

## God

*The life of a congregation is a rich community tapestry of people, programs, ministries and worship. We lift up the patterns of this tapestry at Unity Church with the threads of monthly themes woven through our worship and programming. These themes deepen our understanding of our own faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community. We explore each theme in worship and in our newsletter; in covenant groups, guided writing sessions and Wednesday evening programming; and in our community outreach ministries, our literary journal and programs, and many other opportunities. The February theme is God.*

In the biblical story, Jacob is sleeping outside in the desert alone when a stranger approaches. He and this stranger—God in disguise—wrestle all night. No one wins this wrestling match. It ends in a draw. As dawn breaks, God renames the exhausted Jacob, Israel which means "the one who strives with God," and gives Jacob a blessing. However, Jacob's hip is hurt is the wrestling match. God leaves him with a permanent injury. Jacob, now known as Israel, walks with a limp for the rest of his days.

Wrestling with God carries with it great risk as well as the potential for blessing and transformation. Maybe that is why we Unitarian Universalists are sometimes hesitant to wrestle with God.

God can be a tricky topic for us. It is not a word that comes up in coffee hour conversation. This *commUNITY* will probably use the word God more often than the previous year's worth of issues combined. In some of our churches, speaking "God" during worship can cause tension and conflict. We hesitate to say God, not wanting to cause discomfort to ourselves or others, not wanting others to assume that we believe in the God that so often appears in our culture, the God that is invoked to justify hatred, oppression, and discrimination.

When Unitarian Universalist minister Forrest Church, who served All Souls Church in New York City, encountered people who said, "I don't believe in God," he always responded, "tell me about the God you don't believe in. I probably don't believe in that God either." When we do believe in God, it is not the old bearded man on a cloud. Our God is harder to describe than that.

Somehow, music makes the wrestling easier. We regularly sing about God. Maybe music turns our wrestling into dancing. In January, we sang that "sisters and brothers anointed by God may then create peace" in the hymn *We'll Build a Land*. We sang of the "God of our weary years, God of our silent tears" in *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. Every week at the Wellspring Wednesday worship service, we sing that "what we know about God is a piece of the truth."

What we know about God is a piece of the truth, a truth that comes from wrestling, lost sleep, and transformation. Some of us know that there is a God; some of us know that there isn't. Some of us take comfort in the belief that we cannot possibly know the full truth of God.

We wrestle with where God is and is not. Some of us know that God is especially present in places we hold sacred—nature, places of pilgrimage, holy sites. Some of us believe that God is everywhere, even at the SuperAmerica, the landfill, the nuclear power plant. Others see God's absence in certain parts of our world, in situations of violence, suffering, and oppression. "Can God be part of pain?" we cry out, echoing the generations before us who also wrestled with this issue.

We wrestle with how to describe the God we believe in. For some of us, traditional language obscures God; for others, using the words that others have spoken for generations is illuminating. We use analogies, symbols, and metaphors in our attempt to get a firmer grasp on God. God is love. God is a still small voice. God is a fractal. God is in relationship. God is a process. God is a friend. God is mystery. God is unknowable. God is found when we stop to think about God. God is creation and transition.

In the month ahead, and in all months ahead, may we wrestle with God. May we dance with God. May we strive with God. And may we emerge transformed.

— Rachel Lonberg  
Hallman Ministerial Intern

### God Resources

#### BOOKS

**Old Turtle** by Douglas Wood is a children's book in which animals, rocks, water, and trees argue about the nature of God.

**For Lovers of God Everywhere: Poems of the Christian Mystics** edited by Roger Housden is a collection of poems from the Christian mystical tradition, spanning the Eastern and Western church and ancient and contemporary sources.

**I and Thou** by Martin Buber lays out a framework for deep and meaningful relationship between people and between people and God deeply rooted in the Talmudic tradition. The epilogue is especially recommended.

#### MUSIC

**A Love Supreme**, by John Coltrane, is an album-long, beautiful, complex hymn of praise.

#### MOVIES

**Oh God!**, a 1977 movie in which God appears to an assistant grocery store manager and asks him to spread a message. Hilarity ensues.

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# JUST WORDS / WHEEL OF LIFE

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## Just Words

One of the great gifts of a capital construction project is the number of stories that emerge about a building prior to change. People imagining things being different than they are—or were—elicit a flood of memories from those that were here in the past. I have heard stories about the construction in 1955, 1963 and 1988. Though a religious community is more than a building, the building still houses our memories and hopes. For example, a member who grew up in the church entered Rob's office recently and remembered that his office had been the second grade classroom for a number of years. Things change to accommodate the growing and changing needs of the congregation. This capital construction project is no different.

But as tempting as it is to focus on the construction, I want to focus on the importance of memory and sharing our stories with one another. Over a third of the members here at Unity Church are relatively new. They don't have the same stories as people who have been here for many years. They have their own stories which are just as inspiring. At a recent worship associate meeting, one of the associates talked about the inspiration she experiences each time she is present to new members signing the membership book. As they sign, the new members share what it means to them to join. It is a moment of solemn power and presence. How do we share our stories with one another? How do the more recent members hear the stories of those of us who have been here a long, long time? How do longtime members benefit from the fresh inspiration provided by those who are new among us?

Psychologist James Hillman wrote that we "re-member" the story of our lives again and again, revisiting, reinterpreting and even revising old events in the light of new information. Memory and imagination intertwine with memory supplying the raw material of our experiences while imagination creates connections and conclusions about the world and who we are. When change occurs, our memory and imagination can help us. We can help one another with our stories and our experiences here at Unity Church.

In a book called *Forgetting Whose We Are*, pastoral counselor David Keck writes about religion in the context of memory loss. Religion relies on memory he says because religion attempts to narrate a coherent story of existence and offers us ways to find ourselves in that story. The memory religion relies on, though is more than what each of us remembers. It is dependent on community memory. Our community's memory is long and strong.

Keck invites us to imagine the community gradually becoming the memory of those who are losing theirs. He calls this keeping faith with memory. We are held in the community and in the world because the community and our loved ones know who we are. They remember us into the world. The community also remembers us into our deepest values: whose we are. As we embark on the churn of construction, we will need to find ways to remember one another to the best we can be, remembering what we have been and what we shall be together in the future. Without each other, we can so easily forget whose we are and what we are in the world to do. Please watch the newsletter and future emails about storytelling opportunities which will be held as we prepare for construction.

— Janne

### **Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers**

*Welcome to Unity* is geared to newcomers and those seeking to learn more about Unitarian Universalists and Unity Church. Upcoming classes will be held on Wednesday, February 8, at 7:15 p.m. and Sunday, February 19, at 12:15 p.m. Contact Julie Handberg at [julieh@unityunitarian.org](mailto:julieh@unityunitarian.org) to sign up for these classes.

## The Wheel of Life

### In Celebration

**Andrew Tenney Adams**

Born one more redeemer

January 8, 2012

to parents

Alexcia and Paul Adams

**Harold Clayton Kujawski**

Born one more redeemer

January 12, 2012

to parents

Amy and Bryan Kujawski

## From the Church Office

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, February 20, in honor of Presidents Day.

**commUNITY** is the newsletter of Unity Church—Unitarian. It is published monthly, except the month of July. Deadlines are the 14th of each month. Subscriptions are free to those who make pledges to Unity Church and are available to others for \$30 per year.

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# FEBRUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION

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## Sunday Worship Calendar

Sunday worship services are held at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. except where noted. Sermon podcasts and archives are available online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org).

### February 5: *God the Problem* — Rob Eller-Isaacs

The word "God" is so often abused, so often used as a bludgeon or a prod that many religious liberals refuse to use the word at all. Others find the word helpful or even essential for living a loving life. Rob and worship associate Laura Schlatter will begin our series of services on God with a service on the history and tensions which surround the concept.

### February 12: *When God Says Oops* — Janne Eller-Isaacs

In the story of Noah, God admits to making a mistake. What are the implications of the supreme deity making—and admitting to making—a mistake? Janne and worship associate Bailey Webster will explore what meaning we might find in God, the mistake maker. They will wrestle with the challenges that error and mistake-making present in every life, even divine ones.

### February 19: *The Dream of the Diaspora*

"In doing community building in the Diaspora, we must adopt the visionary attitude of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. which starts with 'I have a dream.' The dream must be big, but also realistic, speaking to the way the congregation imagines its own church in the future. It is hard work, but it will be successful if done by people who believe their work is led by God's Providence."

Our pulpit guest, the Rev. Zoltán Kopándi-Benczédi is the 2011-2012 Balázs Scholar at Starr King School for the Ministry, and is minister to congregations in Lupény-Vulkán, Déva and Vajdahunyad, Transylvania. He hopes to return at the end of his scholarship year with new insights into the connection between church life and community development, particularly work done in multicultural environments. Marg Walker will serve as Rev. Kopandi-Benczedi's worship associate.

### February 26: *When the Bush is Not Burning* — Rachel Lonberg

The holy is easy to sense in burning bushes and epiphanies. Join Hallman Ministerial Intern Rachel Lonberg and worship associate Dutton Foster as we explore how we recognize divine presence in the other 99% of our lives.

## Integrating Your Catholic Past

Saturday, February 11 • 9:00 a.m.-noon

Everyone who has made the transition from Roman Catholicism to Unitarian Universalism has a story. Join us for a morning of theological, cultural, and personal exploration of the gifts and challenges we bring with us. For more info or to volunteer, contact Ministerial Intern Jim Foti at [jim@unityunitarian.org](mailto:jim@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 ext. 212. Free childcare available by request to [christy@unityunitarian.org](mailto:christy@unityunitarian.org).

## 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 the chosen community non-profit recipient. **Please make checks payable to Unity Church.**

### February 5: Hubbs Center GED Scholarship Fund

The Ronald M. Hubbs Center is an adult education facility located in St. Paul's Frogtown-Midway communities. Students include single parents living on limited incomes, immigrants, refugees, those recently laid off or released from correctional facilities and others for whom the lack of a high school education has limited their ability to earn a living wage or pursue further education. For many students, the \$95 GED testing fee is often a hardship and an obstacle to their goals so one hundred percent of this donation will go to assisting students with the GED testing fee. Unity Church member Pam Ampferer is the GED Coordinator on staff at the Hubbs Center.

### February 12: Trans Youth Support Network (TYSN)

The Trans Youth Support Network is a partnership of youth and community members working together to support trans youth in Minnesota. The mission of TYSN is to promote racial, social and economic justice for trans youth, with the freedom to self-define gender identity and expression. They sponsor the "Youth Membership Program" that brings together transgender youth to build community and develop leadership skills. Unity member, Lex Horan, is a board member, organizer and fundraiser for the Trans Youth Support Network.

### February 19: Balazs Scholar Program

This offering supports the Balazs Scholar Program that brings a Unitarian Transylvanian minister to study in the U.S. at the Starr King School for the Ministry by providing fundraising, administrative assistance and tuition to each new scholar. This year's scholar, Rev. Zoltan Kopandi-Benczedi, will be the pulpit speaker at Unity Church services on Sunday, February 19, and will be the guest of honor at a potluck lunch and discussion sponsored by the Partner Church Ministry team on Saturday, February 18.

### February 26: Frogtown's Tree Frogs

Saint Paul's Frogtown neighborhood has fewer trees than any other neighborhood in the city, a deficit that a group of determined residents calling themselves the "Tree Frogs" are tackling. Over the winter, Tree Frogs will learn how to identify signs of Emerald Ash Borer, an insect that is threatening more of the city's trees. In April 2012, the Tree Frogs will install a "pop up" tree nursery on a vacant lot, bringing in dozens of fruit and shade trees in one day to build an instant park. Tree Frog Park will serve as an outdoor classroom for learning about trees and how to care for them. At the end of the summer, the trees will be distributed to homes throughout the neighborhood. This offering will support the purchase of trees, mulch and water to beautify Frogtown streets and homes. Unity member Patricia Ohmans is a Tree Frog.

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# MINISTERIAL INTERNS / PARISH HALL ARTIST

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## Rachel Lonberg: 2011-12 Hallman Ministerial Intern



I went to a Christian seminary. While there were many Unitarian Universalists, as well as a few Buddhists, atheists, Jews and Muslims, who attended Union Theological Seminary, the institution is Christian at its core. During my three years there, I learned

to use Christian words. This was an unconscious response to the culture on campus. What, before seminary, I would have called "the holy" or "source of love, hope and compassion," I started calling God. I could also be heard talking about grace, the Holy Spirit, and—on rare occasions—sin. Adopting this vocabulary made conversations with friends and classmates easier. Using similar vocabulary while still acknowledging our differences allowed us to delve into deep conversations about theology, experience, and meaning without getting bogged down in discussion of word choice and definitions.

Becoming comfortable with this kind of religious language was one of the most valuable things I learned in seminary. It allows me to communicate my beliefs and religious experiences to non-UU Christians and others not steeped in Unitarian Universalist jargon. This is crucial in today's world.

Melissa Harris-Perry, a Unitarian Universalist political commentator told the UUs gathered at General Assembly in 2009 that it is "...easy to simply write off faith talk as inherently divisive. But if we do this, then we cede faith to those who will use it as a weapon and we lose it as a tool in our own struggles for self, community, and justice."

How do we communicate our beliefs and our values to people who do not share our faith? How can we best join the ongoing, heated conversations about faith and values happening all around us? Choosing the "right" words will not magically make this work easy, but developing our ability to be multi-lingual is one way we can join the conversation.

*Rachel Lonberg can be reached at the Church Office by email at [rachel@unityunitarian.org](mailto:rachel@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x129.*

## Jim Foti: 2011-12 Ministerial Intern



If you didn't see me around Unity much in January, it's because I traveled to a place that greeted me with sunny skies, green grass, and blue waters – a place called Chicago.

My master of divinity program at Meadville Lombard Theological School takes me to Chicago four or five weeks a year, and most of those weeks are in January. (After the balmy start, winter did eventually assert itself.) It was a crazy-busy time for the school, with seventy-five students coming from all over the country for intensive classes, advising, workshops, worship, and general bonding. About forty of our teaching pastors (including Rob Eller-Isaacs) joined us at the beginning of the month for a three-day convocation, which focused on theology, ethics, and economics.

This January was particularly lively for Meadville, and not just because of the weather. The school celebrated its move from the University of Chicago area to its new home downtown, in space leased from the Spertus Institute, a center for Jewish learning and culture. Going from Meadville's maintenance-deferred buildings in Hyde Park to a sleek 2007 building overlooking Lake Michigan was quite a switch – one I heartily welcomed. Meadville's old site had its charms, but the new location has up-to-date classrooms (digital projectors! functioning climate control! three-pronged outlets!), and the whole staff and the Chicago faculty's offices are now under one roof.

I'm very grateful to the generous people who put Meadville on firmer financial footing and made the move possible. Locating a Unitarian Universalist seminary in a green, architecturally daring multifaith building in the center of the city helps convey that Unitarian Universalism is not only about its rich past, but also about the willingness to take chances, be changed, and believe in the future.

*Jim Foti can be reached at the Church Office by email at [jim@unityunitarian.org](mailto:jim@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x212.*

## Parish Hall Artist

Tom Blackstone, lifelong Unitarian and native of Omaha, Nebraska, began drawing as soon as he could pick up a pencil, and he has never stopped. He is self-taught. Acrylic, felt pen, and a unique style of wallpaper collage are his favorite media. When asked what inspires him or what his creative process is, he quickly responds, "It just comes out of my head." He has had several shows in Omaha. The pieces on display represent five decades of work. Tom would be delighted to be at Unity Church to meet everyone but Parkinsons keeps him from traveling. John F. Blackstone, his brother, and Linda Kjerland are excited to bring you these colorful and engaging works of art.

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# HERITAGE WEEK / UNITY LIBRARIES & BOOKSTALL

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## February 11 -18 is Heritage Week at Unity Church!

During Heritage Week members and friends of Unity church will explore and celebrate our Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist religious heritage.

*Activities include:*

**Sources Suppers!** Participate in a meal ritual that connects us to our Unitarian Universalist past and inspires us as we move forward. These dinners, which include retelling and discussing six important stories from our history will be held at church on Saturday, February 11, and in homes on February 12 and 18. See details below.

**Sermons!** Listen to sermons about our heritage by Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and Rev. Zoltán Kopáncsi-Benczédi, a Transylvanian Unitarian minister who is currently the Balázs scholar at Starr King School for the Ministry. See page 3 for details.

**Workshop!** If you grew up in the Catholic tradition you are invited to explore the gifts and challenges of that experience at "Integrating Your Catholic Past" on February 11 from 9:00 a.m.-noon. Details are on page 3.

**Presentation!** There will be special Wellspring Wednesday program on the queens who influenced the early Unitarian movement in Transylvania by Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons, Minister at First Unitarian Society in Minneapolis at Wellspring Wednesday.

**Potluck and Conversation!** Balázs Scholar weekend features a potluck and conversation on February 18. See below for details.

Look for more details on all these events at upcoming editions of *This Week at Unity*.

## Attend a Sources Supper

The Sources Supper ritual aims to create a deep connection with our Unitarian Universalist heritage via storytelling and conversation around a common meal. The stories are about four founding events in UU history plus two key turning points in later history. The conversations are based on questions following each story. An informal meal takes place in the middle. The whole event, including gathering, ritual, and dinner takes about 3.5 hours. The ritual, which follows an easy-to-use script, works with adults and youth of 12 years and older. **We are glad to report that the children's version is now ready for piloting this winter and spring.**

Sign up in the Parish Hall on Sundays after services or by contacting the Church Office by phone at 651-228-1456 or by email at [unity@unityunitarian.org](mailto:unity@unityunitarian.org) The Saturday, February 11, ritual at church will begin at 5:00 p.m. and end by 8:30 p.m., with child care provided. The in-home rituals on Sunday, February 12, and Saturday, February 18, will be from 6:00-9:30 p.m.

To read about the origins of the Sources Supper and the key events covered, go to [www.SourcesSupper.org](http://www.SourcesSupper.org). You can look at a copy of the script on this website.

## Balázs Scholar Weekend at Unity Church: February 18-19

The Rev. Zoltán (Zoli) Kopáncsi-Benczédi is the 2011-12 Balázs Scholar at Starr King School for the Ministry, and is minister to congregations in Lupény-Vulkán, Déva and Vajdahunyad, Transylvania. Zoli will participate in services on Sunday, February 19.

Everyone is encouraged to attend a potluck lunch on Saturday, February 18, to meet Zoli and hear him talk about his experiences. Members of the Duluth Unitarian Universalist congregation will also show photos and describe their visit to Transylvania in the summer of 2011.

Please bring a potluck offering and join us on Saturday at 11:30 a.m. in the Foote Room. The Partner Church Team is also encouraging participation by other area Unitarian Universalist congregations.

## What's New in the Library and Bookstall

From Louise Merriam, Library Team

### February Bookstall Theme

With Valentine's Day fast approaching, it is time to take stock of what the holiday could mean—if we just let it. Imagine Valentine's Day in a way that shows that love knows no border, no gender, no race and no religion. Throughout February the Bookstall will feature new and popular titles for adults and children sure to speak to your loving heart. We invite everyone to join us in **standing on the side of love.**

Look for the Green Dot Sale - great prices on great books in February.

### Library News

Check out the improved arrangement in the Whitman Children's Library. The library team spent several months weeding out little-used books and cataloging nearly 200 new titles!

A milestone: Unity Libraries added the 2000th title to the catalog in January. The book, which can be found in the Peace & Justice section of the Whitman Children's Library, is *Henry Hikes to Fitchburg* by D. B. Johnson. Inspired by a passage from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, the wonderfully appealing book follows two friends who have very different approaches to life.

### All-Congregation Book Read

Purchase a copy of *Devil in a Blue Dress* by Walter Mosley at the Bookstall. Copies are also available in the Anderson Library.

Discussion will be led by the Racial Justice Team at Unity Church on

- Sunday, February 5, 12:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 8, 7:10 p.m.

Panel discussion sponsored by The Friends of the St. Paul Public Library will be held on

- Thursday, February 9, 7:00 p.m., Rondo Community Library

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# BOARD OF TRUSTEES / CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

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## Board of Trustees

From Bob Peskin, chair

Alignment.

It's the word on the minds of all of us on the board of trustees, the *Unity Tomorrow* teams, and the staff of our beloved church.

Alignment is the process of reconciling two different numbers: what we have raised during the Capital Campaign, and the total cost of the *Unity Tomorrow* project. Right now, these two numbers are not the same. Our challenge, the challenge for all of us who hold Unity Church dear, is to reconcile these numbers.

Still, we can celebrate our collective achievements to date: the *Unity Tomorrow* Capital Campaign has already garnered more participants and more total dollars than any prior capital fund drive in the history of the church.

Despite this, our work is not done. The total cost of the project exceeds the amount raised thus far. While this is a fairly typical place to be at this juncture in any capital campaign, it poses a special challenge to us because of the imperative need to initiate the renovation process this spring. And although there are several discrete aspects of the renovation—infrastructure and code upgrades, kitchen and bathroom upgrades, accessibility/way-finding/unified entrance—the nature of the renovations and the inter-relatedness of each aspect requires us to treat the entire process as a single, unified project, as was approved by the congregation at last November's annual meeting.

The board of trustees is ultimately responsible for signing the contracts that will initiate the construction phase of *Unity Tomorrow*. We are carefully monitoring the alignment process: as provided for in our Policy Governance structure, we have asked the Executive Team to present us with details on financing options, so that the board may recommend the most prudent choice to the congregation for your approval moving forward.

In the coming weeks, you'll be hearing more from the capital campaign team about how each of us can do our part to assure the ultimate success of the campaign. In the meantime, I urge you to familiarize yourself with the details of the renovation plans. Stop by the table in the Parish Hall anytime after Sunday services, visit the *Unity Tomorrow* web site <http://www.unitytomorrow.org> or contact me or any member of the board of trustees.

To quote Rosie the Riveter, "We Can Do It!"



## Ongoing groups at Unity Church

Please contact the person listed for more information or contact the Church Office by phone at 651-228-1456 or by email at [unity@unityunitarian.org](mailto:unity@unityunitarian.org)

**A New Look at the Bible:** Second Thursday of the month (February 9) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

**Afterthoughts:** Sundays after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

**Caregivers Group:** An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (February 16) from Noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Evergreen Quilters:** Second Tuesday of the month (February 14) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (February 25) from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760

**Grandparent Unitots!:** A playgroup for grandparents and their grandkids. Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Contact: Ona Lentz at 651-222-8117

**Job Transition/Networking:** Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Contact Linda LaBarre, Facilitator, at [lindaleelabarre@gmail.com](mailto:lindaleelabarre@gmail.com)

**Lectio Divina or Spiritual Reading:** Sundays after the 9:00 a.m. service in the Ames Chapel.

**Living With Grief Group:** A group for people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (February 21) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Men's Retirement Group:** Monday, February 6 and 27, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

**Unitots!:** A playgroup for families with kids through preschool age. Fridays at 9:30 a.m.

**Unity Book Club:** Second Tuesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. On February 14 they will discuss *Colonel Roosevelt* by Edmund Morris. On March 13 they will discuss *Out Stealing Horses* by Per Peterson.

**Unity Bridge Club:** First Friday of the month (February 3) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209

**Unity Singles:** Watch for announcements in *This Week at Unity*. Contact: Bonnie Reiland at [bonniereiland@aol.com](mailto:bonniereiland@aol.com)

**Zen Meditation:** Find renewal and grounding in the practice of Zen meditation. Tuesdays from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Contact Ken Ford at [kford5@comcast.net](mailto:kford5@comcast.net)

**Elders' Circle: Tuesday, February 21 • 1:00-2:30 p.m.**  
The Elders' Circle is a group of church elders (self-identified) who gather monthly for fellowship, learning, and fun. Refreshments will be served. For more info, or to inquire about a ride, contact Ministerial Intern Jim Foti by e-mail at [jim@unityunitarian.org](mailto:jim@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x212.

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# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAYS / CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

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## Wellspring Wednesdays

A weeknight at church including dinner, worship, and learning. All are welcome.

**6:00 p.m. Dinner:** \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family, and can be paid by cash or check.

**6:45 p.m. Worship service** in the Ames Chapel.

**7:10 p.m. Programs** follow worship. Childcare is available.

### February 1 • Dinner: TBA

**Homelessness Series Part 3, Help and Hope for Homeless People:** A moderated discussion about opportunities where we live, where we work, and here at Unity Church to offer help and hope and to try and end homelessness in our community.

### February 8 • Dinner: Pie night! Pot pie, salad, and pie for dessert.

**Unity Church Book Read Discussion:** Please join in discussion facilitated by the Racial Justice and Library Teams at Unity Church of Walter Mosley's, *Devil in a Blue Dress*, Unity's 2012 Book Read.

### February 15 • Dinner: TBA

**Summit Hill Laughter Club!** Join Unity Member Katy Taylor to explore the art of laughter to invite more joy, play, and wellbeing into your life! Because of the deep pranayamic breathing exercises, this form of practice is also called Laughter Yoga, but it does not include any physical asanas and can be practiced by people of all ages who are willing to be a little bit silly. Children who come with their parents are welcome. Offered one Wednesday per month upcoming dates include: March 14, April 11, and May 16.

**Film Discussion of *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1995) Rated R:** Denzel Washington, Tom Sizemore, Jennifer Beals, Don Cheadle and others star in a film directed by Carl Franklin. Franklin studied at UC Berkeley and the American Film Institute. Never afraid of difficult subject matter, he directed *One True Thing about Anna Quinlen* in 1998 as well as *High Crimes* about a deceitful and potentially murderous Marine in 2002. Come see how the book by Walter Mosley was transformed into an American popular film.

### February 22 • Dinner: Build your own baked potato!

**The Hamlet Seminars are back by popular demand!** This is a study of Act One of Shakespeare's most popular play. King Hamlet has been killed and all of Denmark is convulsed in grief. Claudius, brother to the king, marries his brother's wife and assumes the throne. Hamlet is inconsolable, heart-broken and bereft until he is visited by the Ghost, his father, who reaches back from death to tell his story. Join us for a fascinating conversation!

### February 29 • Dinner: TBA

**The Hamlet Seminars:** This is a study of Act Two of Shakespeare's most popular play. There are two, warring versions of the truth. The official version (which is a comfortable fiction) is told by King Claudius, Queen Gertrude and the kingdom over which they rule. The unofficial version is told by Hamlet and his closest companions. These two versions meet and battle to the death! Who will win? Will truth prevail or will the lie suffice? Join us and find out which is to be or not to be!

## Committed Couples Class

The path of being in a committed relationship is a demanding path full of all kinds of challenges and opportunities. The goal of the committed couple's class is to enhance relationships no matter what state they are in.

People in a committed partnership sometimes believe that their issues are unique. Often that isn't the case and as couples share, comradery and understanding increase.

The committed couple's class is intended to promote healthy and productive conversations about our relationships. Participants are often amazed at how often they laugh at themselves as other couples share the same story.

Committed Couples is a class designed to support all couples who are committed to one another. We cover issues like finances, spirituality, the impact of family of origin issues, parenting, intimacy and conflict. We share and work in small groups and as couples. Each creates a relationship vision together which serves as a foundation for the work we do. If you have questions, please contact Janne at the church office.

Led by Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs, the Committed Couples class will be held Tuesdays, March 27 through May 8 from 7:00 to 9:15 p.m. Registration is free for pledging members of Unity Church and \$110 for non-pledging friends. To register, please contact Julie Handberg by email at [julieh@unityunitarian.org](mailto:julieh@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x110.

Contact Christy Randall by email at [christy@unityunitarian.org](mailto:christy@unityunitarian.org) at the Church Office by Sunday, March 18, to request childcare.

### Wellspring Wednesday Ongoing Offerings

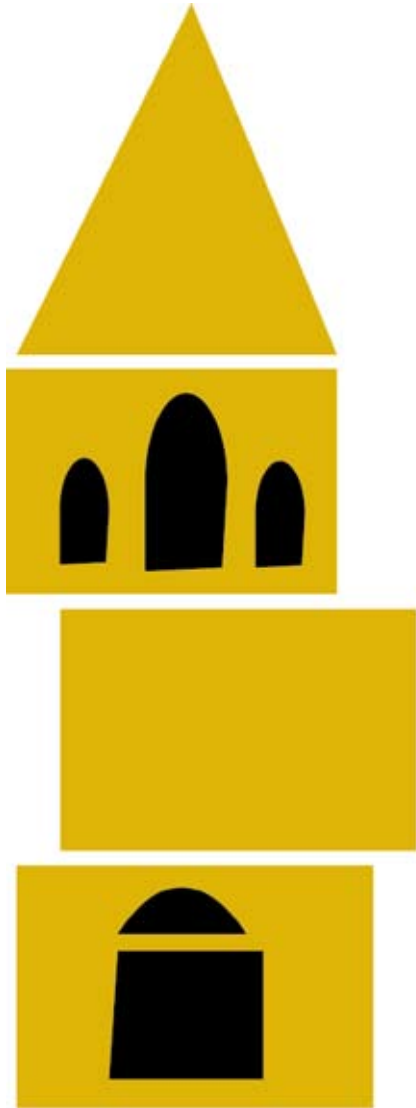
**Yoga:** Weekly, \$10 per class or \$50/6 classes

**Tween Youth Group (grades 4-8):** Weekly, all are welcome

**The Great College Search:** Third Wednesday of every month

**Drumming:** Second Wednesday of every month for kids and adults

# UNITY TOMORROW



## UNITY TOMORROW

### Congregation Review and Comment Session

Sunday, February 12  
12:30 p.m. • Foote Room

Come for an update on the *Unity Tomorrow* facilities planning process with time for learning, questions, and comments. All are welcome and childcare will be provided.

### **Unity Tomorrow: Alignment**

**From Lorelee Wederstrom, Unity's Owner Representative**

The *Unity Tomorrow* project is now in the throes of the alignment process. We received the design development cost estimate on December 22 and found it to be almost \$1.6 million over the schematic cost estimate for construction. I want to very quickly say that this is a common occurrence in projects of this size and scope; particularly with so much renovation of the existing facility, as opposed to all new construction. The design development process reveals a tremendous amount of detail—both by the design firm as well as the contractor—in further understanding current conditions and what should be remediated.

A very large portion of this price variance is due to increased costs on exterior enclosure elements—windows that need to be replaced or re-built, stone restoration, tuck-pointing and cleaning, and repairs to sections of our roof system. Another very large portion is due to utility and fixture updates, particularly in our electrical services and lighting for the building.

The *Unity Tomorrow* design teams met on January 12 to review the design development cost estimates, the variances between costs and the “value engineering” options that have, to date, been generated by the project’s delivery team (Miller Dunwiddie, McGough Construction and Unity’s Owner Representative). These value engineering options are cost reduction ideas that if identified and taken properly will have minimal impact to the final program of the project, but will reduce the cost. The final design of our mechanical systems will impact these opportunities as will the amount and type of lighting fixtures we select. The project team also hopes to reduce construction time from 12 months to 7 months, which will save significant cost if we can phase the work in such a way to minimize disruption to church activities.

Aside from the actual construction, this alignment process is probably one of the messiest times in a large capital project that is more than 65% renovation. The project delivery team will continue to explore value engineering options so that we can bring the scope and cost back to our targeted goals. This effort will also need to be brought into alignment with the capital campaign results. Results of this alignment process will be shared at the next Congregational Review Forum on Sunday, February 12.

November 2011 – January 2012	January 2012	February – May 2012	June 2012 – May 2013 (or December 2012)
Complete Design Development	Alignment Scope & Capital Dollars Available	Construction Documents	<i>Unity Tomorrow Under Construction</i>
Hazardous Material Survey		Guaranteed Maximum Price & Contract	
Interim Pricing by McGough		Permitting	
Complete Capital Campaign		Congregational Life Churn Planning	
		Groundbreaking, May 20, 2012	



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# UNITY TOMORROW

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## Capital Campaign Update

From Tom Merritt, Campaign Chair

As the *Unity Tomorrow* project has evolved, we've learned details of costs involved in transforming the church. Many people from the congregation have stepped up to make financial commitments. **In mid-January, the campaign had heard from 480 households committing \$5.4 million.** These are amazing numbers for a capital campaign at Unity Church. Campaigns take a long time, and the church has never raised such a significant amount and from so many people. All of us working on the campaign want to express our thanks to each of those you who have made a commitment.

**We still need to raise \$2.6 million to pay for the project; that's the goal now.**

We've learned that we are facing **one project indivisible**. All components of the remodeling, ranging from the infrastructure to the new entry, are so interrelated that none can be put off without negating the benefits from the other or without creating such additional engineering costs as to be entirely counterproductive. The project will be spectacular in both seen and unseen aspects. The very visible new entry will make a dramatic statement of openness to visitors. The new and enlarged bathrooms and kitchen will be quite evident to all. New reliable and efficient operating systems will provide temperature control, ventilation, and electricity — less visible but much needed to remediate our antiquated infrastructure.

**There will be significant positive changes to the Religious Education spaces** thanks to our architects, the design teams, and Kerri Meyer. Imagine a simplified, coherent religious education space with new lighting, ventilation, and a welcoming lobby at the foot of stairs coming down from the new entry gallery. This illustration depicts the new lower-level lobby looking north toward today's yellow hallway. Note the nursery area immediately to the right. The rotational classrooms will be consolidated in a coherent plan at the north end of the yellow hallway.

## Operating Pledge Drive

From Dan Huelster, Pledge Team

Usually, at this time of year, I'd be writing to say thanks for a pledge drive well done! *Talk to you in the fall about next year!* But, to say *Unity Tomorrow* has been a usual drive would be a misnomer. And, as such, I write to give you an update.

Thank you to all who have given generously, both to the Operating Pledge Drive and the Capital Campaign. We can be proud of the money raised thus far.

About the Operating Pledge Drive—the keep the lights on, the Sanctuary warm portion of *Unity Tomorrow*—of the households who have made pledges over half of us were able to increase our pledge. A quarter of us were able to maintain pledges at their current level. But there is never stasis at our church, and given the economic times, we saw nearly 15% of our households need to decrease pledges.

What is unusual this year is to be in the new fiscal year, not having heard from over 200 households. Not knowing where we stand with these pledges is throwing a wrench in the budgeting process. If you would like to speak with someone about your operating pledge please contact Executive Director Barbara Hubbard at the Church Office.

As for the Capital Campaign side of *Unity Tomorrow*, we have never raised such a sum, nor have we ever had the support of so many people. What has become apparent through the design development and alignment process of *Unity Tomorrow* is that *this project will need to be done in its entirety*. We now need to close a \$2.6 million gap to see this project to its fruition. Read Tom Merritt's article at left for more information.

We bid adieu to our sage, Chris Crosby-Schmidt, who has completed his third year on the pledge team. Chris led the team with warmth, wit and aplomb. The Pledge Team was also joined by Kit Brady and Lee Carey who came on as liaisons from the Capital Campaign. Their talents and energies made our dual drives tenable. Kudos to them.



**Religious Education Lower Level Lobby**

Rendering by Miller Dunwidde

I strongly urge every one of us to evaluate our commitment to the Capital Campaign in light of our engagement with the church and our dedication to Unity's future.

**What is your responsibility in moving us toward the \$2.6 million goal?**

[www.unitytomorrow.org](http://www.unitytomorrow.org)

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

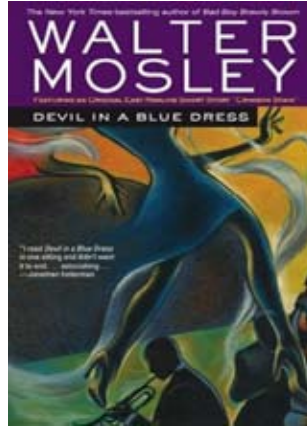
## Unity Church Book Read

Please join in discussions of Walter Mosley's *Devil in a Blue Dress*, Unity's 2012 Book Read.

Discussions are scheduled for Sunday, February 5, after the 11:00 a.m. service and during Wellspring Wednesday on February 8 at 7:10 p.m. The All-Congregation Book Read, in celebration of Black History Month, is sponsored by the Racial Justice Ministry Team and the Library Team.

You are also welcome to join The Racial Justice Ministry Team at a panel discussion of *Devil in a Blue Dress* at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 9, at the Rondo Library, located at 461 Dale St. in St. Paul. The Rondo Library Panel Discussion, sponsored by the Givens Foundation for African American Literature and the Friends of the St. Paul Library will include panelists: Nothano Zulu, Davu Seru, Ezra Hyland and Arleta Little.

Set in the post WWII Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, the mystery novel unfolds with unexpected twists and turns. The main character, "Easy," emerges from a life revolving around double shifts as an airplane factory mechanic to all the intrigue of a private detective. Copies of *Devil in a Blue Dress* are available at the Unity Bookstall in the Parish Hall.



## Unitarian Universalist Service Committee An Invitation to Youth

Bill Schulz, former Executive Director of Amnesty International USA, now President of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, writes to tell you about UUSC's Civil Rights Journey.



"Think of a young person in your life who is passionate about justice and ready to be a leader in the ongoing struggle for equality. Think of someone who would benefit from experiencing the history of the civil-rights movement, while in the company of other committed young people and adult leaders.

This trip is specially tailored to young people, ages 15-20. From July 22-29, 2012, participants will travel by bus from Atlanta, Georgia, to Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma, Alabama. In addition to visiting historic sites, participants will meet some of the courageous people who worked to desegregate schools, register new voters, and bring an end to racial discrimination in the United States. The cost for the trip is \$600 per person for youth ages 15-20 and \$900 for a limited number of adults able to serve as chaperones. The trip will be led by Rev. Hope Johnson of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Central Nassau, in Garden City, New York, and UUSC staff member Sam Jones.

Along the way, participants will also learn about the progressive, nonviolent organizing techniques used by civil-rights activists and how those techniques are still being used today – to advance rights for workers, immigrants, and LGBTQ people; to work toward economic justice through the Occupy movement; and more."

Visit <http://www.uusc.org/justworks/trip/2012/civilrightsjourney> for an application, deadline information and more details.



## NO Regrets in 2012

Mark your calendar with the **Partner Church Team Plant Sale** dates of:

Sunday March 11, 18 and 25

The plants will be available for pick-up on Palm Sunday, April 1, 2012.

Remember how beautiful they all looked last year. This year take one home for yourself.

The Partner Church Team and Unity's partner village in Homoródszentpéter will thank you!

## Evergreen Foodshelf

The third Sunday of every month is Evergreen Food Drive Sunday. Donations can be brought anytime and should be placed in the barrels located at both the Holly and Portland Avenue entrances. Suggested items for February 19: canned vegetables, and tomato sauce.

## Whole Farm Coop

Buy meat, cheese, produce and more from local, sustainable farms and pick it up at Unity Church! Order from [www.wholefarmcoop.com](http://www.wholefarmcoop.com) or call 320-732-3023 by Wednesday, February 8. Orders will be delivered to Unity Church on Wednesday, February 15.

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# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH / MUSIC MINISTRY

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## Children and Youth

### No Summer Camps

Due to summer construction, Unity Church will not offer or host summer day camps (Chalice Camp, Art Camp, Flute Fling). See you Summer 2013!

### Presidents' Day No R.E.

Due to the holiday weekend, there are no R.E. classes on Sunday, February 19. If you're in town, join us for worship – special activities are planned for children ages 4-12. Nursery care available as usual, and children are always welcome in the Sanctuary.

### Interfaith Youth Day of Service

Youth in grades 7-12!! Now is the time to contact Luke Stevens-Royer to sign up for the Interfaith Youth Day of Service on Monday, February 20 (no school that day!) Come volunteer with Twin Cities youth of all faiths and make a difference with your day off. Email [luke@unityunitarian.org](mailto:luke@unityunitarian.org) by FEBRUARY 13 if you want to participate!

### Kerri Meyer on Study Leave

Unity's Director of Religious Education is on an unpaid study leave from February 1 until May 19. Mary Blouin-Auffert is serving the congregation as Temporary Assistant D.R.E. Parents and volunteers can continue to communicate with the Religious Education department using Kerri's email and phone extension. Kerri looks forward to seeing Unity's families at Flower Communion in May!

### R.E. Registration for 2012-13

**Wednesday, April 18 • 7:10 p.m.**

**Sunday, April 22 • 1:00 p.m.**

**Tuesday, April 24 • 7:10 p.m.**

**Saturday, April 28 • 10:00 a.m.**

**Please note that R.E.'s spring break is now March 11** and we will have Sunday School on April 1. Check to see if this change affects your Sunday ministry.

# THREE

## 2012 Children's Musical

Now in its 23rd year, the Unity Church Children's Musical takes the stage for three performances on March 1, 2 and 3.

Thirteen Unity fifth and sixth graders will star in our production of the original musical **THREE**.

**THREE** takes a group of children, trapped in a snowstorm, on a musical journey in search of a lost friend. With the help of three muses, three extraordinary boxes and a magical feather pen, the children will sing and dance their way to their missing companion.

As always, the entire production from the script to the music to the choreography is brand new and all original. Written by Rene Meyer-Grimberg with music by Sandy Waterman and Mary Blouin Auffert is back as director.

The children's musical is one of the great traditions of Unity Church. Every year our talented fifth and sixth graders create an exciting and memorable experience for all of us. We encourage members and friends of all ages to come, enjoy the show and encourage our young people to take part in the arts.

Performances of **THREE** will be held in the Sanctuary on:

**Thursday, March 1 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Friday, March 2 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Saturday, March 3 at 5:30 p.m.**

Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$3 for children or \$15 for families. Tickets will be sold in the Parish Hall after services beginning February 19 as well as before the performances. Come and be amazed — by a compelling tale, great music and a cast of creative and courageous Unitarian Universalist kids.

## Concerts with a Cause

Come and hear wonderful musicians who are donating their time so that we might support an important cause that needs our help. Let their music 'blow open our hearts' as we gather this winter to enjoy the warmth of beautiful music while assisting valuable work in our community. A minimum suggested donation of \$10.00 is appreciated. However, all concerts are free and open to the public.

Please invite friends and family to hear this wonderful music. Plan to stay for the 4:30 p.m. service and soup supper to warm these winter evenings!

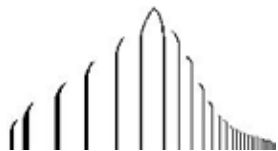
### **Sunday, February 19, at 3:00 p.m.: Waltz Your Way Through Winter**

Featuring our Unity Vocal Quartet and four-hands piano team, Kathy Kraulik and Ruth Palmer. Find your way through winter by listening to the four-hands waltzes of Johannes Brahms and his famous Liebeslieder Waltzes for Vocal Quartet and four-hands piano.

### **Sunday, March 4 at 3:00 p.m.: Piano Recital**

Featuring Catherine Kautsky, Professor of Music; Chair, Keyboard Department, Lawrence University, Appleton, WI. This amazing pianist comes to us bringing wonderful music including "De Profundis," an amazing musical dramatic work for piano.

**Proceeds from the concerts will help Unity's efforts to defeat the Minnesota Marriage Amendment in 2012. <http://www.unityunitarian.org/concerts-with-a-cause.html>**



# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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**TIME SENSITIVE  
MATERIAL**

## CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

### Integrating Your Catholic Past

Saturday, February 11  
9:00 a.m.-noon • Turn to page 3

### Call for Worship Associates

Have you ever wondered what goes into creating a worship service? Do you have interest in working with the ministers and other worship associates to craft worship?

If you are interested in knowing more about the worship associate program, please contact Janne by email at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x106.

# THREE

## 2012 Children's Musical

Performances on  
March 1, 2, and 3

Turn to page 11

### Heritage Week February 11-18

Sources Suppers



### Balazs Scholar Weekend



Balazs Scholar Rev. Zoltán Kopándi-Benczédi, his wife Ildiko and son Gustav.

Turn to page 5



### Unity Tomorrow Congregation Review and Comment Session

Sunday, February 12 • 12:30 p.m. • Foote Room

Come for an update on the *Unity Tomorrow* facilities planning process with time for learning, questions, and comments. All are welcome and childcare will be provided.

Turn to pages 8 and 9 for an update on the facilities planning process and words from the capital campaign and operating pledge team.

All of the most recent renderings, floor plans, and design development details are available online at [www.unitytomorrow.org](http://www.unitytomorrow.org)