

Love

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.

In her book *Writing to Wake the Soul*, Karen Hering tells the story of French Poet Robert Desnos writing to his lover from a Nazi concentration camp. He told his love that although he did not have the time or energy to write it in the camp, he had an idea “for a love story in an entirely new genre” and he would write it as soon as he was released. He died of typhus two days after his release, leaving us to wonder. What sort of love story can we imagine having ideas for amidst such suffering? And what “entirely new genre” would this love amidst suffering prompt the creation of?

Unitarian Universalists often use Love interchangeably with God. We rarely specify whether we mean that Love is the essence or God, the being of God, an attribute of a more complex God, an action or doing of God, or a concept we can trust that we think roughly correlates to concepts of God. We may mean all of these, or we may mean to be broad enough to include all these possibilities.

Universalism has often focused more on experience, on love of “being,” and on God’s love for the world. Universalist theology sees God’s love for the world as the reason we will ultimately not be separate from God, and it encourages us to experience that love in the present through loving one another. Unitarianism has focused more on reason, on love of ideas, vocation, and “doing.” Unitarian theology has seen humans’ love for God as the reason to

walk towards perfection of the soul. Our human expression of love for God appears when we work for justice, make art, and find the work of our hearts. In our own lives, we can work to find the balance between these two expressions of a love relationship with the ultimate.

Sociologist and psychologist Erich Fromm reframes this traditional juxtaposition of “being” versus “doing.” Fromm argues that the real difference is between being and having, which are the primary modes of human existence. The being mode is based in being present, being human, and experiencing and acting in the current moment. The having mode is based in acquiring resources, owning, and accumulating something that feels missing from being. What we often characterize as “doing” can fit into either category. When doing is an expression of being it is a way humans practice love in the world. When doing is an effort to acquire, it is an expression of something missing and a frantic race to get whatever that appears to be.

Other religions have various concepts of love, and ways of linking love and God. Christian theologian Paul Tillich said God is unity, and love is humans’ feeling of longing to return to that unity. Buddhism prioritizes the concept of compassion, and understands that compassion is the given reality of all being: we do not need to return to the interconnected reality, because we have never been separated from it. Many religions understand God as the

Beloved, including Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam, particularly in Sufism. How might thinking of God, the ultimate, or the power larger than ourselves, as our Beloved alter our experience of religion? Of worship?

Written by Jennifer Nordstrom
with help from the theme team:
K.P. Hong, Ruth Palmer, Lisa Friedman,
Pat Haff, Karen Hering, Karen Van Fossan,
Janne Eller-Isaacs, and Rob Eller-Isaacs

Love Resources

BOOKS

Marriage and Other Acts of Charity: A Memoir by Kate Braestrup

All About Love: New Visions, by bell hooks

Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

A General Theory of Love by Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon

The Soloist by Steve Lopez

CHILDREN’S BOOKS

The Odd Duck by Cecil Castellucci and Sara Varon

Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown

MOVIES

Jiro Dreams of Sushi (2011)

Free Willy (1993)

Just Words

Blackberries for Amelia

Fringing the woods, the stone walls, and the lanes,
Old thickets everywhere have come alive,
Their new leaves reaching out in fans of five
From tangles overarched by this year's canes.
They have their flowers too, it being June,
And here or there in brambled dark-and-light
Are small, five-petaled blooms of chalky white,
As random-clustered and as loosely strewn
As the far stars, of which we now are told
That ever faster do they bolt away,
And that a night may come in which, some say,
We shall have only blackness to behold.
I have no time for any change so great,
But I shall see the August weather spur
Berries to ripen where the flowers were—
Dark berries, savage-sweet and worth the wait—
And there will come the moment to be quick
And save some from the birds, and I shall need
Two pails, old clothes in which to stain and bleed,
And a grandchild to talk with while we pick.

— Richard Wilbur

Our first grandchild is on the way! Our daughter Jessie and her husband Andy, who live in Portland, Oregon, are expecting their first child. The due date is February 11, our 34th anniversary. Janne and I cannot imagine any gift more precious than the one that's on the way. Oh sure, we know, many of you are already grandparents, some of you many times over. I don't mean to make a fuss. God knows we've had to put up with hundreds, perhaps thousands of understandably effusive stories, pictures passed around at meetings, the steady click of knitting needles. To tell the truth we've been waiting not so patiently for years. We never said a word mind you. Not a word. No pressure.

"I have no time for any change so great"... as the possibility of a night sky with no stars. We do have time to follow one star out to where it stands still pointing down to a little craftsman cottage. Jess invited Janne to fly out when labor starts and be there for the birth. I'll follow soon thereafter. And then at the end of March, when Jess heads back to teaching, Janne and I will go to Portland for a couple of months to support Jess and Andy and get to know the baby.

It is a marvelous coincidence, as well as testimony to our daughter's good sense, that the baby is coming in a year during which we are due a sabbatical. Both Genesis and Deuteronomy instruct us to let the land lie fallow every seven years. Both in academia and in the liberal ministry there is a long tradition of granting lengthy leaves to provide for extended focused opportunities for personal and professional growth. Would that every employer had the good sense that Unity Church shows in granting us this precious time away. We're very grateful. We'll make good use of it. We promise.

As always,
Rob

Sabbatical planning is well underway. In our absence the Rev. Lisa Friedman will assume the role of Senior Minister, and Hallman Intern Jennifer Nordstrom will take on additional duties.

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Winter Jewell Shearer-Frazier

born one more redeemer

December 25, 2013

to parents

Janis Shearer and Johannes Frazier
and big brothers Stefan and Emil

Bobbi Cordano and Mary Baremore

married

January 18, 2014

in the Ames Chapel

From the Archives...

A group of dedicated volunteers meets most Tuesday evenings to inventory the records of Unity Church. Amazing things are buried in around 150 boxes — photos, financial records, correspondence, orders of worship, pamphlets, videotapes, cassette tapes, manuscript music, bits of burned wood, organ pipes, and much more. Starting in March, the Archives Team will introduce readers of *commUNITY* to a particularly interesting piece of Unity Church history every month. Stay tuned.

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SUNDAY WORSHIP / HERITAGE WEEK

February Worship Calendar

Sunday worship services are held at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. except where noted.

February 2: *The Ark of the Ache of It*

Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs

There is nothing more bittersweet in life than the reality that we have to learn to let go of those we love. Self-differentiation is a discipline by which we move toward clarity both about who we are as individuals and how to be respectful and supportive of others. Rob and worship associate Phil Lowry begin a month of services on love.

February 9: *Inside This Clay Jug*

Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs

Among the five theological questions with which we require our coming-of-age class to wrestle is this: What is the nature of the God within? It's the one with which they tend to have the most difficulty. Learning to love oneself, learning to know and to respect the God within is a daunting spiritual challenge. It seems dangerously close to pride. How do we become convinced we are worthy of God's love? Rob will be joined by worship associate Jen Welsh.

February 16: *You Really Got a Hold on Me*

Hallman Ministerial Intern Jennifer Nordstrom

We are held together in community by the bonds of love but that can get complicated when we are bound in with people we don't like very much. How do we hold one another in community when we grate against one another? What is an ethic of love?

February 23: *Love in Action: Schools for Love*

Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs

The writer bell hooks writes, "Schools for love do not exist. Everyone assumes that we will know how to love instinctively." What we do know is that we don't know how to love instinctively but must be taught. Is church the best place to learn about love? Janne and worship associate Kate Connors will explore the ways we can teach and learn that love can be expressed through acts of care, compassion and justice making.

Unitarian Universalist Heritage Week

February 8-15

Be part of the 6th annual Sources Suppers on February 8 or 15 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 Supper at the church on February 8 or in members' homes on February 8 or 15. (The church version will involve small groups after an opening ritual.) 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.

February 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 2: Minnesota Schools Outreach Coalition for LGBTQ Youth (MNSOC)

MNSOC is a coalition of Minnesota students, families, community members and organizations working within the broad context of schools to address issues of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. MNSOC sponsors the Q-Quest Youth Fest (a day long gathering for LGBTQ high school students), facilitates workshops at the annual LGBTQ Lobby Day at the Capitol, offers anti-bullying training for educators, and holds a prom for Twin Cities LGBTQ youth in the spring. MNSOC is a community partner of the Unity Church Rainbow Chalice Alliance Outreach Ministry Team.

February 9: 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 16: Habitat Project at Johnson High School

A team of students, staff and adult volunteers of Johnson High School on St. Paul's East side will be traveling to Nicaragua for their 4th Habitat for Humanity home building trip in June 2014. They will be working with Nicaraguan volunteers and future homeowners to help families achieve their dream of a simple, decent place to live. These trips are often life changing experiences for Johnson High School student participants. For each of the past three trips, a Unity Church offering has helped bridge the gap between the financial obligation of the students, what they are able to pay, and the actual cost of the trip.

February 23: Frogtown 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. This spring, 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.

Our Agenda

From Lia Rivamonte, Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees convened on Saturday, January 11, for a day-long retreat.

We should have guessed that the day would unfold like a second Christmas. We unwrapped gift after gift, each one unexpected and wonderful, each a sign of the riches to come. Now we can be sure that 2014 will be a fruitful year, less knowable, perhaps — no ends statements to wrestle with, no new capital campaign to launch — but absolutely brimful of fresh thinking about who we are as a church and where we want to go.

The first gift was the opportunity to hear why each of us was there. It is at once an easy answer, as we are all part of a community that emphasizes helping, but the more personal stories, as you might expect, are not so easily known. This was followed by an anti-racism development session led by two members of the current Anti-Racism Leadership Team. Any of you who have participated in past “trainings” will be interested to learn that the tone and direction of current anti-racism learning, at least as it will be promulgated here, is quite a new beast. It emphasizes self-awareness, embracing the complexities within the cultural identities of each of us — and that’s just the beginning. It is joyful as well as painful work. It is something to be relished.

After a delicious potluck, we settled in to an even tastier and much larger banquet. Last year’s work with the Ends Statements offered us an authentic means for deeper connection with those outside of our congregation with whom we share common values — aka our “moral owners.” Led by the ineffable Laura Park, we attempted to identify two overarching questions to guide us in our approach. We seek to forge a new, dynamic, shared leadership with organizations within our larger community to work for a more loving, just world. Not *just* the stuff of dreams.

The final gift of the day was a session with Chuck Selcer, a partner with Unity’s independent auditing firm, Schechter Dokken Kanter. It was delightful, as well as educational. Yes, folks, reading financial statements armed with colored highlighters was a great way to end the day.

The totality of these gifts exceeds their numbers by far. We are excited at the prospect of examining them closer in the coming year. We hope you look forward to receiving them as we pass them along to you.



Cultivating a Wider Circle

From Mary-Margaret Zindren, ARLT

This article is an excerpt from a column written by Mary-Margaret Zindren for the Hennepin Lawyer magazine, January 2013.

I was recently invited to a casual gathering of women attorneys. As we got settled, I realized that I was the only white person there. The conversation turned to frustrations that the women of color faced in their workplaces. They spoke about the negative comments directed toward them, the erroneous assumptions made, the career opportunities that have passed them by.

We talked about the importance of inclusive social and professional circles; about authentic inclusion brought about by “moving into discomfort” — the discomfort of trying to connect with people who appear to be very different from yourself, whom you fear you’ll have very little in common with, and the discomfort of worrying that you will say or do something that unintentionally offends.

In this context, I put forward to the group the fact that I’ve often wanted to invite people of color whom I’ve met through work or church to my home for dinner but that I’ve hesitated because my social circle is predominantly white.

Their response was that I should have a direct conversation with the people I want to invite. That I would do best to just say what I’m thinking: “I really want you to come. You may be the only person of color there because my social circle is pretty white. If I say something stupid, or my friends do, I hope you’ll feel comfortable letting me know.”

My world wasn’t always so narrow. The first decades of my life involved every day, genuine, interactions — and a number of very deep and meaningful relationships — that crossed lines of race, class, generation, language, religion, and political affiliation.

But as the years have passed, I’ve been more likely to create and sustain connections with people who look like me and think like me; well-intentioned, “progressive” white people who talk a good game about diversity and inclusion, but whose social circles tell a different story. I’ve come to recognize that I’m going to need to be intentional about cultivating a wider circle — it’s unlikely to just happen without a conscious effort.

So how can you take a step toward widening your circle? Who will you invite to join for lunch or dinner — into your work life and your social life — that moves you out of your comfort zone? Are you ready for the risks and rewards of getting comfortable with discomfort?



Save the Date! 15th Annual White Privilege Conference

Madison, Wisconsin, March 26-29 • www.whiteprivilegeconference.com

The White Privilege Conference is designed to examine issues of privilege beyond skin color. It is open to everyone and invites diverse perspectives to provide a comprehensive look at issues of privilege including race, gender, sexuality, class, disability, etc.— the ways we all experience some form of privilege, and how we’re all affected by that privilege.



Jennifer Nordstrom 2013-14 Hallman Ministerial Intern

On January 8, I stood next to Karen Van Fossan at Wellspring Wednesday chapel as she said goodbye to the gathered community. I got to play her dog Jasmine in that night's story about Jasmine meeting a pack of friendly wolves and running with them for awhile before they parted ways, each carrying the other in their hearts. The children and I danced with colorful scarves, we romped around the chapel, we howled at the moon, and we said goodbye. It was fun, and it was sad. One of the advantages of being in a church community is that you get to mark life transitions with meaningful ritual. One of the disadvantages is that because the spirit of community moves and binds you together in love, saying goodbye hurts.

When we covenant ourselves in a church, we put our spirits into a pot with a bunch of other people—some with whom we have natural affinity, some with whom we do not—and then stir it up. We get all swirled around and tangled up with one another, and bonded with love. The love that binds in church is not only our own, personal, love for one another, it is also a universal love that gets deployed through our covenant to this thing that is larger than us. It is a powerful bonding agent.

My bond with Karen included both the personal and the universal version of love. We were lucky, given that we shared an office, several work assignments, and a home, that we had a natural affinity for one another. So for me, this loss felt personal as well as communal.

But that is the thing about love. It is bigger than loss. It is bigger than missing my friend and co-collaborator, bigger than worrying about the future. Love can hold the loss and the happiness for Karen at the same time. Love knows that sometimes those bonds have to be broken in order for something else to be created. Love wants the highest good, the most beautiful option, for all living beings. Which means that this time, love means letting go.



Karen Van Fossan

Thanks to the support of the people of Unity Church-Unitarian, I have found clarity this past semester in my call to ministry. One of the purposes of an internship is to nurture the discernment process, and this past semester at Unity has helped me to discern how central my Christian faith is to me. I continue to affirm Unitarian Universalism and am grateful for this opportunity to engage my own "free and responsible search for truth and meaning," as the fourth UU Principle states. Also, I long for and feel my spirit nurtured by worship that is rooted in the Christian gospels and Christian sacraments. During spring semester, I plan to begin the transition to the United Church of Christ denomination; I am drawn to the UCC for many reasons, including the strong connections both nationally and locally to the UU tradition.

It was good to say good-bye and a big thank-you to many in the community during Sunday and Wednesday services in early January. Consider this a big thank-you to anyone I did not see and hug this month! Please know how much you have nurtured my creativity, spiritual development, and future ministry. I will especially miss Wednesday evening chapel services, working with my Ministerial Internship Support Team, the embodied practice offerings, Black Friday service planning, receiving your poems by mail and email, and collaborations with many generations, among many other things.

I feel sad to leave Unity Church and also a sense of anticipation about where my call may lead me. Again, I have much gratitude to you for providing the context for this important discernment in my life.

Elders Circle Group

Tuesday, February 18
1:00-2:30 p.m.

Center Room

The Elders' Circle is a group of church elders (self-identified) who get together monthly for fellowship, reflection, and fun. This month, we will have a guest presenter come and share information about senior housing options in the Twin Cities. Certified Senior Advisor Eunice Neubauer will come and talk about options ranging from independent living communities to in-home care to assisted living. What are these like? How does they work? Ms. Neubauer will give an overview of the options and processes, and will be available to answer questions, and discuss pros and cons. For more information or to RSVP, contact Jennifer at jennifer@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x 129.

Silent Retreat

Saturday, February 22

1:00-5:00 p.m.

Robbins Parlor

Ever wanted to go on a silent retreat, but been too scared? Join Spiritual Director Sarah Cledwyn in a half day of silence to explore February's worship theme of Love. We will come together at the beginning of our time to talk about the day and then engage in activities to reflect in the silence as each desires. We will reconvene at the end of our time to talk about and share our experiences. Activities will include an indoor labyrinth, journaling questions, soul collage and more. This time is meant to be an opportunity to dip your toes into the quiet to see what you find there. This program is free to all participants but please RSVP to Sarah at sarahcledwyn@gmail.com to ensure there are enough space and materials for everyone.

Welcome Words

Our Unitarian Universalist tradition has a deep connection with the spiritual side of love. Whether we tap into our Universalist heritage and its bold proclamation that an all-embracing Love has no room for eternal hell, or delve deep with our Unitarian forebearers into the task of growing our capacity to love one another and our world more fully, love is a powerful theme. Even a calling. So in this month when we celebrate our heritage amid these cold, snowy days, I invite you into the warmth of our living tradition. Discover the stories. And discover your own stories of the power of love in your life and in this congregation. See you in church!

Rev. Lisa Friedman
Director of Congregational Life

Pathway to Membership Classes

Unity Church offers a series of three classes for visitors who are exploring Unity as a spiritual home. Sign up at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Rev. Lisa Friedman at 651-228-1456 x107 or lisa@unityunitarian.org. Childcare is available by contacting Christy Randall at 651-228-1456 x127 or christy@unityunitarian.org at least one week in advance.

Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

Wednesday, February 12: 7:15–8:30 p.m.

~also offered~

Sunday, February 23: 5:45–7:00 p.m.

If you have been visiting 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

Saturday, February 22: 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. (potluck lunch)

~also offered~

Three night series: Tuesday, March 4, 11, 18: 6:30-8:30 p.m. (includes light supper)

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

Wednesday, March 19: 7:15-9:00 p.m. ~also offered~

Wednesday, June 4: 7:15-9:00 p.m.

Have you been considering membership at Unity? This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's needs meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church!

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, 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 13) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528.

Afterthoughts: This group meets after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528 for more information.

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (February 20) from Noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org for more information.

Evergreen Quilters: Second Tuesday of the month (February 11) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (February 22) from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760 for more information.

Job Transitions/Networking Group: Every Monday at 9:00 a.m. in the Anderson Library. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org for more information.

Living With Grief Group: A group for people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (February 18) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org for more information.

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, February 10 and 24, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578 for more information.

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

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday (February 11) of the month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. The book they will be discussing is *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot. Contact Jack Hawthorne at jack.hawthorne@comcast.net for more information.

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

Women's Retirement Group: Second and Fourth Thursday of the month (February 13 and 27) from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Leah Doherty at doher001@umn.edu.

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.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather together midweek at church for food, fellowship, and learning. 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. Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance. The cost for dinner is: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4 (children under age 2 are free), and \$20/family, and can be paid by cash or check. Financial assistance is available to cover the cost of dinners; contact Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107.

February 5

Dinner: Mediterranean five-lentil and chard soup with walnut gremolata or nut-free gremolata, salad, dessert

Beloved Wellspring Conversations

Unity Church will join with other community churches and organizations including Above Every Name, Morningstar Baptist, and Men of Ujamaa, for a series of Wellspring Wednesday events based on the exciting Beloved Conversations experience held at Unity late last fall. The programming will include large and small group discussion and the sharing of stories focusing on race, faith, and our desire to work towards the Beloved Community. This three-part series takes place on the first Wednesday of each month (February 5, March 5, and April 2). You need not to have been a Beloved Conversations participant to attend.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Meditation

Happiness: Is it a birthday party, the right election outcome, a bigger paycheck, dinner out, the project completed, or Friday afternoon? Or is there happiness not so subject to expiration as these? Is there happiness that survives our losses and our despair — happiness that embraces even our moments of deepest pain? Throughout the month of February we'll consider the quiet path of meditation as a way to look beneath the momentary ambitions and frustrations that capture our minds and bodies. We'll explore the way of silence and the reality of an expansive and timeless mind that may be the ground of a deeper happiness. This offering is led by Ken Ford, a teacher at Clouds in Water Zen Center.

New Family Religious Education Orientation

Everyday Enjoyable Parenting

Registration is closed.

February 12

Dinner: Thai night! Details to follow.

Our Unitarian Universalist Heritage

Pearl Buck once observed that "If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday." Come and hear some of the foundational stories and explore some of the controversies that still shape our faith today.

Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Meditation

Everyday Enjoyable Parenting

Registration is closed.

February 19

Dinner: TBA

Loving Without Conditions: An Antidote To Perfectionism

Perfectionism is the desire to be perfect, the fear of imperfection, and the emotional conviction that perfection is the route to personal acceptability. It is a self esteem issue. Find out where perfectionism comes from and how, as part of a process totally in keeping with the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalist congregations, we can affirm each person's inherent worth, accept one another, and encourage the pursuit of excellence, not perfection.

Tom Greenspon, Ph.D., is a psychologist, marriage and family therapist, and author, in private practice with his wife Barbara. His publications include professional articles on giftedness as a part of self experience, and on intimacy, sexuality, and couple therapy; he has authored professional and popular articles and two books on the origins of, and recovery from, perfectionism.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Meditation

February 26

Dinner menu: rosemary roasted chicken, curried pumpkin risotto, arugula and white bean salad, blueberry crumble

Ending the Cradle to Prison Pipeline: Job Issues

This program will focus on the difficulties formerly incarcerated people face in the job market upon their re-entry into society. A panel of speakers will present their personal experiences with re-entry employment, their work with local programs providing re-entry job assistance and concrete ways for all to help end this pipeline. See page 9 for more information.

Working Toward Prayer

Rob Eller-Isaacs offers a four-session class (Wednesdays, February 26; March 5, 12, 19) intended to help participants summon a quality of attention, a way of being, he calls prayer. Attendance at all four sessions is strongly encouraged. Register by contacting Marcy Mann-Anderson at marcy@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110. This class is free for pledging church members and \$75 for non-pledging members.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Meditation





What's New in the Library and Bookstall!

From Louise Merriam, Libraries and Bookstall Team

If you have never visited the Unity Libraries, you're in good company. They are one of the best-kept secrets of life at Unity Church — a secret we'd like to share.

Q. Why is it "libraries" and not "library"? **A.** Because there are two: The Whitman Children's Library, located in the religious education space on the lower level, and the Anderson Library, located on the second floor of the Eliot wing.

Q. What's in the libraries? **A.** The collections primarily include printed books; however, there are also DVDs, CDs and cassette tapes. The collections reflect the diverse interests of friends and members of Unity Church, focusing on titles that might not be available at a local public library.

Q. When are Unity Libraries open? **A.** The Anderson Library is open after each service on Sundays and is available for use other times by request or to drop in if the library is not in use. If no group is meeting in the library, feel free to come in. Just turn on the lights, sit and read in the comfortable chairs, check out books with the self-serve system, or take advantage of free Wi-Fi. The Whitman Children's Library is open after each Sunday service following religious education and on Wellspring Wednesdays. Feel free to drop in to the library anytime — turn on the light and help yourself.

Q. How big are the library collections? **A.** The Whitman Children's Library has more than 1,100 books! The Anderson Library has around 1,200 titles in its collection. You can access the online library catalog from any computer anywhere or from the computer in the Anderson Library. The online catalog is available at www.librarything.com/catalog/UnityChurch or on the Unity website: Unity—Service & Learning—Library & Bookstall.

Q. Who pays for the libraries? **A.** The libraries are funded by proceeds from Bookstall sales. The Bookstall is open Sundays after both morning services and carries an ever-changing stock of new and interesting books.

Q. How can one get involved with Unity Libraries? **A.** Join the Library and Bookstall Team. Email Shelley or Louise at library@unityunitarian.org or contact Lisa Friedman, Director of Congregational Life, at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107.

FEBRUARY

Parish Hall Artist

Layl McDill

Once upon a time each of us was a little kid. Everything was nonsense. We tried to figure it out. We wondered about everything. We wondered what was in the cupboard, the drawers, and boxes. We wondered how the calculator worked, or the dishwasher or a watch. We wondered what our stuffed animals did at night. We wondered what all the symbols at on the top row of the keyboard were for. We wondered what it would be like to live in a tree, underwater or in outer space.

For me making my art helps me keep this magical doorway to wonderment open. I am drawn to imagery that sparks that feeling of unknown and mystery like cupboards, drawers or placing everyday objects (like a keyhole, a lollipop, a chair etc.) in an incongruent setting (a flower, a fountain, a fish etc.). My latest series of "Flying Machines" starts with shapes of real animals and then they grow mysterious appendages, openings, fins and propellers. When hung in groupings they create an alternative universe yet upon closer look there are tiny pieces of our regular reality hidden in the patterns and shapes.

My technique and materials are also very mysterious. I use primarily polymer clay with the ancient technique of millefiore. Tiny images that cover every surface of my sculptures inevitably make the viewer wonder "How did she do that?" And even though I have been doing it for twenty years it still seems amazing that I can create a tiny picture can be inside a chunk of clay.

Meet Layl McDill in the Parish Hall on Sunday, February 2, following the morning services.

Open Page Writing Sessions

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, Open Page writing sessions are 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. Sessions are free but RSVP is required to karen@unityunitarian.org.

Love's Many Faces • Sunday, February 16, 2:00-4:00 p.m. • Unity Church

"Love is our true destiny," said Thomas Merton. "We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone — we find it with one another." In this guided writing session, we'll move well beyond a greeting card understanding of love to consider love's many faces, many gifts and many demands.

Brokenness • Sunday, March 9, 2:00-4:00 p.m. • Unity Church

"There is a crack in everything," observed Leonard Cohen. "That's how the light gets in." In this guided writing session, we'll explore the places where we experience the world or ourselves as broken, and consider how brokenness sometimes opens our lives to healing and light.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

School Bullying

What Parents and Teachers Can Do

Sunday, February 2 • 12:30-2:00 p.m. • Anderson Library

Unity's Rainbow Chalice Alliance invites you to a viewing of *Bully*, followed by a panel discussion that will include Jim Davnie, Minnesota legislator from Minneapolis, who will be introducing bullying legislation this year. A light lunch will be provided.

Minnesota has one of the weakest anti-bullying laws in the country. What is the result? In a 2011 nationwide survey, 63.5% of students felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation. In 2011, 63.9% were verbally harassed because of their gender expression. An additional 38.3% were physically harassed. In that same year, Minnesota's largest school district experienced a string of seven student suicides within less than two years. Current state law requires schools to have a policy against bullying, but is silent regarding who should be protected and how we can structure activities and resources to prevent school bullying. Current law doesn't provide educators with resources or learning activities for students on bullying prevention or intervention. Additionally, the law does not provide resources to help students who engage in bullying to examine their attitudes and change their behavior. Come explore implications of bullying for students, educators, parents and legislators and what each of us can do to address the issue of bullying in Minnesota schools.

Project Home Kick-off Meeting

Sunday, February 9 • 10:15-11:00 a.m. • Location TBA

Every May our church hosts Project Home and our church building becomes a safe haven for families in housing crisis. If you like working behind the scenes to organize, publicize and recruit volunteers, won't you join our Project Home Team? Contact Anna Newton for more information at 651-483-2986 or newtona@comcast.net.

Sustainable Agriculture Group

Meeting and Book Discussion

Thursday, February 13 • 5:30 p.m. • DeCramer Room

This month, the Sustainable Agriculture group will read a lively historical account of *Fruitlands* a highly Utopian (and very unsuccessful) farm commune established by Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott's father, and discuss the book at our February meeting. The book has a lot to say about the connection between utopian farm visions, transcendentalism, and Unitarianism. We will also talk about the church's food processes, from buying to composting. Contact Jennifer Nordstrom at jennifer@unityunitarian.org for more information.

Evergreen Foodshelf

The third Sunday of every month is Evergreen Food Drive Sunday. Donations can be brought anytime and should be placed in the wicker trunks located at the Holly and Portland Avenue entrances. Suggested items for February 16: canned vegetables and tomato sauce.

 A Unity Church–Unitarian
Racial and Restorative Justice
Wellspring Wednesday Series



Understanding Mass Incarceration...

Ending the Cradle to Prison Pipeline

This series will have three areas of focus: education (fall 2013), jobs (winter 2014) and housing (spring 2014), and will incorporate the issues of prevention and incarceration, and the effects of the War on Drugs and the Minnesota criminal justice system into each offering. Each session will follow a similar format:

- An introduction grounded in our Unitarian Universalist faith imperative
- An overview of the justice issue delivered by the guest speaker
- A first hand story by someone who has experienced the "pipeline"
- A call to action including opportunities for service and advocacy with community partners
- A question and answer session

Programs are held at Unity Church and run from 7:10 p.m. to approximately 9:00 p.m.

Upcoming! February 26 • 7:10 p.m.

February 26: Job issues for people formerly incarcerated and re-entering society.

This program will focus on the difficulties formerly incarcerated people face in the job market upon their re-entry into society. A panel of speakers will present their personal experiences with re-entry employment, their work with local programs providing re-entry job assistance, and concrete ways for all to help end this pipeline.

SPRING 2014: HOUSING

March 26: Housing issues for youth caught in pipeline.

April 23: Housing issues for formerly incarcerated people upon re-entry.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Pitter-pattering Questions

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

From Rev. K.P. Hong, Director of Religious Education



Teaching as spiritual practice? Imagine learning to play a musical instrument, and staying with it long enough to finally hear it sing. At first, every note and chord on the guitar seems to rattle and buzz, or the piano technique seems to go nowhere but to aching wrists and arms. Yet over time, with continued study, your technique gets better and the sound clearer, until the very chords and scales become the natural language of your fingers. Your hands *know*, and the guitar feels *neither two nor one* with your hands, as they commingle in the music that flows effortlessly.

Inspiration, expression, and artistry not experienced as three discrete events but realized as a single spontaneous act of creativity. Fingers, basswood, metal, even the acoustical space—seemingly unrelated materials—overstep their material and philosophical boundaries in the act of creative performance. And in that moment of unfettered artistry, as many musicians claim, the music is playing you. Surely, it could not happen without you, and yet there seems to be no definite *you* doing this. There is just the creative performance. But don't *you* have to be somewhere?

If anywhere, you are perhaps present in the very act of *allowing* it. Western thought has privileged an understanding of self as grounded in the will, with the self typically experienced either willfully or passively. In comparison, allowing can only feel inadequate; too modest, too subtle, to presence our self. Surely allowing is an act of choice/will, but it remains attentive more to the quality of *being* than to the act of *doing*; more an event of proper relationship and regard than actively manipulating or interfering with what is happening. So often, we either willfully act to make music happen—hammering every note and phrase to our criteria—or when every attempt to willfully control the situation fails, we throw up our hands and resign ourselves to passivity. Yet in resignation, we withdraw into a subtle but *willful* passivity, willfully holding back, willfully ignoring or denying a situation. Both passivity and activity grounded in the willful self! But in allowing, we neither aggressively assert ourselves nor actively withdraw. Allowing occasions a more elusive and understated sense of self, one that is unreservedly distributed and commingled in the creativity of guitar-artist-music, working together but neither indiscriminately fused. *Not-two and not-one*, in that mystery of love.

Allowing offers a different form of participation that rarely comes easily to us, but perhaps one that our teachers know intimately from practicing over and over again with our children. Anyone can willfully lecture out lesson plans and manage behavioral conduct, but teaching that touches the pulsing mystery and immensity of childhood is the magnum opus of our work in religious education. In that work, allowing is the repertoire of trusting, waiting, not interfering; a practice of humility while ceaselessly attuning ourselves to the acoustics of the classroom and the arpeggios of children awaiting their moment. Teaching as allowing, as spiritual practice, as loving.

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

Rev. K.P. Hong can be reached by phone at 651-228-1456 x104 or by email at kp@unityunitarian.org.

If you find joy in being with children and seeing them alive with curiosity, consider being a teacher. Please contact kp@unityunitarian.org if you are interested.

Spirit Play Families

Mark your calendar and join us on February 9 or 23!

If you are a Spirit Play parent who would love to make bedtimes more peaceful and find a way to incorporate our Unitarian Universalist tradition into the end of your child's day, join us for a bedtime ritual workshop. Each of the three training opportunities will be two hours long, involve both children and parents, and take the place of regular Spirit Play classes scheduled at those times:

Sunday, February 9

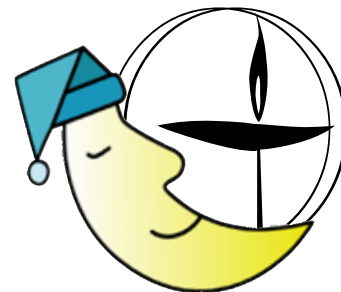
- 9:00-11:00 a.m. for children enrolled in Spirit Play at 9:00
- 3:30-5:30 p.m. for children enrolled in Spirit Play at 4:30

Sunday February 23

- 10:00 a.m.- noon for children enrolled in Spirit Play at 11:00

The Young Unitarian Universalist (UU) Families group will teach and demonstrate a ritual that brings the seven UU principles to life for children as they prepare for sleep. Children will also make and string UU principles beads that help guide them through the ritual. For families interested but unable to participate this round, there will be another opportunity in the spring.

For more information, please contact Pamela Johnson at pamelajohnson@onebeacon.com or Director of Religious Education K.P. Hong at kp@unityunitarian.org.



UNITY CHURCH CHILDREN'S MUSICAL

THE TREASURE

THE 25TH ANNUAL UNITY CHURCH CHILDREN'S MUSICAL

UNITY'S 6TH, 7TH, AND 8TH GRADERS
WRITTEN BY MARY BLOUIN-AUFFERT
MUSIC BY SANDY WATERMAN

THE TREASURE takes a group of children on a mysterious journey — from a sunny beach to the dark depths of a cave — that will stretch their character and test their talents. Singing, dancing, and working together as they follow their map, the children discover that finding THE TREASURE is more than just following the directions to the place where X marks the spot.

As always, the entire production—from the script to the music to the choreography—is original material created for Unity's 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. Sandy Waterman, composer and lyricist extraordinaire, returns for her 25th year as composer of the musical score. The multi-talented Mary Blouin-Auffert wrote the script this year and returns for her third year as director.

THE TREASURE

PERFORMANCES

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 7:00 PM

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 7:00 PM
25TH ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION
FOLLOWING THE PERFORMANCE

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 5:00 PM

Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$4 for children or \$20 for families. Tickets will be sold in the Parish Hall after services during February, online at www.unityunitarian.org, as well as before the performances.

Come and follow along with this mysterious adventure, tap your toes to the fun music and songs, and cheer-on the cast of creative and talented Unitarian Universalist kids.

Children's Musical 25th Anniversary Celebration

Unity Church commissioned and produced its first children's musical, *Winter Walk*, in 1990. Each year since then, the church community has commissioned a musical with an original script, score, and choreography to be performed by the children of the church. Following the musical's underlying philosophies that "everyone has a place" and "everyone is important," the children of Unity Church have, for the past 25 years, created an exciting and memorable experience for the community as they act, sing, and dance their way onto the stage and into our hearts.

For 15 years I have watched the amazing energy, output and lasting connections among the Children's Musical teams and participants. I have seen it grow and change but always consistent has been the amazing work of Sandy Waterman and her teaching philosophy that gives opportunity for success to each and every participant. With her teams of wonderful playwrights, directors and parent/family production assistants, each year has brought lasting memories and growth to every person involved. Congratulations to her continued dedication and to each and every person who has brought their energy, support and care to this project — especially, the children! — Ruth Palmer, Unity's Director of Music Ministry

The commitment of those working tirelessly during the months of January and February each year is a joyful testament to the important role that this program plays in the life of the children involved in its creation. Starting with a group often knowing very little about each other, the experience transforms each child and the group as whole, by building trust, confidence, and lasting connection.

Participating in the Unity Children's Musical is a transformative experience for so many kids, fundamentally changing the way they feel about themselves and their community. This production deepens friendships, inspires teamwork with their peers and develops a sense of ownership of the church among the youth. — Cathy Crosby-Schmidt, past producer and mom of two participants

We hope you will join us in celebrating 25 years by attending this year's musical, THE TREASURE, a magical journey that takes us to the heart of what it means to be part of a group that works, grows, sings, dances, learns, and loves together.

25th Anniversary Reception Celebration • Calling all alumni!

A reception honoring the Children's Musical 25th Anniversary will be held on Friday, February 28, following the 7:00 p.m. performance of THE TREASURE. Please come celebrate! If you are interested in volunteering or have questions regarding this event please contact Teresa Connor at lillipad@comcast.net.

Share a Children's Musical Memory

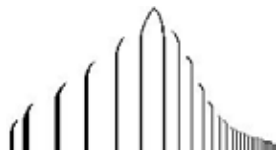
If you have a story, picture, or testimony that reflects your experience with the musical we want to hear from you. Please let us know in which musical(s) you were involved. This is one more step towards helping create a living archive. All reflections and images should be sent via email to unity@unityunitarian.org. They will be compiled and shared in a printed booklet as well as online.

Children's Musical Seeks Programs and Posters

We are specifically seeking posters or programs from the following productions: *Dragon's Tale* (1991), *Snowbound* (1992), *Fancy Feat* (1993), *The Lot* (1994), *Magic Violin* (1995), or *Freedom Friend* (1996). We will make a copy of the artwork so we can complete our framed collection. Other materials will be gratefully accepted as we build our musical archive.

Give an anniversary gift! Save the Stage!

Contributions to the Children's Musical fund will be used for the purchase and construction of a new stage (with our sights set on lights and sound too). Make a gift online at <http://bit.ly/CMGIFT> with "Children's Musical" in the comments.



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

STEVE HARPER, CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REV. JANNE ELLER-ISAACS, CO-MINISTER
REV. ROB ELLER-ISAACS, CO-MINISTER
BARBARA HUBBARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
REV. LISA FRIEDMAN, DIRECTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

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**TIME SENSITIVE
MATERIAL**

A Valentine for the Earth

An Evening of Poetry and Music

Saturday, February 15 • 7:00 p.m. • Parish Hall

Valentine's Day weekend is the perfect time to celebrate the beauty of the earth and its animals, landscapes and people. It's also an opportunity to mourn the environmental crisis our planet is facing.

Come join us for an evening of great poetry and music. Some of Minnesota's best poets will read their environmental work and music will be provided by singer/songwriter Barbara McAfee. Stay for a wine-and-treats reception following the reading. Connect with friends, new and old, who love poetry, music and our beloved planet. Featured poets include Thomas R. Smith, Heid Erdrich, and James Lenfestey, as well as Unity Church poets Kathryn Kysar, Anna Meek, Nicole Lynskey, and more.

For more information about the artists and to reserve your spot please visit www.nicolelynskey.com/wp3/val-earth



The Story of Unity Church

with Rev. Stefan Jonasson

Saturday, February 22

9:30 a.m.: Gathering and coffee

10:00 a.m.-Noon: Program

Did you know Unity Church took a lead role in bringing Unitarian religion to the prairie? We provided money and horses to liberal ministers from Norway and Finland to help them bring the gospel of freedom and conscience out into the Indian lands.

Unity's newly formed Denominational Relations Ministry Team is working to help us recover that evangelical fervor. With that in mind we welcome back The Rev. Stefan Jonasson, preacher, historian and raconteur to tell us our own story. Come listen to one of the best storytellers we know share his deep appreciation for our church.

Young Adult Potluck

Tuesday, February 18 • 6:30 p.m. • Center Room

Are you looking to meet other young adults (ages 18-35) at Unity Church? Bring your favorite dish to a relaxed evening of good company and conversation. If you have questions or would like to help with the evening, please contact Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org.

