

Prayer

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

I've always had a very specific understanding of prayer, which included these defining elements:

1. It was directed to God (and more specifically, Jesus).
2. It requested something.
3. It was done by someone worthy – like a pastor or a very devoted disciple.

It's impossible to get through a liberal seminary education and retain these narrow ideas about prayer, but it's also hard to re-create them with more openness. Prayer is something I've wrestled with for the past several years, during which time I had two pivotal experiences which helped me re-define prayer. The first was early one morning, when I found myself gazing out my kitchen window at the still-dark day, and I began to bring to mind images of hospice patients I had recently visited. I wasn't thinking fully formed thoughts about them; I was simply envisioning them and feeling where they were being held in my heart. It was a visceral, embodied experience, so removed from my head that it was only later that I realized I had been praying.

The second experience was when my daughter was just shy of turning two. Quite independently, she developed the habit of saying aloud the names of all her loved ones as part of our bedtime routine. For the first few days, I was confused. Where had this come from? What did it mean? And then I understood it as prayer, and I named it that for both of us. Ever since then, we have not had a single naptime or nighttime that hasn't begun with, "Let's

pray, Mommy." It is a joyful ritual that has nothing to do with my former preconceived notions about prayer, and I hope that by naming it *prayer* for her, she will grow up with a very different understanding of this month's theme than I did.

Based on these two experiences, I now understand the need to pray as entirely natural, entirely human, and entirely untaught. Nothing, and no one, owns prayer. As Reinhold Niebuhr put it, prayer is about "giving voice to the human predicament." He wrote, "Prayer does not change things; prayer changes people, and people change things... Prayer is not hearing voices, prayer is acquiring a voice."

And sometimes, prayer does not involve a voice at all, but rather a state of being – as when the Apostle Paul urged his readers to "pray without ceasing." This admonition is not about spending life on our knees, but is about integrating prayer into our lives and into our beings. Mother Teresa wrote, "Prayer does not demand that we interrupt our work, but that we continue working as if it were a prayer. It is not necessary to always be meditating, nor to consciously experience the sensation that we are talking to God. To love with a pure heart, to love everybody, especially to love the poor, is a twenty-four hour prayer." This requires discipline, of course. Just as dancers or musicians must practice before being able to let go of themselves and their inhibitions to create something sacred, so must we do with prayer.

One such discipline is the practice of *salah*, one of the Five Pillars of Sunni

Islam. *Salah* includes the repetition of prescribed actions and words and is practiced five times each day. While prayer is more than moving through a ritual set of actions, involving our bodies in the act may enable us to pray more readily. Parker Palmer wrote that when he was severely depressed, a therapist advised him to stand on one foot for fifteen minutes every day. When he continually fell down, his body taught him that he could get up again.

Silence is another form of prayer, one that connects us every Sunday in our worship here. If prayer is an act of communication, then half of it should be listening and so demands silence. This isn't necessarily about listening to God; it's also about learning to listen to each other in new ways, especially to people who we have been taught to imagine have nothing to say. Asking – and listening in response – is a prelude to creative imagination. As Toni Morrison writes in *Beloved*, "the only grace they could have was the grace they could imagine." Prayer is a meaningful way to cultivate humility in community; when we are humble enough to ask, we are able to generate new energy towards our efforts, and we are closer to becoming the prophetic community we strive to be.

May it be so, and Amen.

— by Mae Gibson Wall with help from
this month's theme team:

Rob Eller-Isaacs, Janne Eller-Isaacs, Pat Haff, Kerri Meyer, and Drew Danielson

Prayer Resources

Turn to page 2

Just Words

It used to surprise me that persons of color were far less than eager to talk about race. Having thought about it for almost fifty years it doesn't surprise me anymore. You see race is mostly an issue for white folks. Race is an illusion. Race doesn't actually exist. But racism does. And racism impacts the daily lives of persons of color in ways which most white people can hardly even imagine.

Conversations about race tend to devolve quickly into white people feeling guilty and covertly asking absolution for their privilege. The dynamic is reminiscent of Simon Wiesenthal's book *The Sunflower* in which he tells a challenging story. During his time as a prisoner at Auschwitz he was ordered to the death bed of a SS officer. The young officer was close to death and in agony but felt he couldn't die before he was forgiven for having taken part in a horrific mass murder. "Are you a Jew?" he asked. Wiesenthal said that he was. "Then listen to my story." At the end he asked Wiesenthal to forgive him his atrocities. Wiesenthal felt he had no right to do so. Without a word he left the room.

That young German officer had no idea who he was talking to. He saw only a Jew. Too many conversations across racial boundaries objectify and so de-humanize the participants. Though in agony that young SS officer still held all the cards; even dying he possessed a kind of freedom Wiesenthal could never know. White supremacy did not end with the victories of the 60's. It's still very much alive though it is far more difficult to see. Systemic racism has been forced underground. Open bigotry is no longer socially acceptable so those who benefit from white supremacy have made it disappear. Now we are ostensibly "colorblind" which means we are blind and often numb to the systemic disparities racism fosters.

As we move into Black History month and engage our monthly theme of "prayer" may each and all of us take time to search our hearts, confess whatever privilege we may have and commit ourselves again to be instruments of that intimate justice which theologian Paul Tillich calls "the work of love in community." Our very souls hang in the balance.

See you in church,

Rob Eller-Isaacs

Prayer Resources

Books

Beginner's Grace: Bringing Prayer into Your Life, by Kate Braestrup

When God Talks Back, by T.M. Luhrmann

Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers, by Anne Lamott

Prayers, by Theodore Parker (available as a free Google e-book)

Simply Pray: A Modern Spiritual Practice to Deepen Your Life, by Erik Walker Wikstrom

Children's Books

Miss Rumphius, by Barbara Cooney and Ellen Archer

In Every Tiny Grain of Sand, by Reeve Lindbergh

Grandad's Prayers of the Earth, by Douglas Wood and P.J. Lynch

Films

Life of Pi (currently in theaters) – A young man who survives a disaster at sea is hurtled into an epic journey of adventure and discovery, including an unexpected connection with a fearsome Bengal tiger.

Amazing Grace (2007) – The story of William Wilberforce's passion and perseverance to end the British slave trade in the late 18th century.

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Zoe Victoria Wilson

born one more redeemer

December 7, 2013

to mother Vicky Wilson

and grandparents

Ann Romanczuk and Keith Wilson

Ministry on Wheels

From Jim Foti, Ministerial Intern



In last month's newsletter, I explored some of the challenges and opportunities around creating a "rides ministry" to help people get to and from our church on Sundays. Since that time, I've had numerous conversations with congregants, some who are dependent on others for transportation, and some who are interested in helping provide rides. Everyone I spoke with understands the complexity of addressing this issue, and at the same time, they understand the simplicity of the desire to remain part of this worship community regardless of access to a car.

I'll be spending this month setting up some of the technical aspects of the rides ministry and experimenting with some of the communications methods, such as a shared online list of those in need of rides and those interested in offering them. If you'd like to be part of either list – as a potential driver or passenger – please contact me at jim@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x109, or find me on Sundays or on Wednesday evenings at church.

FEBRUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP

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.

February 3

The Case for Prayer — Jim Foti

If some prayers are answered and others are not, what is prayer good for? Join Ministerial Intern Jim Foti and worship associate Bailey Webster as they explore the reasons for including prayer in one's life.

February 10

Many Forms of Prayer — Janne Eller-Isaacs

In the book *Help, Thanks, Wow*, Annie Lamott argues that prayers essentially fall into three categories, prayers of petition, prayers of praise and thanksgiving, and prayers of awe and presence. The scholars add one more: prayers of confession, when we admit our shortcomings and our failings. Janne and worship associate Neil Bray will explore the different forms prayers can take.

February 17

Praying with Waldo — Rev. Dr. Rob Hardies

We often think of Ralph Waldo Emerson as a philosopher or essayist, but he was also a spiritual teacher, who advised us to "pray without ceasing." What can Emerson and his contemporaries teach us about our own spiritual lives?

The Rev. Dr. Robert M. Hardies is senior minister of All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, D.C., where he recently helped lead the struggle for marriage equality in our nation's capital. In 2010, Rev. Hardies completed his doctoral work on the spiritual disciplines of 19th century Unitarians and Transcendentalists.

February 24

I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray — Rob Eller-Isaacs

The quality of attention we call prayer causes one to see with pilgrim eyes and to hear with ears finely tuned to every whisper. We listen for the still small voice. There are times we need to set aside the asking and listen for the voice inside the voice. This too can be prayer. Rob and worship associate Terri Burnor hope to help us learn the art of listening prayer.

Donuts, Monkeys, Sprinkles and a Scarf

The 2013 Unity Children's Musical

February 28, March 1 and 2

Turn to page 11 for all the details!

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 3: SPACC Department of Indian Work

The St. Paul Area Council of Churches (SPACC) Department of Indian Work's mission is to build a more just and compassionate society by connecting congregations, faith communities, and civic organizations — to overcome poverty, promote peace and dismantle racism. It has three programs that provide services to the American Indian Community: Emergency Services offers traditional food choices through a foodshelf, and clothing and assistance at the time of a memorial service; the Family Education Diabetes Series helps prevent diabetes among adults and children; and the Youth Enrichment program is a year round out-of-school-time activity for children. Unity Church member, Jim Meisenheimer has served as a volunteer with this program.

February 10: One Voice Mixed Chorus

For over 25 years One Voice Mixed Chorus has been Minnesota's GLBTA chorus committed to opening minds and hearts to social change, one song at a time. One Voice is dedicated to the mission of wrapping the stories of marginalized people in song and taking its repertoire of narration, liberation and hope to rural areas throughout the midwest. The chorus is housed here at Unity Church where it has many dedicated supporters who proudly nominate One Voice as yet another agency making the dream of a more inclusive society happen.

February 17: Bridging Inc., the "Dresser Challenge"

Bridging Inc. is a Twin Cities non-profit organization that provides the economically disadvantaged in transition with quality furniture and household items free of charge. This offering will go to the "Dresser Challenge" that provides a new dresser to each of the 4,000 households Bridging will serve in 2013. For a Bridging family, a dresser is more than a piece of furniture. Items once stored in bags and boxes now fit into a dresser creating a sense of stability and dignity to grace their new home. Seventy-five dollars purchases one ready-to-build 5-drawer dresser and volunteer teams assemble the dressers. Unity Church members Phyl and Doug Ostergren are volunteers with Bridging.

February 24: 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.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Board of Trustees

From Bob Peskin, trustee

Not long after I moved to Minnesota, I was asked to replace a cast member in the extended run of a locally-produced opera. For several years before that, I'd been a successful professional choral singer, having been a part of the Dale Warland Singers and doing many freelance singing gigs. But opera? Never.

Because the show was already running, I only had a few days to learn the part, and only one or two run-throughs with the rest of the cast, which had been performing together for several months. With everyone's support, I was up and ready to go for my opening night.

And like a flash, it was all over. A month of performances sped by, and it was time for the last performance, set strike, and cast party.

Shortly after the end of the performance run, I was sharing the story of my brief turn onstage with a musician friend. "Wow, that was incredibly brave of you," he remarked.

Mystified at his reaction, I asked what he meant. "To jump in like that, to learn a part in no time at all, and perform with pros, I'd never do that in a million years."

Huh. I'd never thought of it that way: I'd simply been caught up in the mechanics of doing the work—learning the music and the staging, responding to the director and the other performers, trying to do the best I could. Looking back on it, I recognized that I'd taken a risk, but every performance involves some risk—being a performer means living at that intersection of courage and vulnerability, which is only intensified when you do your work in front of a crowd.

This story came to mind at a recent meeting of Unity's board of trustees, when our conversation centered on the notion of courage and vulnerability, how the two are intertwined, and what courage and vulnerability look like when practiced at church, or inspired by what takes place here. The discussion was deep and moving, and gave us all a glimpse of how meaningful answering such a question could be for the people of Unity Church.

There's an ideal opportunity for you to get in on this question: one of the chief responsibilities of Unity's board of trustees is to lead the church community through the process of reviewing our Ends Statements every five years. (If you haven't committed the current version to memory, take a moment to read it on our web site: www.unityunitarian.org/mission-and-ends.html.)

It's time for us to engage in this work, and we're in the process of formulating a variety of ways you can get involved in this important discussion. In the next few weeks, we'll be letting you know about a series of events designed to get you thinking about what matters here at Unity, what difference we want to make in ourselves and in the world over the next five years, and how a deeper understanding of courage and vulnerability might help us make that difference. Then, during the month of March, we hope you'll join us for one or more of these events.

After all, it's *your* church, and we need to hear *your* voice and *your* stories, in this conversation.

February Parish Hall Artist

The Landscapes of My Life

Kathy Schur

I having stood in these landscapes, I have tried to capture some of their essence in the paintings in this exhibit.

I grew up in Michigan and have lived the last 30-plus years in Minnesota, so the Great Lakes are part of who I am. I am drawn to water, the rivers, creeks, and lakes and find their constantly changing moods and movement fascinating. I have come to art later in life and have found in it a way to express another facet of myself. My art allows me to experience the joy and wonder of the world around us. The physical beauty of sun on water or early evenings light on snow can wake my senses. I see the world in a new and wondrous way. My medium is watercolor which helps me interpret what I see and feel. The process of painting in watercolor is totally engaging. It has an unpredictability that often sends me in directions I had not anticipated. I am drawn to light and how it plays on the landscape. The transparent watercolor paints allow the colors I see in nature to flow onto the paper. Painting has made my everyday world come alive. I now am seeing the world about me in exciting new ways which I want to share with others through these paintings.

I am a member of the Minnesota Watercolor Society and have been influenced by some of the teachers I have met through this organization including Karen Knutson, Pat Undis and Andy Evanson. All are invited to stop by an artist reception in the Parish Hall on Friday, February 8, anytime between 5:00 and 7:30 p.m.

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MINISTERIAL INTERNS

Mae Gibson Wall

2012-13 Hallman Ministerial Intern

Extemporaneous public prayer has long been one of the most intimidating things I could ever imagine being asked to do. I remember being ten years old and, well, *praying* that I wouldn't be asked to pray when I was having dinner with friends whose families did that kind of thing. Imagine my chagrin at discovering that I couldn't complete my Master of Divinity degree without having to face up to this fear.

Most seminary experiences now include at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, which is essentially a chaplaincy internship. And in case you don't know much about chaplains, one of their primary duties is to pray for the people they visit. I found out quickly that not only was I supposed to say "yes" when asked to pray aloud, but that I was actually supposed to *offer* it to every patient I saw. Yegads! This was basically a nightmare come true for me. How would I know what to say? To whom should I pray? Would I be expected to pray to Jesus, or in Jesus' name? As a person who has never identified as Christian, could I do that authentically? My anxieties were many and relentless.

Shortly after beginning my internship, I had a conversation with my mentor about these fears, and as usual, she said something beautiful and profound. She told me that "not every prayer is graceful, but every prayer is full of grace." Her treasured words lodged in my heart and in my mind, and it made the daunting task significantly — though not entirely — easier.

I still get butterflies every time I have to pray extemporaneously, and I usually stumble over my words. But more often than not, the person for whom I am praying is visibly changed at the end of it. It is a powerful experience to have someone else pray for us, even if the words are not always eloquent or articulate. The one thing that could almost always redeem a disconnected or awkward visit between me and a patient was the prayer at the end. It was a time for us to humble ourselves in the presence of something larger than ourselves, and a time for the other person to know that they were being held and heard — if not by God, then at least by this flawed but well — meaning intern. And as scary as it may be to get there, it is a privilege to be able to offer that to someone in need.

And let us pray...

Mae Gibson Wall can be reached by email at mae@unityunitarian.org and by phone at 651-228-1456 x129.



Jim Foti

2012-13 Ministerial Intern

The phrase "church time" is often used to refer to the slowness of change in congregations. And indeed, compared with my career in journalism, where owners and editors and mission statements came and went every few years, the cultural change of churches seem less fast-paced.

The slowness may feel particularly real in the work of dismantling racism and opening the doors to greater diversity. That's when it helps to take the long view. I recently read Unity's Anti-Racism Audit, which was published in 2005 and thoughtfully chronicles 155 years of church, local, and national history. If you didn't see the 52-page audit when it came out, or if you joined the church community in the years since, I recommend it highly.

The audit points out that Unity was a place that, 15 years ago, didn't even have a sign alerting passers-by to its existence. Members of this church made their first trip to Transylvania barely a decade ago, and now interest in Unitarians as far away as India is thriving. After what the audit describes as an inward focus during the '70s, '80s, and '90s, the congregation has, with relative speed, begun to open itself up, its brand-new front door being the latest visible example. Such changes in relationship to the world bode well for Unity's reinvigorated anti-racism efforts.

Leaders of this church, both staff and volunteer, have come to understand that anti-racism is the work of generations — that no single ministerial team or workshop or burst of energy is going to undo centuries of highly structured, highly guarded privilege in our world. Hearts and minds cannot be changed on a schedule, but in the context of its history, Unity's culture is bending in a more inclusive direction with more momentum than you might think.

The 2005 Anti-Racism Audit is available on the church website. From the home page, go to the "Governance" menu and click on the Anti-Racism Leadership Team page. The direct link to the page is <http://www.unityunitarian.org/anti-racism-leadership-team.html>. If you would like a printed copy of the audit, contact Jim Foti.

Jim Foti can be reached by email at jim@unityunitarian.org and by phone at 651-228-1456 x109.



New Class Offering! Adult Spiritual Development: World Religions in Practice

Join Unity's ministerial interns, Mae Gibson Wall and Jim Foti, for a practice-based class in world religions. Together, we will explore Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, all through the lens of religious ritual and discipline. We will move beyond an intellectual approach of these faith traditions and into a more embodied understanding of their practice. The class will be offered on Tuesday evenings from 7:00-9:00pm and will run from March 12 through April 23. To register (and to request childcare), email Mae at mae@unityunitarian.org or call 651-228-1456 x129.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Welcome Words

What a joy it is to have Wellspring Wednesdays and Soup Suppers back! This is how the beloved community is created – one shared meal, one new friend, one worship for all ages, one laughter-filled kitchen at a time. If you have not yet attended a Wellspring Wednesday, I invite you to come. It is a wonderful, relaxed opportunity to gather mid-week and to nourish our hearts and spirits. See you there, and see you in church!

Lisa
lisa@unityunitarian.org



Lisa Friedman
Director of Congregational Life

Pathway to Membership

Unity Church offers three classes for visitors who are exploring Unity as a spiritual home. Sign up at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Laney Ohmans at 651-228-1456 or laney@unityunitarian.org. Childcare is available by contacting Christy Randall at 651-228-1456 x127 or christy@unityunitarian.org at least one week in advance. Rev. Lisa Friedman, Director of Congregational Life, is happy to meet with you to answer questions and to welcome you into the congregation. She can be reached at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107.

Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

Wednesday February 13: 7:15–8:30 p.m. ~also offered~
Sunday, February 24: 12:15–1:30 p.m.
If you have been visiting Unity and would like to find out more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation, we invite you to join us for a “Welcome to Unity” class.

Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Exploration

Tuesday, February 5, 12, 19: 6:30–8:30 p.m. ~also offered~
Saturday, March 2: 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
In this class, we will have an opportunity to share part of our religious journey, to take a more in-depth look at the history of Unity Church, to discuss the expectations and benefits of membership, and get to know the programs and ministries of the congregation.

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

Saturday, April 13: 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world’s needs meet the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class will conclude with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church! There will be a special New Member recognition ceremony on Sunday April 14.

Ongoing Groups at Unity Church

These groups are open to all members and friends of Unity Church. If you are looking to connect with a group, please contact the person listed below, or visit the church website at www.unityunitarian.org for meeting information, or call the church office at 651-228-1456.

A New Look at the Bible: Second Thursday of the month (February 14) 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 for more information.

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (February 21) from Noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org for more information.

Evergreen Quilters: Second Tuesday of the month—in February the group will instead meeting on February 5, from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (February 23) from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760 for more information.

Living With Grief Group: A group for people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (February 19) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org for more information.

Men’s Retirement Group: Monday, February 11 and 25, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578 for more information.

Unitots!: A playgroup for families (parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles) with kids through preschool age. Every Monday and Thursday, from 9:30 a.m.-noon, in the nursery. Contact Christy Randall at christy@unityunitarian.org for more information.

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month (February 12) from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne at jack.hawthorne@comcast.net for more information.

Unity Bridge Club: Friday, February 1, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209.

Zen Meditation: Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. Contact Ken Ford at kford5@comcast.net.

Scan the codes below with your smart phone to find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter!



Unitarian Universalist Heritage Week: February 9-16

Sources Suppers

Be part of the fifth annual Sources Suppers on February 9 or 16 during Unitarian Universalist Heritage Week. This is a dinner ritual tradition developed here at Unity Church where we tell the stories and reflect on the meaning of our UU heritage for our lives today. You can attend a Sources Suppers at the church on February 9 or in members' homes on February 9 or 16. (The church version will involve small groups after an opening ritual.) A children's version is being piloted and should be available in the spring. Sign up in the Parish Hall after services on Sundays or call the Church Office at 651-228-1456. We need hosts as well as participants.

Walking Together in Love

Wednesday, February 13 • 7:15 p.m. • Unity Church

Our congregational life is shaped by the Cambridge Platform of 1648. Rob Eller-Isaacs will offer a brief lecture on the Platform and it's lesson for today. A panel of ministers will respond and there will be ample time for conversation.

Reclaiming the Spiritual Practices of our Unitarian Ancestors

Saturday, February 16 • 9:00-1:00 p.m. • Unity Church

Like a pauper who searches for the next meal, never knowing of the relatives whose will would make him rich, American Unitarians lament their vague religious identity, standing upon the richest theological legacy of any American denomination. Possessed of a deep and sustaining history of spiritual achievement and philosophical speculation, religious liberals have been, ironically, dispossessed of that heritage. — David Robinson, Distinguished Professor of Literature at Oregon State University

In this workshop, led by the Rev. Dr. Robert M. Hardies, senior minister of All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, D.C., we will reclaim the rich spiritual legacy of our Unitarian ancestors—people such as Emerson, Thoreau and Channing—learning and practicing a wide array of spiritual disciplines that sustained them and can sustain us, too. This workshop will offer many practices for enhancing your own spiritual life.

Calling All Cooks!

Do you enjoy cooking with others? Do you like to plan menus for large gatherings? Does it give you satisfaction to see a full parish hall filled with Unity members and friends of all ages sharing a delicious meal together? If you would like to join a monthly Wellspring Wednesday cooking team or a Soup Supper team for after the 4:30 p.m. service, contact please Rev. Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107. Thank you for being a part of Unity's ministry of hospitality and nurture of community.

Elders Group Gathering

Tuesday, February 19 • 1:00-2:30 p.m. • Center Room • Topic: Keep On Moving

Everyone is welcome at Unity's monthly Elders gatherings! This month we're going to talk about an issue that affects everyone: transportation. How can we maintain our ability to drive for as long as possible, and safely? When it comes time to stop driving, how can we remain mobile and avoid isolation in our car-centered culture? We'll draw on the experiences of Unity members and also hear from experts, and we'll look at Unity's efforts to set up a "Ministry on Wheels." The gathering will include time for visiting with friends old and new, and refreshments will be served. For more information about the Elders Group or to offer or inquire about receiving a ride to this event, contact Ministerial Intern Jim Foti at 651-228-1456 x109 or jim@unityunitarian.org.

Wellspring Wednesday

Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather together midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun. Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., followed by worship at 6:45 p.m., and an evening of rich programming beginning at 7:10 p.m. All are welcome. Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance.

Dinner: The cost for dinner is: \$7/ adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/ child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family, and can be paid by cash or check. (Children under the age of 24 months are free.) Reservations for dinner are not required. Financial assistance is available to cover the cost of dinners; contact Lisa Friedman by e-mail at lisa@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x107.

February 6

How Do Photographs Form Us?
with Wing Young Huie (see page 8)

Religious Education New Family Orientation and Registration

P90X Workout

Join P90X certified instructor and Unity Church member Jason Lien for a 60 minute P90X workout that includes stretching, yoga, cardio and core strengthening. Bring a yoga mat, water bottle, towel and some energy!

February 13 • Taco Night!

Walking Together in Love
with Rob Eller-Isaacs (see box at left)

Open Writing Page Session on the Theme of Prayer (see page 8)

Welcome to Unity (see page 6)

P90X Workout

February 20

Dinner Menu: split pea soup, fresh bread, and salad

P90X Workout

February 27

Congregational Read Discussion:

The New Jim Crow (see back cover)

P90X Workout

Open Page Writing Sessions at Unity Church are BACK!

Sunday, February 10, from 2:00–4:00 p.m., and a repeat session is offered on **Wednesday, February 13, from 7:15–9:00 p.m.**

Reflection Topic: Prayer

"There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground," the poet Rumi eloquently reminded us long ago. This session explores the many prayerful possibilities in our own daily lives, including the prayer of deep listening. Free; Registration is requested to karen@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x128.

Starting Sunday afternoon, February 10, with a session on "Prayer," Unity Church will again offer monthly Open Page writing sessions focused on the worship themes. Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, the guided writing sessions are invitations to the creative spirit and opportunities to correspond with the "still, small voice within." Using stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, participants reflect on the month's theme in their own words and on their own pages.

Whether you enjoyed these sessions the first time around and want to return to this spiritual practice of writing or you wish to try it out for the first time, all are welcome. No writing experience is needed. February's session on prayer will be offered twice to accommodate different schedules, Sunday, February 10, 2:00–4:00 p.m. and Wednesday, February 13, 7:15–9:00 p.m.

Other Literary Programming

For information about additional writing programs visit unityunitarian.org/literary-ministry.html. To receive periodic e-mail notifications of Karen's upcoming literary programs, contact karen@unityunitarian.org.



What's New in the Library and Bookstall?

From Shelley Butler, Library and Bookstall Team

Wing Young Huie is coming back to Unity!

The Library and Bookstall Team is proud to present "How Do Photographs Form Us?" — a talk by the highly-acclaimed photographer of The University Avenue Project and much more.



How Do Photographs Form Us?

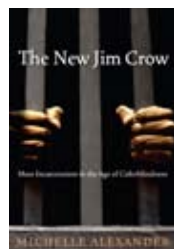
Wing Young Huie

Wellspring Wednesday, February 6, at 7:10 p.m.

Please plan to join us for this fascinating hour with one of St. Paul's most esteemed artistic giants and recent winner of a 2013 State Arts Board grant. Wing Young Huie's many photographic projects document the dizzying socioeconomic and cultural realities of American society. He brings his slide show discussion to Unity Church — helping us to confront many divisive social issues, such as cultural bias, immigration, religion, and social disconnection. You won't want to miss his anecdotes and insights — and his ability to intimately interact with thousands of strangers through the photographic process.

Search the Unity Library Catalog on Your Mobile Phone!

Did you know that Unity Libraries have over 2000 books and videos in their collection? Now, you can find out if we have a particular title or what titles we have on a particular subject or which authors we carry on your iPhone, Smartphone, or PDA. Scan the QR code and save to your Bookmarks so you can easily find the catalog again.



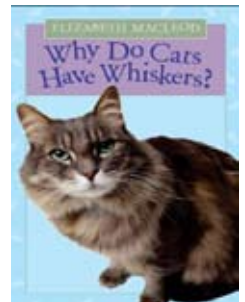
2013 Congregation Book Read

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

If you haven't picked up your copy for the annual Congregation Book Read yet, find *The New Jim Crow* in the Bookstall or Anderson Library. Then, be sure to join a fascinating book discussion on Sunday, February 24, at 12:30 p.m. or Wednesday, February 27, at 7:10 p.m.

The Whitman Children's Library is Now Open in the Lower Level

If you have been looking for the Children's Library, it has been relocated to where you would find most kids and parents: in the R.E. wing of the lower level. Open Sundays before and after services, find something for every reading level from board books to fiction and for every interest including special sections of comics and graphic novels, folklore, religion, family, and more. Don't miss the non-fiction section for great picture books. One of our favorites: *Why Do Cats Have Whiskers?* by Elizabeth McLeod (Children's Non-Fiction: 636.8 M).



COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Help build a Sustainable Agriculture Team!

Are you concerned about food justice? Sustainability? Are you a gardener? An environmentalist? A person who finds the holy in nature and wants to incorporate more justice work into your spirituality? We warmly invite you to join the budding Sustainable Agriculture interest group, which ultimately hopes to become a community outreach team of the church. Our primary goal is to inform and serve our church community by focusing on the ways in which our production and consumption of food nurtures us physically and spiritually, affects the just distribution of food around the world, and alters our earth's environment. Please email Mae at mae@unityunitarian.org or call her at 651-228-1456 x129 for more information or for upcoming meeting dates. All are welcome!

Purchase from Whole Farm Co-op

Whole Farm Cooperative is once again delivering farm products to Unity Church each month.

The Whole Farm Co-op represents thirty member families in Central Minnesota who are committed to creating farms that not only nourish their own families but also sustain the environment. The co-op is deeply committed to creating urban and rural links that provide consumers with safe wholesome food and a clear sense of who and where their food is coming from. Whole Farm beef products are extra lean because they have been raised largely on grass with their feed free of chemicals and antibiotics. Their pork products are extra lean because they were not fed corn but small grains and were given plenty of sunshine, exercise and fresh air. Whole Farm chickens are free range birds with their feed free of antibiotics. Their cheese comes from grass fed cows that are grazed rather than being fed corn which helps restore water quality and wildlife habitat as fewer machines are involved.

The Unity Church deliveries are made on the fourth Wednesday of each month to the first room (with a freezer and a refrigerator) south of the elevator in the lower level. To place an order go to www.wholefarmcoop.net or email wholefarm@earthlink.net by the third Wednesday of each month. Orders can be as small or as large as needed. For more information visit the above Whole Farm website or contact Pat Haff at pat@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x126.

Whole Farm Co-op Deliveries

Order from www.wholefarmcoop.com or call 1-320-732-3023 by Wednesday, February 20, and orders will be delivered on Wednesday, February 27.



Freedom to Marry Day Rally

Thursday, February 14 • 3:00 p.m.

Minnesota State Capitol Rotunda

Organized by Minnesotans United for All Families, the Freedom to Marry Day Rally will be a key first step in working with state legislators to ensure that in 2013 Minnesota state law is changed to reflect our shared belief that loving and committed same-sex couples should have the freedom to marry.



This will be the first time this year that marriage proponents gather at the Capitol. Join with hundreds of others in showing legislators that a broad and diverse coalition of Minnesotans support marriage for same-sex couples. Individuals are asked to register at www.outfront.org/ftmd. You can also sign up to sing in the mass choir at the event. If you are interested in being part of a Unity Church contingent or to find out other ways to participate in the campaign to obtain marriage for same-sex couples in Minnesota, contact Jane Eastwood at janedeastwood@gmail.com or Pat Haff at the Church Office.

Voter ID—One Last Thought

From Sue Conner

Now that the voter ID amendment has been defeated, we have an opportunity to address, in an inclusive and bipartisan manner, our Minnesota voting procedures. We have learned in the past year that our system and our citizenry are vulnerable to concerns and accusations. We can take some time now to address those concerns: to look at our goals, to identify where and how the vulnerabilities exist, to strategize methods to reduce the vulnerabilities.

This month we will collect concerns and ideas to pass on to the legislature. We will compile the responses and send them on to Representative Jim Davnie, who is a member of Unity Church, as well to Representative Erin Murphy, Majority Leader of the House and representative for Unity's district.

Please take a moment to respond to the following two questions and email them to sue.conner@comcast.net with "voter ID" in the subject line or call Sue at 651-646-6667 to share your thoughts.

1. What are some suggestions for increasing the level of trust in our voting system without restricting access or limiting the right to vote?
2. Please describe anything you've personally seen at the polls that has undermined your trust in the fairness of our voting system.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Unity is Making Friends in Bolivia!

In collaboration with Mano a Mano and the team of Minnesota teachers headed to Bolivia in June, our Religious Education program and families will be learning about our far-away friends in the villages of the Altiplano. A number of fundraising projects and donation drives will give Unity folks an opportunity to contribute much-needed school supplies to teachers and students in rural villages in Sancayani and Japo, Bolivia. Our teacher team will be offering day-long pedagogy conferences in these two villages, instructing as many as 100 teachers in best practices for early literacy development and basic math skills.

Here are some details about our projects:

The Penny Challenge! Our three services will go head-to-head in an all-out competition to raise funds to buy classroom materials and specific tools for the skills being taught in our conferences. There will be a giant jar assigned to each service: 9:00, 11:00 and 4:30. The winning service will have a special celebration with treats in honor of their generosity.

How does a Penny Challenge work? Each PENNY in your service's jar gets you a point. To increase your lead over the other services, you can put SILVER COINS into your opponents' jars, which will subtract points from their total according to the coins' values. No bills allowed. Our Penny Challenge will run from February 10 through March 31, with the totals announced on April 7. All proceeds from the penny drive will be used to purchase math tools for our friends in Bolivia, including dice, flash cards, pens, pencils and paper.

The School Supply Drive! Throughout the months of February and March, we'll be collecting gently used and new school supplies. Check your drawers and cupboards at home for extras of these items before purchasing new ones and watch for good sales at retailers. Keep an eye out for packaging that won't create a problem for the villagers: paper is better than plastic and "no package" is best of all! **For our friends in Bolivia, we're collecting: loose leaf paper, spiral notebooks, pencils, pens, crayons, colored pencils, working solar-powered calculators, children's scissors, paintbrushes, watercolors and tempera paints. If you have other items or large quantities, please check with Kerri before bringing your item to church.**

The BIG BOOK Project! We'll be purchasing and constructing Big Books (used for large-group literacy instruction) in Spanish. If you have Spanish-language skills, artistic skills or are willing to help with repetitive manual assembly of blank Big Books, please join us on Wednesday evenings throughout February and March. Our Big Book Project team will meet each Wellspring Wednesday from 7:10-8:30 p.m. Drop-in help welcome!

Workshop Rotation Takes on All Things Bolivian! Our unit on Spiritual Friendship will focus on our friendship with the people of rural Bolivia, forged through our pilgrimages with Mano a Mano. Here's what we'll be doing:

- **Story/Drama:** Sharing in a Bolivian folktale and creating Big Books as gifts for our Bolivian friends
- **Science:** Learning about the geography, ecology and economy that shapes our friends' daily lives
- **Art:** Appreciating the art of weaving and practicing on inkle looms
- **Music:** Listening to the music our Bolivian friends know and love; learning and recording a song in Spanish and English
- **Body:** Tasting food that our friends eat and working on the project of sorting and preparing the school supply donations that we'll send in June

We hope that this new focus on child-to-child connection between Unity Church and our partner villages will last for years to come and enrich the lives of all involved.

Interfaith Youth Day of Service

Monday, February 18

Presidents' Day is the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches' 8th annual Interfaith Youth Day of Service at Macalester College's Center for Religious and Spiritual Life in Saint Paul. This day-long event is an opportunity for high schoolers from many different religious and cultural backgrounds, including no religious affiliation, to deepen their connection to service and justice. The event includes an opening gathering, multiple options for service projects in mixed faith small groups, and workshops on interfaith understanding, social justice, leadership, and arts and activism. Families must transport youth to and from Macalester at the beginning and end of the event. Registration forms are available by contacting Kerri at the Church Office.

February 2013

Notes for your family's calendar:

Sunday, February 3 – regular R.E.

Wednesday, February 6 – New Family Orientation; Tween Youth group, 7:10 p.m.

Sunday, February 10 – Story Sunday Grades 1-6; New Workshop Cycle: Community

Wednesday, February 13 – Tween Youth group, 7:10 p.m.

Sunday, February 17 – No R.E. Classes – Special activities for kids

Monday, February 18 – Interfaith Youth Day of Service, Grades 7-12! (Registration required)

Wednesday, February 20 – Tween Youth group, 7:10 p.m.

Saturday, February 23 – Teachers' Night Out (RSVP required, must be a current R.E. teacher)

Sunday, February 24 – regular R.E.

Wednesday, February 27 – Tween Youth Group, 7:10 p.m.

Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministry

Works of art are of an infinite solitude, and no means of approach is so useless as criticism. Only love can touch and hold them and be fair to them.

— Rainer Maria Rilke from *Letters To A Young Poet*

As you walk through the halls at this time of year, on Sunday afternoons, Tuesday and Thursday evenings, you will pass many delighted and excited 5th and 6th graders. The reason for this? They are currently in rehearsal for the annual Unity Children's Musical.

This musical has involved anywhere from 13 to 26 acting, singing, dancing, speaking, always joyous young members of this community along with their families for the last 24 years. Under the guidance of Sandy Waterman for all those years, joined by various and wonderful playwrights, directors and choreographers, this activity has consistently provided the living example of "only love can touch and hold them and be fair to them." Each child is a "work of art" blossoming before your very eyes. The underlying philosophy that "every child has a place" and "every child is important" has been witnessed in each production. Magically, just the right words, tunes or moves are assigned to each child who is then joyfully "loved into" the realization of their own unique accomplishment.

Our current musical staff — Rene Meyer-Grimberg, playwright, and Mary Blouin Auffert, director and choreographer — have worked with Sandy these past several years to continue this amazing Unity Church tradition. Please consider coming to support and witness this for yourself as they present our 2013 Children's Musical: *Donuts, Monkeys, Sprinkles and a Scarf*. You will be amazed at the joy and delight of these extraordinary 5th and 6th graders, supported by their families and friends.

YOU can become a singing member of One Voice Mixed Chorus!

Auditions for One Voice's 2012-2013 Spring Season are scheduled for: February 4 and 5, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., at Unity Church.

For more information on how to sign up for an audition, visit <http://www.ovmc.org/audition-information.html> or call 651-298-1954.



Since 1988 One Voice Mixed Chorus unites gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people and straight allies. One Voice is known for its musical excellence, diverse programming, and deep commitment to community outreach.

Donuts Monkeys Sprinkles and a Scarf

The 2013 Unity Children's Musical
February 28, March 1 and 2

Donuts, Monkeys, Sprinkles, and a Scarf: Gabe has a shop on the corner where everyone in the community stops to enjoy some very special donuts. A mystery develops, a plan is hatched and together they find out what it means to stick together and make it better! Where is that magical feeling coming from? Could it be the sprinkles or the scarf? Or something entirely different? Come find out at the 24th Annual Unity Church Children's Musical

Now in its 24th year, the Unity Children's Musical takes the stage with performances on February 28 and March 1 and 2.

As always, the entire production—from the script to the music to the choreography—is original material created for Unity's children. Rene Meyer-Grimberg has once again written a fun, magical, and inspiring play. Sandy Waterman, composer and lyricist extraordinaire, returns for her 24th year to share her fabulous catchy tunes. In the director's chair is multi-talented, Unity Singer, and circus maven, Mary Blouin Auffert.

The Children's Musical is one of the great traditions of Unity Church. Every year our fifth and sixth graders create an exciting and memorable experience for the community. Tell your friends of all ages to come enjoy the show and support kids who participate in the arts.

Donuts, Monkeys, Sprinkles, and a Scarf

A new musical by Rene Meyer-Grimberg and Sandy Waterman
The 24th Annual Unity Church Children's Musical

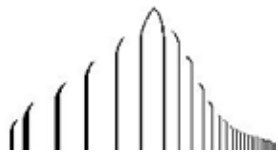
Thursday, February 28, at 7:00 p.m.

Friday, March 1, at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 2, at 5:00 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 17, as well as before the performances.

Come and be amazed by a compelling tale, great songs and a cast of creative and talented Unitarian Universalist kids.



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 • unity@unityunitarian.org

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**TIME SENSITIVE
MATERIAL**



¡Baile!

*Winter blahs got you down?
Want to escape to a tropical place and
mambo, tango and cha-cha the night away?
Join us for a night of Latin dancing!*

**Saturday, February 2
7:00–10:00 p.m.
Unity Church Parish Hall**

Free instruction during the first hour and a half.
No pressure, no expectations, no partner required!
Free, but donations gratefully accepted.
This event is sponsored by Unity's Mano a Mano
Community Outreach Ministry Team.

Black History Month: Congregation Read

The Anti-Racism Leadership Team, Racial Justice Team, Restorative Justice Team, and Library and Bookstall Team have joined together for the third annual Black History Month Congregation Read.

The congregation has been invited to read and discuss *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander. This is an opportunity to build community and shape our desire for racial justice by giving our congregation a shared experience, shared language, and a basis for deep, meaningful conversations.

Discussion sessions are scheduled for Sunday, February 24, at 12:30 p.m. and Wednesday, February 27, at 7:10 p.m.

This book has also been selected as the Common Read for the 2012-13 Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). The teams will lead discussion groups in February. Those dates will be share in upcoming communications. Books are available in the Unity Bookstall.

