

God

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

“God of many names and mystery beyond all our naming,” begins a prayer by UU minister Rev. Daniel Kanter. Muslims sing the 99 names of Allah, believing them to be outward signs of the universe’s inner mysteries. In Judaism, names convey the nature and essence of things, represent the history and reputation of what they name, and therefore, G-d’s names in all of their forms are treated with great respect and reverence. The Christian God is infinite and incomprehensible and so metaphors, given in divine revelation, are used to name that God, allowing God to be revealed to humans in finite and comprehensible ways.

I read somewhere once that for Unitarian Universalists, the names we use for the sacred and holy represent the vision of our highest values and hopes. If this is true, then regardless of whether you believe in an actual deity (or several), regardless of whether you believe in an interested God or no God, regardless of what you believe about something or someone larger than us moving throughout all of creation — if this is true, then when we say “God,” deep down, beneath all metaphor, we are naming the same thing.

What would our song of the names of God sound like?

Unfathomable Magic and Mystery
Source of Peace

Heart-breaker, Heart-opener, Heart-healer

Creative Cosmos
Sacred Silence

No Thing and Not There
Mother Earth

Compassionate Listener

Luminous Laughter
Voice of Truth
Brave Seeker
One Who Stands on the Side of Love
Love Itself
Blessed Poet, Weaver of Words
Eternal Power of Transformation
Divine Darkness
Interconnected Web of Life
The Holy Within
Black Lives Matter Button Wearer
Infinite Life Force
Stardust, Sunshine
The Stories We Tell of Who We Are
Dance of the Intellect
Holy Pilgrim
Beginning and End
Perpetual Search for Truth
Holy and Beautiful Body
Sublime Synchronicity
Still, Small Voice
Deep Well of Grief, Oh Wailing Woman
Music Maker, Singer of All Songs
Light of the World
All-Encompassing Arms of Compassion
Source of Radiance and Reason
The Great Surrender
Sanctuary and Storm
Hidden, Discoverable Meaning
Unstoppable Flow of Time
Wise and Wounded Soul
Spirit That Moves Through All Things
Arc of Justice
Breath of Life
Beloved Community
I Am

Adolfo Quezada writes, “God of the Wild, you are different from what I expected. I cannot predict you. You are too free to be captured for the sake of my understanding. You are everywhere I least expect to find you.”

Let us reclaim this word — God — this wild, unpredictable thing that is hidden in all of our secret places. Let us reclaim this word that may have alienated us, wounded us, distanced us from each other and ourselves. Let us reclaim and redefine the All Things and the Nothing that God represents. Let us sing together the many names of that which we hold sacred.

Hallman Ministerial Intern Shay MacKay with this month’s theme team:
Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs,
Lisa Friedman, Karen Hering,
K.P. Hong, and Ruth Palmer

God Theme Resources

BOOKS

A History of God by Karen Armstrong
The Gift: Poems by Hafiz translated by Daniel Ladinsky
36 Arguments for the Existence of God: A Work of Fiction by Rebecca Goldstein
Gilead by Marilynne Robinson
The Shack by Wm. Paul Young

FILM

Dogma (1999)
Little Buddha (1993)
Baraka (1992) and *Samsara* (2011)

YOUTH

God In Between by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso
What is God? by Etan Boritzer
On the Day You Were Born by Debra Frasier

JUST WORDS / ORDINATION OF ROSE SCHWAB

Just Words



Bring the war home. It was a common marching chant back in the days when so many of us were fighting for peace. Did we mean it? Did we really want our neighborhoods strafed from the sky? Did we really want napalm and Agent Orange deployed to deforest our parks? Of course not. But we were desperate for some way to wake the country up and keep it awake long enough to end the war.

Now we chant “No justice, no peace” and now, as then, there are those who object, not to the goals but to the tactics. Since the Black Lives Matters banners went up on the building making our longstanding support for the movement even more visible I have received a number of heartfelt letters from beloved members of the congregation who believe there is nothing to be gained by making people uncomfortable. Respectfully, I beg to differ. Frederick Douglas wrote “Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation are people who want crops without plowing up the ground... Power concedes nothing without a demand, it never did and it never will.” We need to wake the country up. We need to make people uncomfortable and we need to be uncomfortable ourselves. Lives are at stake.

Let me be as clear as I can about why Unity Church stands in vivid and public solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

1. Our support arises directly out of the stated ends of the congregation. As a community we commit ourselves to:
 - Reach out to one another across differences and stand together in the face of injustice
 - Build authentic relationships with people across differences, in the spirit of humility and reverence and
 - Live out our commitment to racial reconciliation and to dismantling racism
2. By stepping forward now, by leaning into the discomfort, by being present despite whatever concern we may feel about the tactics we are earning the trust and confidence true partnership requires.
3. We have learned that friendship invariably helps to transform rage into compassion.

As Black History month begins I hope that in spite of and because of the struggle you take pride in your church and in our tenacious commitment to being an effective and credible partner in working to heal our Nation’s original wound.

Yours in love and struggle,
Rob

Service of Ordination for Rose Schwab



In the Unitarian Universalist tradition only a gathered congregation may ordain a person to the ministry. At the annual meeting of the congregation on November 21, the congregation of Unity Church-Unitarian voted unanimously to ordain Rose Schwab into the Unitarian Universalist Ministry.

The service of ordination will be held on Saturday, April 9, at 3:00 p.m., in the Sanctuary of Unity Church. A reception in the Parish Hall will follow the service.

Mark your calendars! A complete invitation will follow.

The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Frances P. Kaschak



Flowers for Sunday Worship Services

If you would like to provide flowers for Sunday services, there are many dates available. Please contact Barbara Hubbard (barbarah@unityunitarian.org / 651-228-1456 x116) to reserve the date of your choice and to make arrangements.

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FEBRUARY WORSHIP CALENDAR / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

February 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 7: *A Salute to the Sun*

Unitarian Universalist children of my generation were taught that it was the Pharaoh Akhenaten who first “unified the Godhead,” by insisting that everyone worship Amun Ra, the sun god. By doing so he became, in effect, the founder of Unitarianism. Farfetched, perhaps, but it makes for a fascinating starting place for a series of services on God. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Rochelle Lockridge will be joined by storytellers from Tower Club for a service on climate change, solar energy, environmental racism, and the nature of God.

February 14: *Bring Many Names: Getting God Out of the Box*

Our Unitarian and Universalist ancestors were always questioning the prevailing understanding of who or what God was. Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Diane Ross will try to follow this humble tradition and will examine the many ways we can and do approach this thorny issue.

February 21: *Lean Into the Strength*

We welcome the Rev. Laszlo Major, the 2015-16 Balazs Scholar at Starr King School for the Ministry. Laszlo (Laci) serves the Unitarian Congregation at Latk about 20 miles from our partner church in Homorodszentpeter. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs will help to conduct the service which will focus on historical understanding of God among Unitarians.

February 28: *The God Within*

Join Hallman Ministerial Intern Shay MacKay, worship associate Nicole Lynskey, and special musical guest Ellis in recognizing and celebrating the Holy that dwells within ourselves.

Worship Associates Sought

We are now seeking applicants to become Worship Associates for the next term. Worship Associates must be members of the church and make a commitment to serve for two years, beginning in April. Worship Associates are expected to attend three group meetings throughout the year to discuss and develop themes and topics for the Sunday services. The next meetings are scheduled for April 9, September 17, 2016, and January 14, 2017. Each associate works with a minister or other service leader to develop and conduct three to four services during the church year.

If you are interested in serving Unity Church in this capacity, or if you would like more information, please contact Neil Bray at neilclaxtonbray@yahoo.com or Helen Pohlig at hmpohlig@msn.com to discuss this opportunity. There will be an application process to fill four available positions.

Offering Recipients

Each Sunday, thirty percent of the offering goes to support the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church and seventy percent is given to a chosen community non-profit recipient. **Please make checks payable to Unity Church.**

February 7: Flint Child Health & Development Fund

The Flint Child Health & Development Fund supports the delivery of critical public health, medical, and community-based services and interventions that address and mitigate the short and long term impacts experienced by Flint, Michigan, families exposed to lead as the result of the water crisis. This Fund will further ensure that the children of Flint are afforded the resources and interventions to overcome this population-wide exposure to lead.

February 14: People Incorporated, Artability

The People Incorporated Artability program involves a summer-long series of art and writing workshops, culminating in a three-day show in October as a means of celebrating the creativity of people with mental illness and the contributions they make to society. People Incorporated was founded in 1969 to provide help and support for an underserved population of men and women living in halfway houses and shelters in the Twin Cities. It is recognized throughout the state by the mental health community for its “first” in the delivery of state-of-the-art, one-of-a-kind, mental health services.

February 21: Balazs Scholar Program

This offering supports the Balazs Scholar Program that brings a Unitarian Transylvanian minister to study in the U.S. at the Starr King School for the Ministry by providing fundraising, administrative assistance, and tuition to each new scholar. This year, the program welcomes the Rev. Laszlo Major who will join us for worship on February 21.

February 28: Frogtown Tree Frogs

Since Unity Church first provided an offering to Frogtown's Tree Frogs, this little group of determined neighbors has made tremendous progress. Four years ago, the Tree Frogs installed a “pop up” tree nursery on a vacant lot at Lafond and Dale Street. Each year since, the group has given away dozens of shade and fruit trees thanks to Unity Church. Currently, 152 new trees have been planted! In spring 2016, the Tree Frogs will install benches, paths and landscaping in the Pop-Up Park. This Sunday's collection will help purchase three dozen more giveaway trees to provide more shade, food, and beauty in Frogtown. Unity Church member Patricia Ohmans is a Tree Frog.

If you would like to nominate a non-profit organization to be an offering recipient, please visit our website (<http://www.unityunitarian.org/nominate-the-offering.html>) and complete the online nomination form or contact Rev. Lisa Friedman at the church office.

A Call for the New Year

From Mark Foster, Chair



I made myself a cup of Yogi Tea the other day and on the teabag tag were these words: "Live for something higher, bigger, and better than you." Hmm...is this why I feel so drawn to this church? Like my family, my community, the future, Unity is bigger and better than I am.

It's not that the church *itself* is bigger and better than any one of us. Unity *represents* or enables us, as a group of people, to do good work. It represents "the larger hope" which is expressed in our Ends Statements and is put into action as Unity takes its place in the greater community as a leader and facilitator in areas of social change and racial justice. Unity Church carries us forward in this work and in *all* the ministries we are engaged with — as individuals *and* as a congregation. It makes a small "me" feel a part of the big "us" in a profound way. I am proud of this place and my place in it. How about you?

I read these words from Michael A. Schuler, parish minister of the First Unitarian Society of Madison, Wisconsin, at the close of our 144th annual meeting in November. As I begin the new year as the chair of your Unity Board, I share these words again as a call:

*If you are proud of this church, become its advocate.
If you are concerned for its future, share its message.
If its values resonate deep within you, give it a measure of your devotion.
This church cannot survive without your faith, your confidence, your enthusiasm.
Its destiny, the larger hope, rests in your hands.*



UUA MidAmerica Regional Assembly

The WHO in the New Era of Unitarian Universalism
April 29-May 1, 2016 • Saint Paul, MN

Keynote Speakers: Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen, Rev. Jeremy Nickel, and Kenny Wiley

If you are interested in attending the conference, volunteering, or learning more about Unity's Denominational Relations Team, please contact Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org.

Details at www.midamericaregionuua.org/ra.

Coming to Terms with God in the Racial Justice Movement

by Mary-Margaret Zindren, Anti-Racism Leadership Team

Long ago, I stopped saying traditional Christian prayers like the "Our Father" and the "Apostles Creed." I stopped saying saying "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. I even stopped saying that I am, or that others are, "blessed." I was — and in many ways still am — that sort of Unitarian Universalist.

What is that sort? I think it's those of us who reject or aren't sure there is a Divine, who believe in authenticity and integrity, and who are pained by saying things we don't wholeheartedly believe. When we're being honest with ourselves, we also realize that we're the sort who can look down on others, believing that we're smarter, more "evolved," more worldly than those who believe in God at all, and in particular the Christian Savior version of God.

Because the UU tent is very big, I tend to feel comfortable in this congregation. When I tend to be most uncomfortable is during services that incorporate passages from the Bible and songs that reference God — especially Spirituals. Clapping feels unnatural and the words often feel forced. I worry about how inauthentic I come across — how the whole congregation comes across — to others who may be visiting for the first time.

Except when I don't. Except for those times when a feeling wells up inside me and I am emotionally and physically moved. Moved to tears. Moved to sing all the words. Moved to stand and bear witness to truth and beauty.

Is this God? Maybe it is. Maybe it is possible that God is what is responsible for the joy and hope that lifts my heart and voice and brings me to my feet. Maybe it is God that is fueling me and the many others in this congregation who are working to build an anti-racist church and a just society. Who am I to say it isn't?

To be in the work of racial justice is to be in community with Christians. Singing spirituals and praying at rallies is a regular occurrence. Belief in God, in Jesus, in the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting is deeply held and deeply cherished by many in the justice movement and, importantly, by many Black members of the movement.

So can we be "big tent" UUs and also be in community with Christians? Yes, we can. If a spirit moves us, we don't have to name it or worship it to recognize it as real. Whether that spirit is the human spirit and nothing more, or it is The Spirit — a higher power — I'm not sure we'll ever know during our years alive on this earth. I'm increasingly sure it doesn't matter.

If you are a Humanist-leaning UU and you feel inspired to join the movement for racial justice, I encourage you to lean into the discomfort and to let yourself be moved. Moved to wade into the water, to hold the hand outstretched to you, to sing full-throated even if you don't know or believe every word. I hope we can all, together, allow a communion of spirit — whether it be human or Divine — to carry us with joy and hope and determination toward the realization of the Beloved Community.

HALLMAN MINISTERIAL INTERN

Pledge Report

Operating, Capital, and Unity Tomorrow
From Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director

Last fall, we conducted our annual pledge drive in support of the operating and capital budgets for 2016 and 2017. Thank you to everyone who has shown their commitment to the church by pledging for 2016. If you haven't yet pledged, it's not too late! As of mid-January, the current status of our pledges is as follows.

2016 Operating Pledges

We have received 651 pledges for 2016's operating budget totaling \$1,229,536 toward our approved goal of \$1,279,000. We need another \$49,472 in 2016 pledges to meet our year-end goal.

- 39.8% of pledges were flat from 2015 to 2016
- 44.2% increased an average of 15.8%
- 6.9% decreased an average of 33.5%
- 9.1% are new pledges
- The average pledge for 2016 is \$1,889 and the median pledge is \$1,200.

2017 Operating Pledges

We have received 452 pledges for 2017's operating budget totaling \$947,823.

Capital Pledges

We have received Capital pledges for 2015, 2016, and 2017 totaling \$656,867 which are earmarked for installing a sprinkler system in the sanctuary (\$105k–\$125k), correcting water leakage issues (\$35k–\$40k), and addressing debt service on the *Unity Tomorrow* loan.

Unity Tomorrow Capital Campaign Commitments

As of December 31, 2015, total *Unity Tomorrow* capital campaign commitments were at \$6,831,937. We have collected \$6,538,932 with a remaining \$293,005 collectible by the end of 2016. The total project costs were \$7,977,426. We have fully satisfied the principal payments for our short term *Unity Tomorrow* loan with Western Bank, and we agreed to a delay in the commencement of our long term note until December 31, 2016. This agreement allows us to reduce the principal with final *Unity Tomorrow* capital contributions before entering into a long term note. We will be considering multiple bank proposals in 2016 on the long term debt.

2015-16 Hallman Ministerial Intern

Shay MacKay



Marion Zimmer Bradley once wrote, "To know you are ignorant is the beginning of wisdom. Then, when you begin to learn, you will not have to forget all the things you think you know."

I'm halfway through my time here with you. Five newsletter theme articles, two sermons, a handful of R.E. classes, and a million meetings down. A few more to go.

In the wake of the holidays — the race from Thanksgiving through Hanukkah, Solstice, Christmas, and into the New Year — I'm reflecting. There have been many times over the past five months when I have willingly admitted my ignorance, gracefully surrendering to the gentle lessons this beloved community offers me at every turn. And in the infancy of my ministerial wisdom, I admit there have been times when I have very *ungracefully* tripped over my own two feet in my rush to share all the things I think I know.

I wonder sometimes, by whose authority I dare move here among you, exploring my own pastoral presence and prophetic voice. I wonder sometimes why you let me! And then I remember, as I wait for the next adventure in congregational life to come along, you (and I) believe in the interconnected web of all life. What we do with and for and to each other creates vibrations that will move through that web long after any of us are here at Unity Church, and those vibrations sing into being the very wisdom that guides us toward changing the world — together.

And so, as we dwell here together at the turning of this year, I pray that the Spirit That Moves Through All Things continues to move through me, through us, as we dance this dance of mutual transformation, forgetting all those things we thought we knew — about ourselves, about each other, about faith, about love — and beginning to learn, again and again, why it is we choose to move through this space and time together, living lives of integrity, service and joy, offering radical hospitality and loving the hell out of this world.

Shay MacKay can be reached by phone at 651-228-1456 x129 or by email at shay@unityunitarian.org.

Spring Fundraiser • Save the date: Saturday, April 16!

We are beginning to plan our spring fundraiser with the goal of raising \$20,000 for the 2016 operating budget. We have set the date for Saturday, April 16, and plan to engage our church community in a "Great Gatherings" event. This silent auction will feature opportunities to bid on shared experiences offered by church members and friends — it's all about building community through small gatherings: concerts, dinners, connecting with nature, arts, crafts, family fun, and more. We will spice up the fundraiser with a sale of gently-loved jewelry and art.

Do you have great ideas and time to help with this endeavor? We can promise fun and a real sense of satisfaction in a team setting. Contact Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director by email at barbarah@unityunitarian.org or at 651-228-1456 x116.

WELCOME WORDS & MEMBERSHIP / NEW MEMBERS

Welcome Words



One of the things I love most about being Unitarian Universalist is our theological diversity. As this month's theme reminds us, we don't even take the idea or experience of God for granted. Just last Sunday over a bowl of chili in the Parish Hall, my son, a first time visitor, and I wandered into a

conversation about whether or not God has a gender. It is our openness to questioning, our commitment to speaking our truths, and our genuine interest in the diverse perspectives of others that makes such moments possible. So take this month as an invitation — dive deep into those conversations with your neighbors in the pews! Who knows what you might learn? Keep warm and see you in church!

Rev. Lisa Friedman

Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement

Pathway to Membership Classes

Unity Church offers three different classes for visitors who are exploring Unity as a spiritual home. Sign up at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement, at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107. She is also happy to meet with you personally to answer questions and to welcome you into the congregation. Childcare is available by request at least one week in advance.

Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

Wednesday, February 3: 7:15–8:30 p.m. ~also offered ~

Sunday, February 28: 5:45–7:00 p.m.

If you have been visiting Unity Church 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. Together, we will explore the mission and vision of this church, as well as historical and contemporary Unitarian Universalism.

Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Inquiry

This winter and spring, Finding Yourself at Unity will take on a new format! Look for sessions to be offered on a regular basis on Sundays, which can be attended in the order that works for you. In these classes, 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, April 13: 7:15–9:00 p.m.

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

Welcome New Members!



New members (l-r): Burt Riskedahl, Libby Arnosti, Susan Vaughan-Fier, Christine Sarkes

Libby Arnosti grew up at Unity Church and has many memories of participating in the children choir, acting in musicals, and going through Coming of Age. She recently moved to Frogtown after spending six years living on the West Coast, and is working as a substitute teacher and after-school tutor before moving toward a career as an ESL teacher. She is so excited to be an official member of her church home.

Janet Kinney is excited to be joining the Unity Church community. A long time Unitarian, she decided to join Unity after moving to St Paul. She loves the music, the joyous atmosphere of the families and the messages of our ministers and lay leaders. She looks forward to making new friends.

Burt Riskedahl and his wife Margo moved to the Summit Hill neighborhood in St. Paul in August, 2015, returning to St. Paul after 42 years of residing in Bismarck, ND, close to the communities they were originally raised in. They lived in the Merriam Park neighborhood in St. Paul in the late 1960s and early 1970s when Burt was employed by the Wilder Foundation and attended William Mitchell College of Law. At the point of downsizing their lives following retirement, they decided to return to the progressiveness and good quality of life that living in the Twin Cities represents. It also brings them closer to their two adult children and their families (timewise more than mileage wise) as they reside in Portland, OR, and Toronto, ONT. They look forward to being a part of the Unity fellowship.

Christine Sarkes is a mother to two amazing ginger daughters who make her proud every day. She is happy to have found a spiritual home in Unity Church, whose values mirror her own. Her passions are theater, books, blogging, cooking and travel. She is eager to explore Unity's service activities and to meet more members!



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Soup Suppers

After the 4:30 Sunday Worship Service

All meals will offer vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies may contact Madeline Summers at madeline@unityunitarian.org to arrange to have a special preparation.

February 7: Dill pickle soup

February 14: Chili

February 21: Pork and poblano soup or mushroom and barley

February 28: Pho (beef or veggie)

We are always in need of help with soup suppers! If you'd like to get to know a few people in a relaxed work environment contact Madeline to get trained to work in the kitchen.

Elders' Group

Comedy Improv Lessons for Life

Tuesday, February 16 • 1:00–2:30 p.m. • Center Room

Improv comedy is the art of creating deep relationships and complex stories with very little context. What can this creative art form teach us about relationships and storytelling that make a difference? We will look at the rules of improv, play some games, and explore the wisdom this art form offers us to be better, more connected human beings.

Young Adult Group

The Young Adult group is growing! Join us on Tuesday, February 23, for a 6:30 p.m., potluck in the Center Room. All those ages 18-35 are welcome! Contact Rev. Lisa Friedman (lisa@unityunitarian.org) to be added to the email list to receive Young Adult news and announcements.

Camp UniStar

You ask, "Where can I find another UU community that echoes the friendships and richness of my Unity community?" The reply: "Camp UniStar!"

Camp UniStar is located on Star Island just four hours north of the Twin Cities. Campers come as individuals, families, and pairs, for one of ten Saturday-to-Saturday program weeks over the summer.

In addition to morning programs options for children, youth, and adults, campers enjoy swimming, sailing, and kayaking in beautiful Cass Lake. Hike the peaceful Chippewa National Forest which surrounds camp. Take in the fresh breezes, the call of the loons, delicious meals, and the rhythmic waves upon the shore. Stay in the lodge or a cabin, or tent lake side on a raised platform.

Want to learn more? Stop by the Camp Unistar table in the Parish Hall on one of the last three Sundays in February. We will have brochures and experienced campers on hand to answer your questions. www.campunistar.org

End of Life Conversations

Unity Church embarks on ambitious plans to invite the entire congregation to participate in conversations about our end of life wishes, our experiences with death, and losing loved ones.

All adult members and friends of Unity Church are invited to sign up to be a part of facilitated small group discussions that will begin at the end of February and continue through early April. These groups will be answering and discussing a series of in-depth questions revolving around end of life choices, selecting health care agents, and creating a health care directive. "Every person who drives or travels in a car needs a health care directive!"

Unity Church is blessed to have a team of experts who have collaborated and created a set of comprehensive questions for all to answer. We will have trained close to a 100 facilitators who will have documents and resources for each participant. Notaries in the congregation have offered to notarize all directives that are brought to the church. It is the hope of the planning team to elicit 100% participation in the congregation and then to take this effort to other faith communities and the City of St. Paul. Please join us in this ambitious effort!

Groups will be meeting during the day, evening, and even on weekends. You should have no trouble finding a group that will meet your schedule needs. Sign up will be available online beginning February 1 and in the Parish Hall on Sundays beginning February 7.

If you have concerns or questions, please contact Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x116.

Committed Couples Spring Series

Committed Couples is a class designed to support all couples who are committed to one another and to promote healthy and productive conversations about relationships. The class will cover issues like finances, spirituality, the impact of family of origin issues, parenting, intimacy, and conflict. There will be sharing and work done in small groups and as couples. Each creates a relationship vision together which serves as a foundation for the work that happens during class.

Led by Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs, the Committed Couples class will be held on seven consecutive Tuesday evenings, from 7:00-9:15 p.m., beginning March 8 and continuing through April 19. Registration is free for pledging members of Unity Church and \$110 for non-pledging friends. To register, please contact Martha Tilton by email at martha@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x105.

Contact Michelle Hill by email at michelle@unityunitarian.org to request childcare.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

February 3

Dinner menu: Tuscan white bean stew, ciabatta, and salad

The Sulfide-Ore Copper Mining Threat to the Boundary Waters with Chris Donato

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) is synonymous with Minnesota. For generations, people from all across the world travel to the BWCA to camp, hike, canoe, kayak and fish in our nation's most interconnected system of lakes and streams. Some 250,000 visitors per year help to solidify the Boundary Waters as an engine of the NE Minnesota economy, which generates \$850 million dollars in revenue and supports 18,000 Minnesota jobs. Now, that is all being threatened by a proposed sulfide-ore copper mine on the unprotected southern edge, which risks contaminating the BWCA and ruining the pristine waters. Join Unity's Sustainability Team for a presentation on the threat and how you can help protect both a Minnesota and national treasure!

Addiction and Recovery Ministry

What does love have to do with it? Love, compassion, and affection are challenging in the face of the painful, frustrating, and scary symptoms of addiction. We'll explore how love can help heal. This group offers topics for discussion, time for sharing, and peer-to-peer support ministry. The use of the terms addiction and recovery are meant to be inclusive and self-defined with a focus on strengths, community, and spiritual development. Everyone is welcome.

Textile Arts Group

Bring your knitting, crocheting, tatting, embroidery, and cross stitch for an evening of fellowship and service. This group will meet regularly on the first and third Wednesday evenings. All ages and levels of experience are welcome! Questions? Contact Linda Mandeville at lindamandeville@aol.com.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Take It Easy Vinyasa with Elen Bahr

This is our slow and gentle version of "power yoga" or "fitness yoga." It's set to music, tailored to meet the needs of various shapes and sizes of yogis. We'll use classical yoga poses (Warriors, Downward Facing Dog, Chair Pose, balance poses, etc.) but we'll take them slow and easy to help you unwind at the end of your day. Bring a yoga mat and blanket, if possible.

Welcome to Unity with Rev. Lisa Friedman

If you have been visiting Unity Church 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. We will explore the mission and vision of this church, as well as historical and contemporary Unitarian Universalism.

New Family Religious Education Orientation with Rev. KP Hong

An orientation for families whose children are enrolling in Religious Education for the first time. Contact kp@unityunitarian.org if you plan to attend this orientation session.

Go: The Chinese Game with Bob Ruud

Learn and play Go, the Chinese board game. Anyone above the age of 10 is welcome. Bring your own board and set if you have one. www.usgo.org/what-go.

February 10

Dinner menu: Swedish meatballs, mashed potatoes, salad, dessert

Transformational Moments in Unitarian Universalism: A Celebration of UU Heritage Week

In every movement, there are threshold moments that define the future. Join the ministers of Unity Church to hear some of these pivotal stories and to reflect on some of the thresholds we are facing today.

Naming the Holy: Writing about God with Rev. Karen Hering Open Page Writing Session

Free; RSVP required to karen@unityunitarian.org

"God is a pure no-thing, concealed in now and here," wrote the 17th century mystic and poet Angelus Silesius. This writing session is an invitation into "now and here" to encounter and reflect on the Holy, known by many names and beyond all naming. 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. No writing experience is necessary.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Therapeutic Yoga with Elen Bahr

This practice is great for those with chronic tightness, chronic pain, or who simply want to move their bodies more freely. The 75 minute-long practice takes place lying on the floor, with slow, subtle movements and gentle breathing. We find this practice is best for adults, not youth. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat and blanket, if possible.

Go: The Chinese Game (see February 3)

February 17

Dinner menu: Tomato soup with grilled cheese

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates Unity's Congregational Book Read

"This is your country, this is your world, this is your body, and you must find some way to live within the all of it." In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis. Join members of Unity Church and the larger community to discuss Coates' honest reflections to his son and to engage the issues he raises. Co-sponsored by Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice, Anti-Racism Leadership and Library teams.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Take It Easy Vinyasa with Elen Bahr

This is our slow and gentle version of "power yoga" or "fitness yoga." We'll use classical yoga poses but we'll take them slow and easy to help you unwind at the end of your day. Bring a yoga mat and blanket, if possible.

Textile Arts Group (see February 3)

Go: The Chinese Game (see February 3)

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

February 24

Dinner menu: Roasted chicken

Black Lives Matter: Stories from the 4th Precinct and Beyond

Many Unity Church members have been present at the Black Lives Matter events of the past few months. Their stories embrace a variety of insights, perspectives, and experiences. Members of the Racial and Restorative Justice Team invite you to listening circle to hear their voices, using the circle-keeping process as our model for discussion.

End of Life Conversations

Beginning at the end of February and continuing through early April, all adult members and friends of Unity Church will be invited to sign up to be a part of facilitated small group discussions. These groups will be answering and discussing a series of in-depth questions revolving around end of life choices, selecting health care agents, and creating a health care directive. "Every person who drives or travels in a car needs a health care directive!" See details at right.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Therapeutic Yoga with Elen Bahr

This practice is great for those with chronic tightness, chronic pain, or who simply want to move their bodies more freely. The 75 minute-long practice takes place lying on the floor, with slow, subtle movements and gentle breathing. We find this practice is best for adults, not youth. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat and blanket, if possible.

Go: The Chinese Game (see February 3)

About Wellspring Wednesday

Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun. Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., followed by worship 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. (Children under the age two are free.) Reservations for dinner are not required. All meals will offer vegetarian and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies may contact madeline@unityunitarian.org to arrange to have a special preparation. Email Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org for financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner. No one is turned away.

Dinner Volunteers Needed

Dinner preparation and clean up volunteers are needed on Tuesday, February 16 and 23, from 5:30–7:30 p.m., and on Wednesday February 17 and 24, from 3:00–7:30 p.m. (or a few hours during that time). Contact madeline@unityunitarian.org to volunteer a few hours of help.

Fellowship Groups

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 11) 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.

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (February 18) from Noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Evergreen Quilters: Second Tuesday of the month (February 9) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (February 27) from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760.

Living With Grief Group: For people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (February 16) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, February 8 and 22, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

Unitots!: A drop-in playgroup for families with kids through preschool age. Every Monday and Thursday, from 9:30 a.m.-noon, in the nursery. Contact Michelle Hill at michelle@unityunitarian.org

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. All are welcome—even if you haven't read the book. Contact Jack Hawthorne at jack.hawthorne@comcast.net. **February 9 selection:** *The Tiger's Wife* by Tea Obreht

Unity Bridge Club: The next meeting of the Bridge Club will be Friday, February 5, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209.

Women In Retirement, The Choice Years: This group meets the second and fourth Thursday (February 11 and 25) of each month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org for more information.

Young Adult Group: Potluck supper on Tuesday, February 23, at 6:30 p.m., in the Center Room. Bring your favorite dish to a relaxed evening of good company and conversation. Contact: Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org

Sangha Zen Meditation: Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. Instruction is offered on the first Tuesday (February 2) beginning at 5:00 p.m. Contact Ken Ford at kford5@comcast.net

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE & LEARNING

Half-day of Silence

Saturday, February 6 • 1:00-5:00 p.m. • Unity Church

Join Spiritual Director Sarah Cledwyn in a half-day of silence on Saturday, February 6. We will begin as a large group to talk about the day and then engage in practices 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, creative arts and more. All are welcome and we ask for a \$10 suggested donation. Please RSVP to Sarah at sarahcledwyn@gmail.com or at 651-699-9948 to ensure there are enough space and materials for everyone. To request free child care, please e-mail Michelle Hill at michelle@unityunitarian.org at least one week in advance.

Small Group Spiritual Direction

Change is something we can count on in life. Wherever we are in this moment, it is different in our very next breath. Join Spiritual Director Sarah Cledwyn, MA, for a small group spiritual direction process. This group will provide an opportunity to bring awareness to the change that is always part of life, bring focus and attention to the path of your life, as well as offer community connections for support and deep reflection. Groups will meet every other week on Thursday, beginning in February and will run through May. A day group will meet from 10:00 a.m.-noon and an evening group will meet from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Free childcare is available with one-week advance notice to michelle@unityunitarian.org. Details and sign up is online at <http://bit.ly/ucugroups>. Cost is \$30 per session with a sliding fee scale. Questions? Contact Sarah at 651-699-9948 or sarahcledwyn@gmail.com.

The Mysticism of Music

A Retreat into the Spirituality of Sound

**Saturday, February 20 • 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. • Unity Church
Facilitated by Hallman Ministerial Intern, Shay MacKay**

Everyone is invited and welcome to attend this workshop. You do not need to be a musician or a singer. You do not even need to know anything about music. The spirituality of sound is as much about listening as creating, so all you really need is an open mind, an open heart, and a willingness to listen deeply. We will be doing some easy, gentle body movements that will be accessible and adaptable for all physical ability levels. There will be presentations and discussion, but mostly this will be an experiential retreat, exploring music, silence and spirit in a variety of ways. Sign-up for this retreat at the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall on Sundays or by emailing Shay at shay@unityunitarian.org.

Tuesday Meditation at Unity Church

A portion of the time in Unity Sangha's Tuesday meditation meetings is devoted to teaching and discussion to deepen our understanding of the meditation path and its roots. In the first months of 2016, this exploration will be devoted to the core teaching of the Buddha commonly known as the "Four Noble Truths." We will ask: How did this contemplative way arise as an antidote to the fear and anxiety we all know as an inescapable aspect of the human condition?

Join us Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. in Ames Chapel. Meditation instruction is offered at 5:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month. Please notify Ken Ford at kenfaure@gmail.com if you plan to come for instruction.

Wednesday Evening Yoga

Weekly yoga practice for everybody. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat or blanket. See Wellspring Wednesday offering descriptions pages 8-9 for details. Learn more about the instructor, Elen Bahr, at EveryYogi.com or email questions to elen@everyyogi.com.

First Thursday Tai Ji

The Tai Ji practice circle will again meet in the Foote Room on Thursday, February 4, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Practicing the Five-Element Form, the circle offers enhanced balance, flexibility and peace of mind and is open to those new to Tai Ji as well as experienced participants. People with limited mobility can enjoy the practice seated in a chair.

Facilitator Lisa Schlingerman says, "the Five-Element form is a joyful dance connecting us to the natural world. We can celebrate the mystery and beauty of life and enjoy a healthy, active practice too."

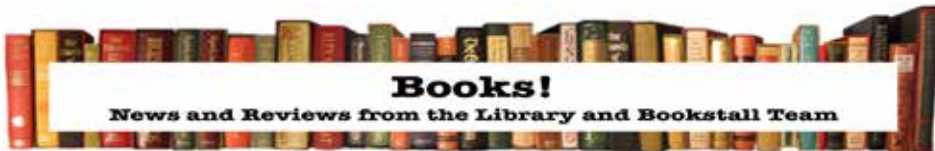
To participate, RSVP to Karen Hering at karen@unityunitarian.org. Dress in comfortable clothes and bring your own beverage and/or treat for a break midway through the practice. Donations will be accepted for the facilitator.

Saturday Southern Style 5 Animal Kung Fu

This beautiful Chinese martial art emulates the moment and disposition of the Tiger, Snake, Crane, Dragon, and Leopard. Our focus will be on studying the introductory form of this style. You can expect a practice which builds strength, conditioning, and flexibility. Class meets Saturdays, in the Body Room, from 10:00 a.m.–noon, and is for any level of experience ages 16–106. To participate, please contact Bryan Kujawski at 612-750-0221 or barney.kujawski@gmail.com.

From the Unity Church Ends Statements: Within

1. *The people of Unity Church-Unitarian value a deeply meaningful, transforming liberal religious experience. As individuals, we*
- b. *Develop spiritual practices that nurture reverence and encourage diverse worship services rich in beauty, serenity, community and joy.*



All Literature is Protest

Between the World and Me: The Unity Congregation Book Read From Shelley Butler, Libraries and Bookstall Team

The format of *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates — a letter to his son — was based on James Baldwin's "A Letter to My Nephew" but the title of the book is actually borrowed from a 1934 poem of the same name by Richard Wright in which Wright imagines the unbearable physical and emotional suffering of lynching. *And a thousand faces swirled around me, clamoring that / my life be burned...* The first few lines of the poem appear just after the dedication page.

Born in 1908 on a plantation in Mississippi, Wright was grandson to four slaves, and no stranger to lynching. Despite an abusive childhood and lack of formal education, Wright became one of the most important American writers of the 20th century and has been called, "the father of the contemporary Black writer." He paved the way for many including Baldwin, and now, in turn, Ta-Nehisi Coates. It was Wright who said, "All literature is protest." I like that Coates writes with this sense of historical purpose, and places himself in a line of important American writers.

Some of the comments that I've heard about *Between the World and Me* are that it is hard to read, readers are left with a feeling of despair, and Coates offers no solutions. For me, there was nothing shockingly new or unfamiliar in it, and by the time I read it, it had already hit #1 on the New York Times bestseller only weeks after it had been published. It has been a bestseller ever since, won the National Book Award, and is on too many 10-best-books-of-2015 lists to name. That a book written by a father to a son about being Black in America is getting read and celebrated this much is cause for celebration not despair. There is painful history and hard truths in this book but still, I am left with a feeling of hopefulness.

Coates has been criticized for failing to offer a solution and for writing to his son that "the struggle is all I really have for you." Others consider the book an invitation to engage with each other about solutions. What do you think?

The discussions about *Between the World and Me* scheduled for Wednesday, February 17, at 7:10 p.m., and Sunday, February 21, at 12:30 p.m., will most certainly be interesting, and if true to UU character, they will be lively, critical, and thought-provoking, also. You do not need to have read the book (but it helps).

Find more information in the book read handout, "Between the World and Me Reader," a compilation of Baldwin's letter to his son, Wright's poem, comments and reviews on the Coates book, more questions to think about while reading *Between the World and Me*, and a list of resources for further reading. Find this and *Between the World and Me* in the Anderson Library anytime and in the Unity Bookstall on Sunday mornings.

On behalf of the Anti-Racism Leadership Team, the Racial and Restorative Justice Team, and the Library and Bookstall Team, thank you for taking part in the congregation book read. We look forward to hearing your thoughts at the book discussions.

Note: To be honest, I haven't read Richard Wright since I was in college so depended on these sources for information:

- "Richard Wright (author)." Retrieved online from: Wikipedia
- Moskowitz, M. "The Enduring Importance of Richard Wright." *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 2008. Retrieved from: www.jbhe.com/features/59_richardwright.html
- The Richard Wright Encyclopedia. Retrieved online from: Google Books.

Unity Church Emergency Preparedness Team

Late in 2015, a small group now known as the Emergency Preparedness Team (EPT), began meeting. The team's purpose is to assess how well Unity Church can meet emergencies and to prepare an Emergency Action Plan to document our policies and procedures. Unity Church Executive Director Barbara Hubbard chairs the team and other members include Facilities Manager Bill Lowell, Richard Birger, Leah Doherty, and Rob Fulton.

The EPT examined a long list of possible emergencies such as medical, fire, tornado, loss of power, unwelcome visitors, etc. The first effort was improving how we handle medical emergencies. To that end, you will soon see complete first aid kits on all three floors. The EPT has also obtained a grant to pay for partial costs of three automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and they will be placed on all three floors. The lower level AED will have a set of youth panels. We are preparing a training for staff and key volunteers for use of the AEDs. We are also offering a Situational Awareness Training in February for our staff, tenants, and front desk volunteers. Sometime this spring, we will be conducting a drill of how best to evacuate the church on a Sunday, addressing the challenge of how to reconnect parents with children.

Watch for more information from Unity's EPT!



COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Sustainable Living Group

The Sustainable Living Group is picking up steam! We are a group of people with a deep concern and passion for the environment within our homes, church community, and beyond. We joyfully welcome new participants that are searching for ways to live into their environmental values! Please make time to ask and learn more about the Solar program on Sundays in the Parish Hall! Our next group meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 9, at 7:00 p.m., in the Gannett Room. On Tuesday, February 23, we will be offering a class helping people to kick-out their toxic cleaning products by making safe and natural cleaning products!! Questions? Contact Jessica at jjimm0813@gmail.com.



Rainbow Chalice Alliance

Ready to Bake: Pies for Queer Prom

Unity's Rainbow Chalice Alliance (RCA) annual Pi(e) Day (3/14/16) Bake Sale is fast approaching! Order a delicious blueberry, apple, or French silk pie in the Parish Hall on Sunday, February 7, 14, and 21. RCA is only able to make 50 pies, so order early! Your pie purchases make it possible for RCA to support Q-Quest (a yearly festival for LGBTQA youth) as well as help fund Queer Prom and Youth Pride in the spring.



RCA welcomes all available volunteers to help with our annual "Pies for Queer Prom" fundraiser baking sessions which will be held on Saturday, February 27, from 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., and Saturday, March 12, time to be determined. No experience necessary. To volunteer for a shift, contact Elizabeth Giffin at egiffin19@yahoo.com. Volunteers are essential to the success of the fundraiser. Pies will be available for pick up on Sunday, March 13, after each service.

Celebrate Progress and Act Again on Homelessness

It is time to celebrate Unity's successes in the effort to end homelessness. We also must see that this is a long game with more to be done. Over the last two years Unity members have joined with more than 70 partner churches in the Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative to urge legislative action against homelessness. This effort succeeded in gaining approximately \$140,000,000 of funding for new housing construction, remodeling, operation of housing facilities, and services to help people escape homelessness. Last summer, using some of that money, ground was broken for Prior Crossing on University and Prior Avenue, a housing development with 44 studio apartments for formerly homeless youth. It will be completed this summer. Several other projects around the state were also funded. We need to congratulate each other for the part we each played in urging this action from our state legislature and governor.

But, of course, this work is not complete. There are still too many homeless people in Minnesota. Our legislature will begin to meet in March, and Beacon will want our help in urging continued state support for this cause. Funding will be needed for more housing and renovation projects, as well as help for homeless youth services, rental assistance, and aid for individuals who have completed prison sentences and are at-risk of homelessness. Please join this effort when asked during the month of February. Look for Unity's Affordable Housing Team table on Sundays in the Parish Hall.

Support the Last Month of the Winter Warm Up Drive!

The Racial and Restorative Justice Team (RRJ) and our partner Amicus thank you for the wonderful response so far for this year's Winter Warm Up Drive. In a recent thank you letter, Amicus shared their gratitude for our congregational effort: "Just as the temperatures are getting colder, you sent us gloves and socks, along with many hygiene products. Some of our clients are just being released from prison in the clothes that they had on when they were sent to St. Cloud. It warms our hearts to see our donation closet filling up with necessities. Thank you for gifting those we serve."

During February, the RRJ team will continue to collect: hygiene items such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, body lotion, deodorant, and shaving cream (all items should be unopened); new gloves, hats, scarves, coats, and socks; hand and foot warmers; bus passes or donations for Amicus to buy bus passes

On Sundays, please bring donations to the Racial and Restorative Justice table in the Parish Hall. Donations delivered during the week should be brought to Rev. Lisa Friedman's office. Thank you!!



Food Collection for Sharing Korner

Unity's Evergreen Quilters coordinate an on-going food drive for Sharing Korner Food Shelf. Collection baskets are stationed in the main lobby and by the Holly Avenue doors. Donations of non-perishable items are always welcome.

Thank you!

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Higher Power of Coming of Age

From Drew Danielson, Coordinator of Youth/Campus Ministries



There is a pretty good chance you've heard me proclaim, "Coming of Age is the best thing we do at Unity Church." I say it every Coming of Age (COA) Sunday, I say it at orientation, mentor meetings, and in class. It is a program that embraces our bright youth and draws on our members of all ages, our staff, and our traditions. It

is done with the light of truth and the warmth of love. The credo ceremony is a wonder!

Yes I am very close to it, I ostensibly "run" it, thank you; but even as I brag about it, I'm abundantly aware it is a flawed, challenging, often confusing program. As Unitarian Universalists we are "comfortable with The Mystery" — still, how do you teach that? Nowhere is the difficulty more apparent than when we tackle the topic of "the nature of the higher power."

Our youth are eager to proclaim they do not believe in "an old white man with a flowing beard seated in the clouds" — whether watching, loving, and/or vengeful. They are primed to stress they will not be duped by such immature, hopeful human clinging for a loving creator. That's that then, time to move on.

Perhaps they aren't in worship with us enough. They don't seem to register dissonance about how often the Spirit is called into our midst. They are unfamiliar with the idea that through human history the desire to "fill the God shaped hollow" has been nearly universal. They feel *something* at a sunset, in a canoe, and at moments of great joy and personal sorrow. But it isn't God!

COA leaders sometimes get flack for too heavily embracing the concept of a Higher Power. The kids don't know what to do when they hear the powerful personal story of Pastor Danny Givens who speaks of personal relationship with God. I think a majority of us flinch when asked to define Higher Power for ourselves. I'm of a mind that adults need to have more courage to dig into the mystery, and I think we should tell our children what we feel, and what we find. It's the best thing we do at Unity Church.

The Gifts of Practice

From Sarah Cledwyn, Spiritual Director and Spirit Play Teacher



This year I have been teaching Spirit Play as one of my spiritual practices. I've also been spending some time reflecting on my experience of teaching and what I am learning from it as I engage with our children and engage with my own soul. This process of practice and reflection has been very rich. Aside from the joy

of getting more competent and improvisational in my role, I have grown so much by observing and being present with our children as they learn and as we play together. Coming into the classroom in the same mind-set as I come into my meditation practice has been an interesting process in itself. I have tried to take on the different perspective that my other practices call for. Instead of trying to manage the children and the lesson, I have been able to let them flow and dance while I enjoy the creativity and learning taking place in a very embodied and energetic way.

Some things have touched me deeply, like the child who said that the best thing, the most important thing, and the character he would be in the story of Jesus' birth was the swaddling clothes wrapped around the baby. Take a moment to let that sink in. What swaddles you as you begin the new year, or a new path or a new practice? What swaddles you when you feel vulnerable and helpless in life? What does it feel like? How do you honor or appreciate your own metaphorical swaddling clothes? There are too many of these moments and opportunities to capture them all. Is it just my altered vision this year? Because it feels like I haven't noticed this much invitation for my own journey in other years I have taught. This is the difference between just teaching and practicing teaching.

My reflections for this year are now online in the form of blog posts. If you want to see what invitations I have received from our children and how they have impacted my own journey, please feel free to read along. This week I reflect on the feeling of belonging we create through relationship and ritual (<http://sarahcledwyn.com/this-is-the-circle-of-our-community/>) and last week I reflected on the blessing of beauty as it was enacted in our class (<http://sarahcledwyn.com/fists-full-of-blessings/>). As always, I invite you to consider, whether or not you have children in religious education, joining in our community of belonging.

OFF THE RAILS



The 2016 Unity Church Children's Musical
March 3, 4, and 5 • Turn to page 14 for details

OFF THE RAILS



A western tale about tradition, cooperation, and progress
The 27th Annual Unity Church Children's Musical

Unity's 6th, 7th, and 8th Graders

Written and Directed by Mary Blouin Auffert

Music by Sandy Waterman

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 27th year as composer of the musical score.

PERFORMANCES

In the Sanctuary at Unity Church

Thursday, March 3 • 7:00 PM

Friday, March 4 • 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 5 • 5:30 PM

TICKETS

\$6/adult • \$4/child • \$20/family

Sold online (www.unityunitarian.org) in February and in
the Parish Hall after services beginning February 14.

Tickets are also available at the door.



MUSIC MINISTRY / PARISH HALL ARTIST



Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries

The sound of the sea, the curve of a horizon, wind in leaves, the cry of a bird leave manifold impressions in us. And suddenly, without our wishing it at all, one of these memories spills from us and finds expression in musical language....I want to sing my interior landscape with the simple artlessness of a child. — Claude Debussy

Music and rhythm find their way into the secret places of the soul. — Plato

*... only if there are angels in your head will you ever, possibly, see one.
— Mary Oliver from "The World I Live In" found in the collection Felicity*

I just got home from a three hour music rehearsal, 10:30 p.m., -6 outside, sitting by the fireplace to warm up and ponder... music. How is it that people willingly slog out into this cold to either hear it, practice it, or be it?

Composer, Debussy, suggests that music wishes to "sing" from an interior landscape of memories and impressions. Plato, in his writings, speaks of music's ability to find its way into places even we do not know. And, Mary Oliver, of not being able to see an angel if we do not first conceive of one. Well, my "middle" really leapt at this Oliver line (thank you Karen Hering for introducing me to this poem) because it immediately spoke to me of what I witness constantly in my work... that moment when one engaged in music, often in singing, "sees that angel" in their head.

OK, no deep discussions here about what angel stands for, no specific philosophies attached to it. For me, it simply represents a connection, unique within each person, to what might be described as "a secret place in their soul;" for me, something quite sacred, something part of my particular definition of God. The lovely thing about music is that everyone can approach, listen to, and participate in music from their own perspective. Each brings a unique sound of being into the mix of any ensemble, any performance, any receptive thought.

The "world I live in" is highly conceptual and deeply affective in its connection between and among us. Perhaps this is my work, through music... together, to discover the "angels in our head," in those secret places, wishing to be seen and express themselves, to help define the "God" in this world. Got Music?

SAVE THE DATE!

**Arthur Foote
Music Sunday**

May 1, 2016

9 a.m., 11 a.m., 4:30 p.m.

One Voice Mixed Chorus Presents...

The Love Show

In The Love Show, OVation, the a cappella ambassador ensemble from One Voice Mixed Chorus, takes on the theme of love and its many flavors. Join us on a musical exploration of love, with humor, honesty, and pride!

Tickets are \$15 online and \$20 at the door.

Sunday, March 6 • 3:00 p.m.
Mayflower United Church of Christ
Tickets and details: www.ovmc.org

February Parish Hall Artist

Stuart T. Loughridge

I moved to the Twin Cities, from Denver, CO, in 1999 to begin my training at the Atelier of Fine Arts.

I fell completely and devotedly into my work. As a full-time artist I operate a studio of Fine Art in Saint Paul. Within the studio I create etchings, watercolors, and oil-paintings, working in the genres of landscape and urbanscape, portrait and figurative, life and myth. I operate my own frame shop where I create many hand-crafted, custom-finished frames and lovingly restore antique frames, all for use on my own artwork (all artwork on paper is framed using archival methods and UV protection glass).

When walking or traveling I create small sketches using a handy pocket-sized watercolor kit.

These innumerable studies are the seeds for deliberate studio compositions in either etching, watercolor, or oil.

It all starts from the little studies, direct from life, in watercolor or pencil.

My portraits are drawn from life, either in pencil, watercolor or oil, and sometimes directly upon copper plates.

I love drawing, and I love aesthetics.

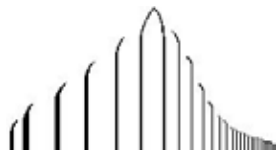
And I am committed to the long road of improving my craft.

As the Icelandic Composer Jóhann Jóhannsson said, "What you create is more important than who you are."

I wholeheartedly agree.

Parish Hall Art Exhibits

The art team will begin accepting submissions for the 2016-17 exhibit year in April. Watch for details!



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
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

*After silence, that which comes nearest to
expressing the inexpressible is music.*

— Aldous Huxley

The Mysticism of Music

A retreat into the spirituality of sound

Saturday, February 20 • 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

(Please note time change!)

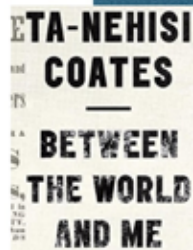
**Facilitated by Hallman Ministerial Intern, Shay MacKay
In the Parish Hall at Unity Church**

Everyone is invited and welcome to attend this workshop. You do not need to be a musician or a singer. You do not even need to know anything about music. The spirituality of sound is as much about listening as creating, so all you really need is an open mind, an open heart, and a willingness to listen deeply. We will be doing some easy, gentle body movements that will be accessible and adaptable for all physical ability levels. There will be presentations and discussion, but mostly this will be an experiential retreat, exploring music, silence and spirit in a variety of ways.

Sign-up for this retreat at the welcome table in the Parish Hall on Sundays or by emailing Shay at shay@unityunitarian.org.

The 2016 Unity Congregation

BOOK READ



Book Discussions

- Wednesday Feb. 17 at 7:10 p.m.
- Sunday Feb. 21 at 12:30 p.m.

Available in the Anderson Library and Unity Bookstall.

*Sponsored by the Unity Racial and Restorative Justice,
Anti-Racism Leadership, and Library and Bookstall Team.*



Jewelry Donations

Unity Church is currently collecting new and gently used jewelry and watches for our spring fundraiser! Please drop off jewelry at the Peace Coffee table in the Parish Hall on Sundays.