24@unityunitarian.org](mailto:mst24@unityunitarian.org). Just because cottage meetings and the survey are complete does not mean that we are done listening.
- Continue to tell the story of what Unity Church means to you and *listen* to the stories of others so you can expand your thinking about who we are as a church community.

"All that you touch you change. All that you change, changes you. The only lasting truth is change..." — Octavia Butler

With gratitude for your time and support during the changes behind and ahead, your 2024 MST: Angela Wilcox, Jennie Smith, Kat Sherman-Hoehn, Ray Wiedmeyer, Rebecca Flood, Rich Lau and Tara Romanov Messana.

## Engaging Awareness, Disrupting Dominance



Facilitated by Alfonso Wenker

[alfonsowenker.com](http://alfonsowenker.com)

Saturday, December 2

9:00 a.m. – Noon | Sanctuary

You've shared your hopes and dreams at cottage meetings, through the congregational survey, in emails and informally at coffee hour in Parish Hall.

This workshop represents the next step in the search process. Alfonso will guide us through deep discussions to help us in our preparations for a new minister. During the workshop we'll delve into the truths about ourselves and the congregation, in the context of the search. We'll create space for meaningful reflection on the implications of these truths, and how we can take action.

This is an opportunity to deepen into more rigorous practice of noticing how our preferences show up when we care deeply. We'll practice moving from our individual wants, into how to make choices in service of the collective "we."

# BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

## A Rare Treat: The Art and Story of Rose and Melvin Smith

Paul Rogne, Guest Writer from Unity's Art Team

In November 2023, the Unity Church Art Team featured a Parish Hall exhibit of artwork by Rose and Melvin Smith, esteemed elders in the African American artist community of the Twin Cities. It was the culmination of a journey that began in 2021 when the art team sought these artists out hoping to purchase one of their paintings. After visiting with the art team and touring Unity to see the permanent art collection, Rose and Melvin agreed to sell one of Rose's fine paintings, an image of a woman she met in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. That painting now hangs in the Center Room.

The Smiths told us they were impressed with Unity and wanted to thank our church community for its commitment to promoting the arts. Their interest and ours resulted in an exhibition of their most recent work, none of which had ever been shown.

Over the years, the artist couple has exhibited several times in New York City; their works depicting scenes and impressions of life in the history of the Rondo neighborhood are currently being featured in a Manhattan gallery. They have also exhibited in Chicago, Oklahoma, and at the Weisman Museum in Minneapolis. It has been a privilege to have them exhibit new work at Unity Church. Rose's latest is a series of canvases capturing flowers arranged in the style of the Japanese art form, *Ikebana*. Melvin's colorful collages were inspired by the classical American dance form the Jitterbug.

Why did the art team reach out to these particular artists? In addition to the quality of the work, the team looks to questions prompted by Unity's Ends Statements (2018) in considering

the criteria to use in selecting artists for this program:

- How does art relate to the creation of a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships?
- How does art help people know each other in all their fullness and create an ever-widening circle of belonging for all people?
- How does art help in the pursuit of justice, wholeness, and equity for the people of the earth and life on it?
- How can art create brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture?

If our ends statements plus Unity's mission to "transformation through a free and inclusive religious community ..." are to be taken seriously, then the art team is determined to move forward on them. What shows that movement up to this point?

Not only have we shown and continue to invite artists of greater diversity regarding ethnicity, race, gender, culture, religion, sexual identity, socioeconomic, physical ability, and neurodiversity to participate in Unity's monthly exhibitions but we have also expanded the church's permanent art collection featured throughout the building to include this diversity. There are now many more artists from our greater community represented on our walls including artists of color, LGBTQ+, Hmong, Karen, and more. In 2022, Mica Lee Anders, a Rondo neighbor and accomplished artist and educator, led a group of Unity volunteers to create an eye-catching new Foote Room mural. The shape of the overall design is familiar to



Unitarian Universalists — a chalice. In October 2023, the Parish Hall featured works created by artists incarcerated in Minnesota correctional facilities. These talented artists claim roots in a variety of ethnicities and cultures. Art From the Inside, the organization that brought them here, was able to hold a successful fundraiser at Unity, and was the recipient of a Sunday offering — another example of how the art team strives to act on our ends.

We know there is much more to do, but it is exciting and rewarding work. The art team urges everyone at Unity Church to be curious. Take a moment to look at the artwork as you wander through the hallways or gather for a meeting. Chances are you are seeing art that represents the concerns, ideas, thoughts, and/or feelings of a member of our greater Beloved Community. That should be reason enough to take notice.



# WELCOME NEWCOMERS



## Welcome Words

**Laura Park, Director of Membership and Hospitality**

Many people who visit Unity Church for the first time are searching for a kind of compassion they have not found in other parts of their lives. The kind of compassion that recognizes and welcomes us as we are, with both our gifts and our wounds.

The kind of compassion that works to adapt across cultural and identity differences, instead of minimizing or ignoring those differences. The kind of compassion that we can offer ourselves and the people with whom we're in relationship and the world at large. This is the practice of compassion we work to develop and offer at Unity Church. A practice that is both spiritual and antiracist multicultural.

If building this practice resonates with you as a newcomer, I hope you'll spend some time exploring the opportunities Unity Church offers to build these and many other aspects of our spiritual and antiracist multicultural faith lives: within us as individuals, among us as we build congregational community together, and beyond the walls of the church in the world. As you explore, let me know what questions I can answer about congregational life and the pathways you might explore. Contact me at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110. I look forward to getting to know you!

## Pathway to Membership Classes

The offerings below invite you to explore a deeper connection to Unity Church and the commitments and opportunities of membership. Questions? Please contact Laura Park, Director of Membership and Hospitality, [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

### Finding Yourself at Unity: For Visitors and Inquirers

**Sundays 10:15 a.m. | Drop-ins welcome; childcare in the nursery.**

**Gannett Room or online via Zoom: [bit.ly/fyonline](https://bit.ly/fyonline)**

Attend the sessions in any order, which include Unitarian Universalist History; Faith Formation for Children, Youth, and Adults; Congregational and Pastoral Care; Q & A with a Minister; Worship & the Liturgical Year; Social Justice & Community Outreach; Membership 101 & Congregational Life, and a Building Tour. Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time. This month's offerings:

December 3: Building Tour

December 10: Worship and the Liturgical Year

December 17: Unitarian Universalist History

December 24 and 31: No session

### Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

**Tuesday, January 9, 2024 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

*Develop personal practice to help you find and keep your balance.*

*Develop the skills of intimacy that let you go deep quickly with strangers.*

*Take the compassion that rises from doing the first two and use it to bless the world.*

This is how Unity Church talks about its expectations of membership. Does the invitation into this ongoing work resonate with you? This session, for people ready to become members, explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's need meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church. Let Laura Park know you're interested in participating or to ask questions. She can also arrange a private signing ceremony.

## Bond of Fellowship

*As those who believe in religion,  
As those who lieve 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



**commUNITY** is the monthly newsletter of Unity Church. 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/year.

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## Wellspring Wednesday

Wellspring Wednesday gathers a multigenerational church community to nourish right and holy relationship among us and deepen our life of faith, grounded in spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural work. Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. in Parish Hall, a short chapel service begins at 6:40 p.m. in Ames Chapel, and programs begin at 7:10 p.m. Childcare is available.

The cost for dinner is \$8/adults, \$4/child (ages 5-12), \$2/child (ages 2-4), and \$20/family. If you need financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner, or if you plan to join us and need a special dietary preparation (vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free options are available), email Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).

December 6

*Dinner: Chili, cornbread, mixed greens, cranberry lemon bars*

### Food Conversation: A Gift of Food

Parish Hall and online via Zoom:

[bit.ly/afefoodgifts](https://bit.ly/afefoodgifts)

For all of us who think about food during the holidays, how might that process of giving and receiving food become a spiritual practice and an act of love? Join Unity's Act for the Earth Community Outreach Ministry Team and Rev. KP Hong to explore mindful eating and gifting as we sample foods and share recipes in time for December giving. Have a favorite food gift recipe to share? Please send it to Anna at [asnewton3@gmail.com](mailto:asnewton3@gmail.com).



### Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza

In-person, Choir Room

Beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Learn basic violin posture, note reading, and more! Please email [mayraquitzia@gmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

### Religious Education New Family Orientation

In-person, Gannett Room

Are you a new or visiting family, interested in learning more about Unity's religious education programs for children and youth? We offer Religious Education New Family Orientation on the first Wednesday of every month. Email Nelson Moroukian at [nelson@unityunitarian.org](mailto:nelson@unityunitarian.org) one week in advance if you plan to attend.

Wellspring Wednesday goes on winter break from December 13-January 3.  
See you on Wednesday, January 10, 2024!

## Young Adult Potluck Social

Friday, December 1 | 6:00-8:30 p.m. | Parish Hall

Calling all young adults (ages 18-40)! Come deepen connections with others in Unity's young adult cohort. We hope you can join us! Email Lauren Gunderson at [lauren.b.gunderson@gmail.com](mailto:lauren.b.gunderson@gmail.com) if you plan to attend. Childcare is available upon request.

## Red Cross Blood Drive: Volunteers and Donors Needed



We are looking for six volunteers to check in donors and monitor the canteen during our blood drive on Monday, December 4. Available shifts are 8:30-11:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., and 1:00-3:00 p.m. If you are interested, please contact Heidi Birkholz at [heidi@unityunitarian.org](mailto:heidi@unityunitarian.org). Donation appointments are available from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter UCUstpaul.

## Wellspring Wednesday Food Prep Sessions

Wednesday, December 13 | 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 14 | 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Friday, December 15 | 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Join Heidi and Laura in the kitchen to help prep Wellspring Wednesday meals. We'll bake cookies, cook stews, assemble casseroles, and just generally enjoy time together. Please sign up online at [bit.ly/wwhosp](https://bit.ly/wwhosp) so we know you're coming. If the timeslots don't quite work for you, pick one and leave a note about the time you'll actually be there. Or just show up — there will be plenty to do!

## Lectio Divina

Wednesday, December 13 | 7:10 p.m.

Tuesday, December 26 | 7:10 p.m. | This session will feature a solstice themed poem

Lectio Divina is held online via Zoom. Register once, at any time, to attend any or all sessions: [bit.ly/Lectio2023-24](https://bit.ly/Lectio2023-24)

Participate in a centuries-old monastic practice of listening, contemplating, and responding to sacred texts; modified with poetry for Unitarian Universalist small group spiritual practice. Led by Lisa Wersal or Shelley Butler. Held at 7:10 p.m. on the second Wednesday and fourth Tuesday of each month. A different poem at each session. Questions? Contact Shelley at [library@unityunitarian.org](mailto:library@unityunitarian.org).



# HOLIDAY EVENTS

## Holiday Boutique: Evergreen Quilters & Mano a Mano

Sunday, December 3 and 10 | Parish Hall

Bolivian-made sweaters, totes, shawls, scarves, hats, tablecloths, and more from Mano a Mano. Hand-sewn and quilted table runners, wall-hangings, bags, purses, ornaments, and other gift items from Evergreen Quilters.

## Wreath and Cookie Sale

Sunday, December 3 | Parish Hall and Main Lobby

Unity's high school group will once again sell wreaths and made-from-scratch cookies to raise money to support their activities.

## Music Ministry Winter Concert

Saturday, December 9 | Sanctuary

6:30 p.m.: Carol Sing

7:00 p.m.: Concert

8:00 p.m.: Potluck Dessert Buffet: Bring a holiday dessert to share (please label desserts that contain nuts)!

## Santa Pause

Wednesday, December 13 | 5:30-8:30 p.m. | Lower Level

Sign up your child/ren for three hours of free holiday fun at church so you can finish making gifts, plan gatherings, or take a moment's pause during this full season. Crafts, games, and a movie for children ages 3 to 10 provided. RSVP by Monday, December 11: [unityunitarian.org/childcare-request-form.html](http://unityunitarian.org/childcare-request-form.html). Seeking volunteers age 12 and up. If you have questions or wish to volunteer, contact Katrina at [katrina@unityunitarian.org](mailto:katrina@unityunitarian.org).

## El Mesías

December 15-16 | Details at: [bordercrossingmn.org](http://bordercrossingmn.org)

Border Cross'ing's performances of El Mesías will be held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and Church of the Ascension. If you have not experienced this bilingual mash-up of Handel's Messiah and Ramirez's Navidad Nuestra, this is the year to do it!

## Holiday Caroling

Sunday, December 17 | 1:00 p.m. | Meet in Parish Hall

Share your sweet voices and your holiday cheer! We will meet in Parish Hall and visit various senior residences where church members live. Caroling song books will be provided. Questions? Contact Barbara Hubbard at [barbara@unityunitarian.org](mailto:barbara@unityunitarian.org).

## Sing in a Choir on Christmas Eve

Adult Pageant Choir

Sunday, December 24 | Sing during the 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. pageant performances

If you would like to sing in the adult pageant choir, please email [ahmed@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ahmed@unityunitarian.org). Rehearsal is Sunday, December 17, 10:15 a.m., Foote Room.

Candlelight Choir

Sunday, December 24 | Sing during the 9:00 p.m. service

If you would like to sing with the candlelight choir, please email [ahmed@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ahmed@unityunitarian.org). Rehearsals are Tuesday, December 19, and Thursday, December 21, 7:30-9:15 p.m., and on Christmas eve at 8:00 p.m. You are required to attend at least two of these three rehearsals to participate.

## MITTEN TREE



Our annual Mitten Tree will be waiting downstairs in Whitman Lobby (near the nursery), to be decorated with warm hats, gloves, scarves and mittens. All donated items should be new or like new. Children's items will be distributed to area families through our Obama/JJ Hill School Ministry Outreach Team.

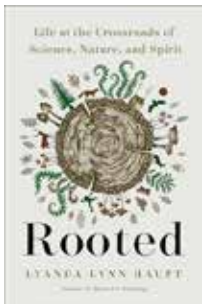
# LIBRARY-BOOKSTALL TEAM



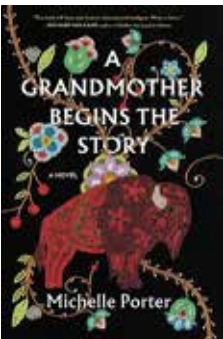
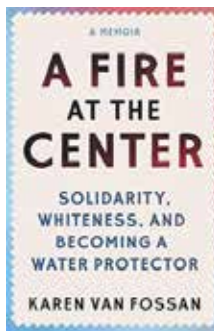
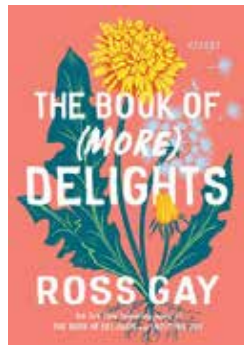
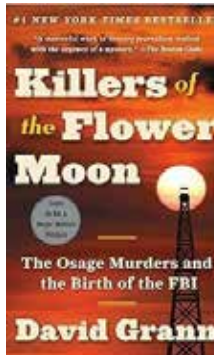
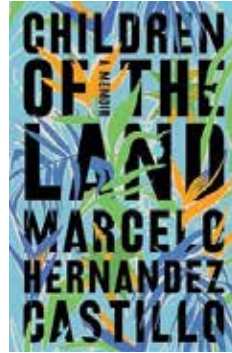
## What's all this in the Unity Bookstall?

*Something New for Everyone: Novels, Poetry, Memoir, Engrossing Nonfiction, and Delightful Essays!*

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team



The Unity Bookstall is full of dozens of new books this month: books full of wonder, which Ross Gay says become a lifeline; astonishment, which Mary Oliver says is the job of the poet; love for the world; curiosity that sparks our attention; and of becoming and un-becoming as Karen Van Fossen writes about (Karen was an intern at Unity Church). If Unity is like a small town, then I think what Gloria Steinem said is true of our Bookstall, "Bookstores are still the closest thing to a town square." Come visit the Unity Bookstall for conversation and community, and oh, don't forget to buy some books!



## Antiracism Literacy Partners

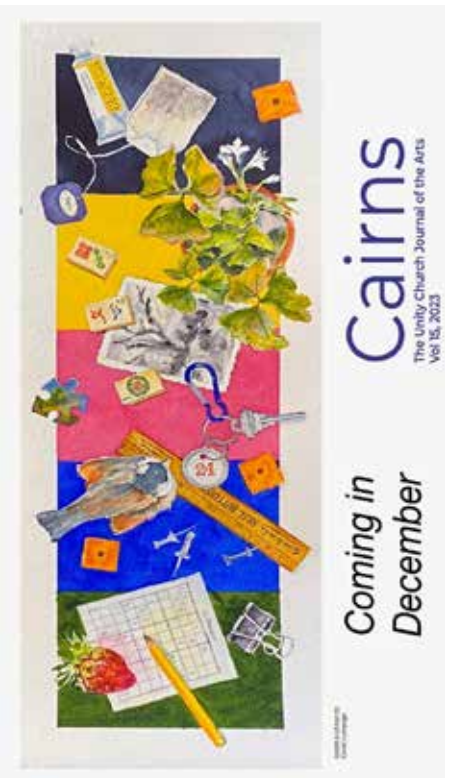


Tuesday, January 9 | 7:10 p.m.  
Online via Zoom: [bit.ly/ALPjan924](https://bit.ly/ALPjan924)

This program highlights useful books, podcasts, and videos in our ongoing practice of learning about systemic racism and the work of dismantling it. Participants report that their understanding of a resource increases exponentially when explored with a partner or a group. Come to choose a resource, sign up for a buddy or small group and make plans for your discussions. Resource/discussion guides provided.

## In The Justice Database

NewGround: A Muslim-Jewish Partnership for Change is an organization of change-makers, working to bring the vision of an America where Muslims and Jews engage in dialogue and mutual cooperation, through authentic partnerships. "Conflict is inevitable and yet not intractable." [bit.ly/JusticeData](https://bit.ly/JusticeData)



# PARISH HALL EXHIBIT / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

## December Parish Hall Artists

### Rebecca Pavlenko | Japanese Gardens

When I began studying Zen meditation, I looked for a photographic subject that would convey the same sense of peacefulness I experienced in meditation. Visiting local Japanese gardens, I found a quiet, skillfully designed natural retreat that encouraged me to slow down, be present and experience the intimacy of the present moment.

To convey the quiet gentleness of the Japanese gardens, I created Polaroid transfers; small, intimate prints that produce soft muted colors and a delicate image. On some, I added hand coloring to create a more vivid image. These matched an experience I had in meditation where everything became more colorful and vivid, as though I was seeing for the first time.

Throughout the seasons, I photographed a variety of gardens around the United States using color slide film. In the darkroom I projected the slides on to Polaroid film and transferred the images to watercolor paper. I made two of each, one of which I hand colored. The images are 4" x 5" printed on 9" x 15" paper.

Rebecca Pavlenko is a photographer, photo educator and scenic artist. She spent two years in a cabin in the woods of West Virginia, teaching herself photography and returned to graduate Summa Cum Laude from the University of Minnesota with degrees in Studio Arts and Art History. Her work is exhibited in galleries, museums, and private collections and she is the recipient of Minnesota State Arts Board and Metropolitan Regional Arts Council grants. She served as a mentor in the Women's Art Registry of Minnesota (WARM) mentor/protégé program and taught numerous photography classes and workshops. She has also worked as a scenic artist on over 100 productions for the Guthrie Theater. Her photography grows out of her love of nature, Zen practice and a joy in exploring photographic materials. She is fascinated by the psychology of the human spirit, the interconnection of all things and the symbolic lessons that are nature's gift.



### Rachel Cain | Photographer

Rachel is a photographer based in White Bear Lake, MN. Although her subject matter is varied, she is particularly interested in photographing old things and finding abstractions. She says "I seek to remind us that even in neglect and decay there lies beauty and resonance. I am intrigued by the various compositions of shape, color, and texture that are revealed in old cars, walls, dumpsters. I am particularly drawn to texture, and bring this out more in processing my shots."

This exhibit is comprised of shots of old vehicles.

Rachel participates regularly in several art shows and has exhibited locally (in Minnesota) and nationally. She is represented at several galleries, including the Friedli Gallery in St. Paul, MN; the House of HeArt in St. Paul, MN; Ripple River Gallery in Aitkin, MN; and Dock 6 in Minneapolis, MN.



## Fellowship Groups

Visit [unityunitarian.org/fellowship-groups.html](http://unityunitarian.org/fellowship-groups.html) or contact Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).

**Afterthoughts** offers time after the 9:00 service to discuss the service.

**Caregivers Group** meets on the third Thursday of the month.

**Evergreen Quilters:** This quilting group meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month.

**Families Living with Mental Health Challenges** meets the third Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

**Kung Fu** meets Saturday mornings, 9:00-10:00 a.m., online via Zoom. Email [barney.kujawski@gmail.com](mailto:barney.kujawski@gmail.com) to receive the link.

**Living With Grief Group** meets on the third Tuesday of the month.

**Men's Coffee Group** meets every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. for light-hearted conversation.

**Men's Conversation Group** meets on Zoom Monday, December 11 and 25, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Men's Retirement Circle:** Monday, December 4 and 18, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

**New Look at the Bible** meets the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

**Recovery from White Conditioning** meets Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

**Textile Arts Group** meets on the first Wednesday 1:00-2:30 p.m., and third Wednesday 7:10-8:00 p.m. of each month. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc.

**Unity Book Club** meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. December 12: *Howard's End* by E. M. Forster

**Women in Retirement** meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., in the Center Room. Social hour at noon!

**Young Adult Group** (ages 18-35) — all are welcome. Email [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org)

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Evergreen Quilters

### Holiday Boutique

**Kathie Simon Frank, Evergreen Quilters**

Evergreen Quilters are busy sewing and quilting mats and runners, zipper bags, scarves, ornaments and other beautiful colorful items for you to select from for gifts for family and friends. Every year at this time the quilters provide this special shopping experience for Unity's congregation at the Evergreen Quilters' Holiday Boutique. Visit them in Parish Hall on Sunday, December 3, and 10, after services. Checks, cash, and credit cards accepted!

This group's social justice mission is to sew and quilt to raise money that is donated to local organizations providing food and/or shelter to our neighbors in the St. Paul community. One hundred percent of the money they raise from their individual and collective creations is donated to these organizations for special projects. Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf, Jeremiah Transitional Housing Program, Project Home, and occasionally others are the recipients of Evergreen Quilters' efforts.

If you, too, would like to quilt for social justice causes, please join Evergreen Quilters. It's a welcoming "no guilt" quilt group. The quilters collaborate on quilting projects and share knowledge, creativity, and skills with each other and the wider community. People of all skill levels are welcome.

Evergreen Quilters meet nearly every month year-round on the second Tuesday evening at the church and on the fourth Saturday at various locations nearby. The next meetings are on Tuesday, December 12 (7:00-9:00 p.m.) and Saturday December 30 (10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Please join us!

## Donate to the Food Shelf

For the month of October we donated 401 pounds of food to Hallie Q. Brown — thank you! For December the food shelf seeks canned sweet potatoes, green beans, cranberry sauce, and pie filling, as well as cake, gravy, and cornbread mixes. They are also in need of paper grocery bags and financial donations to purchase turkeys and hams during the holiday season: [hallieqbrown.org](http://hallieqbrown.org).



## Save the date!

### Community Outreach Ministry Team Summit

**Saturday, January 20, 2024 | 9:30-11:30 a.m.**

This gathering is for all members of the Community Outreach Ministry Teams (COMT) to hear about how the year is going so far, to listen to your needs and concerns, to coordinate programs and to strengthen our important ministries of justice and service.

## Housing Justice Team

### Join the Work of Housing Justice

**Dayna Kennedy, Housing Justice Team**

#### Habitat for Humanity

You may know that Unity Church participates in a "summer build week" with Habitat for Humanity. You may not know that Habitat welcomes volunteers year round. If your circumstances allow you to be free one weekday, and you enjoy working with your hands or think you'd like to try, Habitat would be glad to hear from you. Unity member Dutton Foster has been a member of a year-round group, the St. Paul Regulars, which works on build sites on Thursdays. Rest assured that no experience is required; site supervisors find tasks appropriate to each volunteer's skill level. Questions? Contact Dutton at [duttonfosters@comcast.net](mailto:duttonfosters@comcast.net). Whether you want to try one day, occasional days, or regular participation with the St. Paul Regulars, you'll be welcome.

#### Project Home is bustling!

If you have questions about these opportunities, please contact Donna Franklin, Project Home shelter Manager, at [dfranklin@interfaithaction.org](mailto:dfranklin@interfaithaction.org) or Unity member Janice Gestner at [janicemgg@comcast.net](mailto:janicemgg@comcast.net).

##### 1. Holiday Dignity Shop

Bring unwrapped gifts to Provincial House for children from age 0-18 years in the \$15-\$25 range. Parents can then choose two or three gifts and wrap them. Or, you can volunteer to watch children while their parents "shop." Or be a set-up elf! Gifts accepted through December 20.

##### 2. Serving Meals

Project Home is looking for volunteers to serve meals as part of their weekend meal teams. Serving shifts are available in Saint Paul at Provincial House for lunch or dinner on Saturdays and Sundays. Sign up to volunteer or create a team of 3-6 people. Supervised older children are welcome to sign up. Details are online at [tinyurl.com/PHMealTeams2023](http://tinyurl.com/PHMealTeams2023)

##### 3. Winter Gear Adopt-A-Family

Adopt a current Project Home family and provide winter gear, such as new coats, boots, hats and gloves/mittens. (New items only.) Ready to help? Sign up at [tinyurl.com/PHWinterGear](http://tinyurl.com/PHWinterGear) to find a family to adopt.

#### Reminder: We Changed Our Name!

Our new name is the Housing Justice Team. After much reflection, our team decided "Affordable Housing Team" did not encompass the complexity and scope of our purpose. And the intersection of safe, quality, equitable housing with racial and environmental justice is profound. If you're curious about our work, please check out our monthly online meeting (the second Tuesday of each month from 4:30-5:30 p.m.). Please contact Judy Miller for the Zoom link or with questions, [jmkmam@comcast.net](mailto:jmkmam@comcast.net).

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Partner Church Team

### Summer Pilgrimage to Transylvania

Join fellow Unity members on a summer pilgrimage, led by Minister of Congregational Care Rev. Lara Cowtan, to the Unitarian homeland of Transylvania. The current itinerary includes gathering in Budapest, Hungary, on July 31, 2024, and traveling to historic sites in Hungary and Romania where the Unitarian faith was debated and defined in the Reformation Age. Pilgrims will spend six days living with families in the Unitarian village of Homoródszentpéter, with whom Unity has had a partner church relationship for almost three decades. The small village offers an intimate immersion into the minority Hungarian Unitarian culture in Romania. Pilgrims will return to Budapest on August 13 for a farewell.

The Partner Church Team will hold information sessions after services on Sunday, January 28. The sessions will cover the details of travel and cost (pilgrims will be asked to make a down payment in March and final payment in May, some scholarship aid is available). Come learn about the opportunities for spiritual growth on pilgrimage. Families and young adults to consider joining us for this special opportunity. Questions? Email the Partner Church Team [unitypartnerchurch@gmail.com](mailto:unitypartnerchurch@gmail.com).

## Obama/JJ Hill School Team

### School Support Is Underway

#### Nancy Heege, Obama/JJ Hill Team

Our work with the staff and students at JJ Hill Montessori Magnet School is underway! Unity volunteers have been working in classrooms, helping with the school's annual fun run fundraiser, and providing desserts and snacks for the teachers during conference days. School staff is very grateful for our participation! More volunteers are ready to start as soon as their background checks are approved.

As a leadership team, we realized that our team goals needed to be revised now that the Obama building has been closed for renovation. Our revised goals include:

- Enhance the learning of the JJ Hill students/future new Obama students,
- Support the faculty and staff at JJ Hill School and coordinate our efforts in communication with the parent-teacher organization,
- Provide assistance to the JJ Hill School community as it transitions and establishes itself in the Unity neighborhood, and
- Create and maintain a leadership team that recruits and supports Unity members in positive volunteer experiences with the school.

Thanks for your support!

## Offering Recipients

Each week, seventy percent of our Sunday offering is given to a community non-profit and thirty percent supports the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church. Donations are gratefully accepted online at [bit.ly/sundayoffering](https://bit.ly/sundayoffering).

**December 3: Amicus Reconnect** serves people re-entering society after incarceration. Services include support groups, family reunification, housing and employment search assistance, job-readiness training, skill development, transportation, referrals to community resources, and access to medical care and substance abuse services. Many Unity Church members, past and present, volunteer or work with Amicus. Jim Oberly, who submitted this nomination, volunteers as a mentor to an incarcerated person at Stillwater Correctional Facility.

**December 10: Northwest Passage** provides residential treatment for youth ages 12-17 using a program that blends traditional mental help interventions with arts and nature-based therapies. Its "In a New Light" program is a therapeutic nature photography initiative emphasizing experiences in nature immersion with the goal of empowering struggling youth to define themselves by their strengths rather than their weaknesses, and see themselves through the lens of their awe-inspiring accomplishments. This collection will support Northwest Passage's unique artist-in-residence program. Unity Church members Mark and Sally Foster, Sue Conner, Sherm Eagles, Ray Wiedmeyer, and Karen Abraham are among "In a New Light" supporters.

**December 17: Minnesota Multifaith Network (MnMN)** is a statewide network connecting and equipping faith and interfaith leaders and organizations working for a more just and loving Minnesota. MnMN convenes leaders across traditions and organizations to build relationships and facilitate cooperation developing opportunities and resources for interfaith involvement and learning. This collection will support shared learning and training fostering human rights through expanded interfaith commitments. Unity's Tom Duke and Mary Pickard are lead volunteers in MnMN.

**December 24: Unity's Minister's Discretionary Fund** is used to provide special help and support for persons who are struggling to meet basic needs.

**December 31: Minnesota COPE** (Creating Opportunities for Post-Secondary Enrollment) program is a community outreach organization whose mission is to assist underrepresented scholars in identifying educational opportunities, key resources, and financial support assistance necessary to realize their academic, personal and professional career goals. COPE offers ACT/SAT prep classes and trade school/college tours to help talented youth shape their perceptions of themselves in today's ever-changing workforce. Unity Church is a community COPE partner.

# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH



## Practicing Compassion

**Nelson Moroukian**  
Coordinator of Children and Family Ministries

As Unitarian Universalists we are broad and welcoming in our search for wisdom that can inform and deepen our own spiritual practice. Many of the world's religions hold compassion as a trait of the enlightened — a practice that cannot be achieved without a deep commitment to understanding theological grounding and spiritual practice.

The Bible tells us that Jesus held a deep compassion for all fellow humanity, a trait inspired by a deep relationship to God. Buddhist theology teaches us that compassion (*Karuna*) is one of the central four Brahma Viharas, those qualities which we are eternally striving to expand. The 14th Dalai Lama tells us that "Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive." In the Qur'an, Allah can be seen as a source of compassion that gives each of us the ability to practice compassion in our relationships. In each of these traditions, compassion is seen as a trait that expands beyond our selves, and at times, beyond humanity. These traditions, as well as many others around the world, place compassion as central to the goals of religious practice. The theology of different world religions gives us important insight into the gift and the challenge of practicing compassion; it does not come easily! Regardless of which tradition you look to, compassion always carries the same challenge. It asks us not only to see and acknowledge the suffering of others (sympathy or empathy), but to have a genuine, heartfelt desire to go to that place so that we might alleviate the suffering we witness.

An important concept in Buddhist practice is the *no-self*. The *no-self* is the self or ego, expanded to encompass all living things. Like many Buddhist concepts, understanding it and living it takes practice. This practice of *no-self* brings compassion into grasp: if I am connected to all life, I will desire that all life be free from suffering. Our Unitarian Universalist principles tell us something very similar — to carry respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. While it is easy to intellectually understand, it's much harder to step into a place beyond our scientific understanding of *interconnectedness* and feel for the thread that connects us to the flow of life around us. To step into our *no-self* requires us to let go of some things, so that we might pick up something new along the way. Compassion builds in this place.

When we go downstairs each Sunday for religious education, we are learning and practicing what it means to be in covenantal relationship to one another as we ask big questions. We are asking kids of all ages to step into a place of wonder, where answers are not the end goal. Watching kids move through this space that gives them permission to wonder and ask without worry, it becomes clear that they already know much of what world religion describes compassion to be. An instinct to help a friend through a problem, to solve a dilemma together as a group, or to alert a teacher to a classmate's unaddressed needs, the instinct for compassion abounds. It's not always easy, and it doesn't always play out the same way, but the instinct is there; and we are committed to learning together when we make mistakes. Much of the way we do *church* with children and youth goes beyond language or lesson plans. The way that teachers hold space and lift our children's voices creates an avenue for kids to do what we call *church* in their own, unique way. We strive to build from the place of their natural, human instinct towards compassion. When we are committed to creating these spaces, kids can begin to practice stepping outside of their *self* — a space where we can practice building and honing this essential thing we call compassion.

## Unity Church Youth Musical

For youth in grades 6, 7, and 8

Ready to reveal your fun socks?  
Wondering what Cluck the Chicken  
is up to? Join the fun!

The musical is a unique production created each year for Unity by Mary Blouin Auffert and Sandy Waterman.

All junior high kids (grades 6, 7 and 8) are invited, and everyone who auditions will get a part in the play.

### Auditions

Sunday, January 7, at 1:30 p.m. at  
Unity Church, Foote Room

### Parent/Guardian Meeting

Required parent meeting will be held during the auditions on Sunday, January 7, 2024, at 1:30 p.m., at Unity Church. Meet with the co-producers, learn more about the production, and sign up to volunteer.

### Important Dates

**Rehearsals** begin January 9, 2024, and are held Sundays, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., and Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m. at Unity Church.

**Tech week** is March 4-March 6.

**Performances** are March 7, 8, and 9.

Optional informational meetings will be held on Sunday, December 3, at 10:15 a.m. and Wednesday, December 6, at 7:15 p.m., in the science room for anyone who would like to learn about the musical.

Volunteers from the Unity Church community, ages 6th grade to adult are welcome to help with the crew, staging, costumes, technical help, marketing and programming. For high schoolers, this can count towards service hours.

Questions? Ask a co-producer!  
Contact Gabby Mead at  
[gabrielledmead@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielledmead@gmail.com) or  
Theresa Nelson at  
[theresanelson820@gmail.com](mailto:theresanelson820@gmail.com).

# MUSIC MINISTRY



## Music Notes

**Ahmed Anzaldúa**  
**Director of Music Ministries**

December is quite an overwhelming time for a church musician, and Unity Church is no exception. This year will include many of Unity's beloved holiday musical traditions, and it is a great opportunity to try your hand at singing in one of our choirs or attending a performance. Here is everything to watch out for from Unity's music ministry over

the month of December:

**December 9 is our the Music Ministry Winter Concert!** At 6:30 p.m. we will gather in the Sanctuary to sing carols together, and the performance will begin at 7:00 p.m.. After the concert there will buffet of desserts in Parish Hall for everyone to enjoy. If you would like to bring a dessert for the buffet, please make sure it is clearly marked if it contains nuts.

**December 15 and 16 are Border CrosSing's performances of El Mesías** at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and Church of the Ascension. If you have not experienced this bilingual mash-up of Handel's Messiah and Ramirez' Navidad Nuestra, this is the year to do it!

**This year on Christmas Eve we will have our Christmas Pageant.** If you wish to be a part of the pageant choir, make sure to sign up with me via email. The rehearsal for the adult choir will take place on December 17 between the two worship services. The pageants this year are on Christmas Eve at 4:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

**This year's Christmas Eve evening service is at 9:00 p.m.** and it will take the form of a lessons and carols service. The choir that sings in this service is not one of our regular choirs, but one that comes together just for this occasion. If you would like to participate in this service, please email me to sign up. Rehearsals are on December 19 and 21 from 7:30–9:15 p.m., and on Christmas Eve at 8:00 p.m. We ask that participants attend two of these three rehearsals.

I am looking forward to all of the wonderful music in store for the holiday season! (And also looking forward to the day after Christmas, when I can finally put my feet up and relax.)



## Unity Church–Unitarian Music Ministry Winter Concert

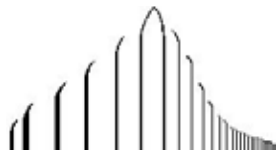
Saturday, December 9  
Sanctuary

6:30 PM  
Carol Sing

7:00 PM  
Concert

8:00 PM  
Potluck Dessert Buffet  
Bring a holiday dessert to share  
(please label desserts that contain nuts)





# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
Business Entrance: 732 Holly Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-228-1456 • fax: 651-228-0927 • [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) • [unity@unityunitarian.org](mailto:unity@unityunitarian.org)

Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation  
Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director  
Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Interim Senior Minister  
Louise Livesay-Al, Chair, Board of Trustees

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**TIME SENSITIVE  
MATERIAL**



Ministerial Search Team update — turn to page 5!


	Just one pint, saves three lives.
<b>American Red Cross Blood Drive</b> Monday, December 4	
<b>9AM - 3PM</b> Parish Hall	SIGN UP ONLINE <a href="http://www.redcrossblood.org">www.redcrossblood.org</a> Sponsor Code: UCUpstpaul



Photos & Credits by  
Carrin Ingemann

**Coming in  
December**

**Cairns**  
The Unity Church Journal of the Arts  
Vol 15, 2023



The Lectio Divina session on  
December 26 will feature a solstice  
themed poem. See page 8 for details.