

## Prayer

*The life of a congregation is a rich community tapestry of people, programs, ministries and worship. We lift up the patterns of this tapestry at Unity Church with the threads of monthly themes woven through our worship and programming. These themes deepen our understanding of our own faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community.*

### Will You Pause with Me?

Every Unitarian Universalist and religious community is unique. When I worked for the Unitarian Universalist Association, I traveled around the country and saw just how unique we are at times and yet how connected we are to our larger values of liberal religion. One area that often connects most UUs is a commitment to some type of spiritual practice whatever that may be for each person. Prayer is one of the many ways people may explore and deepen their religious life. However, it is often a less common practice for UUs compared to meditation, being in nature, or engagement with the arts. And it's easy to wonder, why is this? Why is prayer for some of us less accessible or meaningful as a spiritual practice?

Like many things, language is often what gets in the way. Because language shapes not just our communication, but also our worldviews. So when someone says the word prayer, perhaps there is a dominant image that rises in our minds. Maybe you picture someone kneeling at a bedside, hands clasped, eyes closed. Or perhaps prayer elicits a conversational tone, a feeling that prayer by its very nature is about a relationship with an active God in the universe. And I am sure many additional images may come to mind. Maybe these images do not resonate with your spiritual life or no longer fit with your religious worldview.

I wonder, though, whether prayer can find additional meaning and presence within our lives together at Unity Church-Unitarian. After all prayer, and spiritual practice more generally, is something

that is nurtured both personally and collectively in our community already. "Each time we gather for worship, we set aside a moment to expand the caring ministry of this congregation. Together we recognize the cycle of life and death, the circle of love, compassion and witness that is at the center of this and every sacred community." These are the opening words to our weekly collective prayer practice in worship. For many of us, they invoke the beginning of a healing moment together in community. What is particularly interesting is that the words begin with a suggestion that prayer or at least our Embracing Meditation, calls us to "set aside a moment" to do this spiritual practice. In other words, prayer calls us to pause from our headlong tumble through life in order that we might lift up what is most important to us.

Perhaps pausing is a more accessible and accurate point of entry for prayer. It turns out that the two words share similar etymological roots. And so we might ask, will you pause with me? Can we just stop and be with one another, even for a moment, and know that we are not alone in our journeys through life? We know and maybe have experienced, as well, the healing power that can come, even in silence, simply through eye contact or holding the hands of another. Prayer practice and deepening our prayer life may, in that case, be a practice of giving attention to those deep commitments that must be felt or named.

Similarly, in this posture, we might be able to consider praying for one another or for our communities of involvement. When we practice praying, when we

take the time to pause regularly as individuals and as a community, it is possible to see the fact that prayer can change the world. Because when we come together amidst the messiness of life and align our hearts toward something we care about, we are changed. And perhaps more so, we are able to live with greater clarity and conviction regarding our most cherished values in the world. What a gift that is? To pause, to recall, to lift up, and to recommit to our important work in the world! May this month bring many moments to practice prayer and to discover again the gift of spiritual practice.

*Ministerial Intern Nic Cable with this month's theme team: Jessica Clay, Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs, Lisa Friedman, Danny Givens Jr., Karen Hering, KP Hong, and Karen Hutt*

### Prayer Theme Resources

#### BOOKS

*Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness* by Nan Merrill

*Gratefulness, The Heart of Prayer: An Approach to Life in Fullness* by David Steindl-Rast

*Simply Pray* by Erik Wikstrom

*Beginner's Grace: Bringing Prayer to Life* by Kate Braestrup

#### ONLINE

*The Problem with Prayer Today:* <http://carmelnet.org/larkin/larkin064.pdf>

#### MOVIES

*Simon Birch* (1998)

## Just Words



Prayer is a state of being, a quality of attention that is achieved largely through consistent practice. It is easy to mistake going through the motions for the experience itself. In the fifth chapter of his letter to the Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul suggests that we should “*Rejoice always and pray without ceasing.*” It is a

somewhat confusing admonition in that we all have lives to live. How can we spend all our time in prayer? We can never know what Paul really meant but I’m not sure that matters. What matters, it seems to me, is that we interpret the scripture in ways that help us live more loving, present and effective lives. I understand “pray without ceasing” to mean that we should develop deep, sustainable devotional practices that help us to summon and maintain the quality of attention we call prayer.

Some say we should set aside old powerful concepts like prayer. They say words like God and prayer have taken on the narrow definitions used by abusive reactionary religion and so have lost their liberating power. But I, for one, refuse to relinquish the old, strong theological terms to the so-called religious right. Progressive religion cries out for us to find the strength to testify to the transforming power of our way of being religious. And effective testimony can only be offered in a language others understand. We need to wrestle with those words of power until we know what we mean when we use them.

Once we have taken the time to find ways to share our deepest spiritual experiences with others we become able to engage respectfully with those whose understanding may be different from our own. In these days of deep division when the very Nation is threatened by differences that seem irreconcilable I believe the place to start is face-to-face and faith-to-faith. “*Out beyond right doing and wrong doing there is a meadow. I’ll meet you there.*” These lines from Rumi point to the power of prayer. Prayer brings us into the moment. It bids us set aside our arrogant assumptions about others and helps us move beyond disdain. Prayer is a building block that makes religion real. And will you pray with me?

— Rob Eller-Isaacs

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Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-228-1456 • [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org)

## Working Toward Prayer

**Saturday, February 11 • 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. • Ames Chapel**  
Rob Eller-Isaacs offers this class intended to help participants summon a quality of attention, a way of being, he calls prayer. Contact Martha Tilton by email at [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org) to register. To request child care, please contact Michelle Hill at [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org), by February 4. Cost: Pledging members: Free // Non Pledging: \$35

## Spiritual Practices Retreat

Come explore various spiritual practices in a contemplative atmosphere with Spiritual Director Sarah Cledwyn. On Saturday, February 11, from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. we will gather together to learn about the practices offered, after which participants will engage in the practices as they feel led. We will reconvene at the end of our time to witness and share our experiences. Practices will include an indoor labyrinth, journaling questions, creative arts (including collage), and more. This time is meant to be an opportunity to dip your toes into stillness with support and see what you find there. All are welcome.

This cost of the retreat is \$25 and scholarships are available. Please RSVP to Sarah at [sarahcledwyn@gmail.com](mailto:sarahcledwyn@gmail.com) or at 651-699-9948 to ensure there is enough space and material for everyone. To request free child care, please contact Michelle Hill at [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org) one week in advance.

## Group Spiritual Direction

Join Spiritual Director Sarah Cledwyn for small group spiritual direction, a place where we gather to be explorers of our inner lives in community; to raise our awareness, deepen connection, and direct our choices toward more love and life. Our skillful action in the world needs both outer and inner support to move us, and by extension all of us, into greater lives of integrity, service, and joy. Groups begin the third week in February and meet every other week through May. Cost and registration can be found online at <http://bit.ly/ucugroups>. Contact Sarah with any questions at [sarahcledwyn@gmail.com](mailto:sarahcledwyn@gmail.com) or 651-699-9948.

## Kung Fu at Unity Church

Unity’s UU Kung Fu practice group, *The House of the Upright Ox*, approaches martial arts as spiritual practice focused on resolving conflict on multiple levels. *Hung Gar* Kung Fu is a Chinese martial art which emulates the moment and disposition of the Tiger, Snake, Crane, Dragon, and Leopard. Practice is led by Unity Church member Bryan Kujawski who has been practicing and teaching martial arts for many years. This free class meets on Saturday mornings in the Body Room from 10:00 a.m.-noon, and is for any level of experience, ages 16–106. You can simply show up! Questions? Contact Bryan at [bryan.kujawski@capella.edu](mailto:bryan.kujawski@capella.edu).

# FEBRUARY WORSHIP CALENDAR / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

## Sunday Worship

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

### February 5: *Use Your Words*

"There are a thousand ways to kneel and kiss the ground," writes Rumi. He is pointing toward the many ways we humans pray. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Grant Wacker will begin our series on prayer by offering a service on the languages of prayer and the very real need to find words with which to speak to our deepest longings.

### February 12: *Patient and Purposeful Love*

Love stretches us in remarkable ways as we are called to keep finding new ways to open our hearts and lives to one another. Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Heidi Huelster will wrestle with love's invitation to be present and open to its challenges.

### February 19: *When Words Fail Us*

For years I struggled with the idea of prayer and how to find the proper words in my regular practice. Until the day that the words failed me, and I discovered that there are indeed many ways to pray. Rev. Lisa Friedman and worship associate Rochelle Lockridge will explore the sources — both ancient and new — of the many ways there are to pray.

### February 26: *Hallowed Be Thy Name*

Asked by his disciples to teach them how to pray, Jesus answered with the Lord's Prayer, now translated into countless languages and prayed by millions of Christians around the world and across wide-spanning differences in theology. Rev. Karen Hering and worship associate Terry Linskey will explore what this prayer can teach us today about how we might pray, especially in times of great change. The service will include the congregational blessing of the 2017 Thresholds group and others crossing thresholds.


**When Silence Speaks**  
**A Contemplative Evening of Poetry**  
**and Song with Naomi Shihab Nye**  
**and Sara Thomsen**

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**Sunday, March 26, 2017**  
**7:00 - 8:30 pm**  
**Unity Church Sanctuary**

Poet Naomi Shihab Nye and singer/songwriter Sara Thomsen lead poetry, song and silence, opening our hearts to compassion, community and creativity.

Cost: \$15. Register through Wisdom Ways: [wisdomwayscenter.org](http://wisdomwayscenter.org) or 651-696-2788.  
Financial assistance is available—contact Janne Eller-Isaacs.



## 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.

### February 5: Altrusa Foundation of St. Paul

For over seventy years, the Altrusa Foundation of St. Paul has served to improve the quality of life for targeted populations through community service and literacy programs. In 2016 Altrusa worked with the International Institute's nursing assistant program, donated several hundred children's books to the West Seventh St. Community Center's annual book giveaway, and volunteered time and supplies to the Minneapolis Sandwich Man who this past year handed out over 520,000 sandwiches to homeless individuals. Unity's Mary Anderson and the late Olga Zoltai have been longtime supporters of the Altrusa Foundation.

### February 12: Scholars of Minnesota—COPE Project

Scholars of Minnesota—Creating Opportunities for Post-Secondary Education's (COPE) mission is to assist underrepresented students in the community in obtaining educational opportunities, financial support, and other resources they need to reach their highest academic, professional, and personal goals. COPE arranges and provides after-school mentoring and college preparation for students in the Twin Cities metro area. The program activities include ACT/SAT college prep classes, college tours and fairs, financial planning, and an annual fundraising scholarship event. COPE is run by volunteers which includes board members, parents, community members, and students.

### February 19: Balazs Scholar Program

This offering supports the Balazs Scholar Program that brings a Unitarian Transylvanian minister to study in the U.S. at the Starr King School for the Ministry by providing fundraising, administrative assistance, and tuition to each new scholar.

### February 26: Avenues for Homeless Youth

Avenues for Homeless Youth provides a wide array of supportive services for youth ages 16-24. These services are provided through shelter-based programs and host homes for LGBTQ youth. Today's collection will go to Avenues for Young Families, a transitional family housing program providing rental assistance, health and wellness care, and independent living skills along with job training for twelve homeless young families dreaming of eventual independent living.

## February Soup Supper Menu

*Join us for a soup supper after our 4:30 service.*

February 5: Cuban Black Bean Soup

February 12: Chili

February 19: Pho (beef or vegetarian)

February 26: Pork and Poblano Soup // Root Vegetable Stew

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES / WELCOME WORDS



## Thoughts on Prayer

From Peter Heege, Trustee

February's worship theme is prayer, a perennially challenging subject for many Unitarian Universalists. Those of us arriving here from a traditionally Christian upbringing or practice have learned to think of prayer in its uses as request, affirmation of prescribed belief or confession of sin, and those uses don't fit well with our non-creedal faith.

I would like to define prayer with a broad brush, and hold it out as we practice it, as a most useful tool in our personal spiritual development. In our work as trustees, we look at the Ends Statements which the congregation develops every five years as our fixed point of reference for all the activities of the church. Ends statement 1b says "The people of Unity Church-Unitarian value a deeply meaningful, transforming liberal religious experience. As individuals, we develop spiritual practices that nurture reverence and encourage diverse worship services rich in beauty, serenity, community and joy." When we share prayer in worship, we form a connection to the collective and individual spirit of our community.

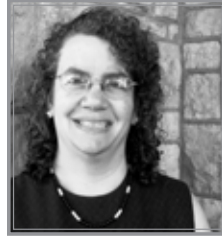
Prayer and breath, *prana* in the Hindu tradition, are intimately connected. Diverse meditative practices recognize the control of the breath as an essential technique for calming the mind. We sing together, "When I breathe in, I breathe in peace. When I breathe out, I breathe out love." Choral singers know when we sing together, that breath and heartbeat synchronize. There is a reason we are deeply moved, sometimes to tears, by the music in our services. Song as prayer weaves the thread of community and affirms that we are not alone.

It seems appropriate in these challenging times, and with Dr. King's birthday shortly behind us, to recall the things he said in prayer and how they align with our core values. "Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be." "...Increase the number of persons of good will and moral sensitivity." "May we be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." "...So that we will be able to make a creative contribution to this world."

Or as we say, "lead lives of integrity, service and joy."

## Welcome Words

Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement



"How do I become a member of Unity Church?" "I'm so glad to be here — how can I get more involved?" These are two of the most frequently asked questions at the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall. The pathway to membership classes and opportunities listed below offer one answer, which we encourage you very much to explore. But we are also aware that the class schedule does not work for every person or family. If you are a visitor who would like to become more deeply involved or to officially join the church, but are not sure how to proceed, I would like to extend a warm invitation to contact me ([lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) / 651-228-1456 x107). I would love to personally connect and be of help! Please know that you do not need to find your way alone. We are glad you are here and I look forward to getting to know you better. See you in church!

## Pathway to Membership Classes

Sign up for Pathway to Membership classes at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement, at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x107. She is also happy to meet with you to answer questions and to welcome you into the congregation. Childcare is available by request.

### Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

**Wednesday, February 8 • 7:15-8:30 p.m. ~ also offered ~  
Sunday, February 26 • 12:15-1:30 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.

### Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Inquiry

Finding Yourself at Unity is now offered on a regular basis on Sundays from 10:15–11:15 a.m. in the Ames Chapel. These sessions 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. Childcare is available in the nursery.

**February 5: Worship & the Liturgical Year**

**February 12: Pastoral Care**

**February 19: Building Tour**

**February 26: Religious Education for Children, Youth, & Adults**

### Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

**Sunday, March 12 • 1:00-3:00 p.m.**

This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry and concludes with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book and join the church!

## MidAmerica Regional Assembly 2017



*Finding Our Partners: Faith In Action*

April 28-30, 2017 • Oak Brook, Illinois

The Keynote Speaker will be Rev. Dr. Lee Barker, President and Professor of Ministry at Meadville-Lombard Theological School. If you are interested in attending the conference, please contact Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org). Conference details are online at [www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly](http://www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly).

# MINISTERIAL INTERNS

## Hallman Ministerial Intern: Jessica Clay



Every time a colleague of mine hears an ambulance siren she says a prayer. She prays for the people who have been injured and for the medical professionals helping them. When I heard this it stayed with me and became a practice of mine, prayer in that moment is an act of love. Our theme this month is prayer which coincides nicely with Valentine's Day, the day of celebrating love in the world.

I used to be a bit of an aggressive driver, getting annoyed with those that would pass me or cut me off. Given that I lived in Los Angeles, I experienced this on a daily basis. Until one day when I decided to reframe how I saw the other. I chose to think "Maybe they are en route to the hospital for their loved one". Now I know everyone who cuts me off isn't headed to a medical emergency, but what if we sent them on their way with a prayer instead of anger. Before you start thinking that I am a saintly driver, know that I still get annoyed and don't bless all who cut me off, but I try to temper that annoyance and replace it with prayer which I average maybe 65% of the time.

Similarly, a spiritual director of a friend of mine decided for one year to drive in the slow lane as a spiritual practice. She choose to relinquish her control over needing to get there on time, and instead to proceed more mindfully, more prayerfully than she had been.

February is the time when spring is just around the corner, but it can feel like we are in the slow lane. We are waiting for that new growth to pop up out of the snow and remind us of what is to come. As those seeds lie dormant under the earth we can pray and trust that these seedlings will emerge once again.

As we travel in the fast or slow lane, as we are cut off or never to merge, we can pray with our whole hearts in each moment. The beautiful thing about prayer is that the only thing that is needed is intention. The intention of being more mindful of the ambulance as it passes by, of the slow driver in the fast lane, and of ourselves when we are annoyed and not our best selves. My prayer for each of you this month is that you pray when you need to and continue to be reminded of spring just around the corner, of love as a seedling, and of the kindness within each of our hearts.

## Ministerial Intern: Nic Cable



How could this be?! Half way, already? It feels like I just arrived and yet here we are with this fluid, slippery thing called time. What a full five months it has been. I feel deeply grateful to have gotten to know many wonderful people during this time. From Beloved Conversations to Wellspring Wednesday to a trip to Standing Rock, I have felt held in the loving embrace of this learning community. And through it all, I have witnessed the power of our shared leadership in responding with courage and vulnerability to the world around us. It is a gift to witness hundreds of people care so deeply about making a difference in the world. And to join you, for however brief a time, the greatest gift, indeed.

So is it almost over, or still just beginning? I tend to lean toward the latter. And so I imagine and stretch my heart to consider what ministry still rests before us. We are entering a profound journey of becoming a sanctuary congregation; we are fortifying ourselves to be a part of a prophetic resistance; we are doubling-down on our core values with our eyes set on the horizon of our Ends that keep us moving forward. There is so much exciting learning and growing ahead.

I am also excited for the revival of the Men's Spirituality Retreat in early February with a deep hope for igniting a new yearly tradition at Unity Church. The Christian Fellowship is also discerning what its identity and purpose is and continue to welcome more folks who are interested in exploring Christian practice in community. There are so many additional things going on and that is truly one of the gifts of Unity Church as a religious community and internship learning environment.

I suppose one of my ultimate hopes for these final five months is to connect with more of you. There may not be enough time to do extensive shared ministry together, or to get coffee together (God knows I drink too much already), but more so to share my gratitude for our co-journeying together at Unity. All of us make up this congregation and sustain its many ministries. In the months ahead, my prayer is to find moments along the journey to pause, to connect, and to give thanks.



# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

## Recovery Ministry

**Thursday, February 7 • 5:00-6:30 p.m. • Gannett Room**

Join us for a monthly gathering of sharing poetry, readings, and our own stories. This group is for anyone who self identifies as being in recovery. If you feel you qualify, then you do and are welcome. This is a supportive group within this community to meet people where they are and build connections. If you have questions or to request child care, please contact Jessica Clay at [jessica@unityunitarian.org](mailto:jessica@unityunitarian.org).

## 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. No writing

experience is necessary. RSVP required to Karen Hering at [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org). Sessions are held at Unity Church.

### **Prayer: A Posture of Listening**

**Wednesday, February 15 • 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

This session on prayer explores the many prayerful possibilities in our own daily lives, including the prayer of deep listening and writing what we hear on our own page.

### **The Hissing of Sin**

**Wednesday, March 15 • 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

We'll reflect on different understandings of sin today, and what they can teach us about living our faith in challenging times.

### **What Saves Us: Writing About Redemption**

**Wednesday, April 19 • 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

This session explores the many different parachutes that save us, as we reflect on the topic of redemption.

## Elders Circle

Join us for our February Elders Circle on Tuesday, February 21, from 1:00-2:30 p.m., in the Center Room. We will be hearing from Laura Park, Managing Director of Unity Consulting. Learn about her role here at Unity Church and how she is sharing her gifts with our denomination. All are welcome, refreshments are provided. Questions? Please contact [jessica@unityunitarian.org](mailto:jessica@unityunitarian.org).

## Young Adult Group

The Young Adult group is growing! Join us on Tuesday, February 28, for a 6:30 p.m. potluck in the Center Room. All are welcome! Contact Nic Cable at [nic@unityunitarian.org](mailto:nic@unityunitarian.org) to be added to the email list to receive Young Adult news and announcements.

## 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, visit the church website, or call the church office at 651-228-1456.*

**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 16) from noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Elders Circle:** Tuesday, February 21, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

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

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

**Men's Retirement Group:** Monday, February 13 and 27, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

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

**Textile Arts Group:** Bring your knitting, crocheting, tatting, embroidery, and cross stitch. All ages and levels of experience are welcome! First and third Wednesdays (February 1 and 15), 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact: Linda Mandeville at [lindamandeville41@gmail.com](mailto:lindamandeville41@gmail.com).

**Unitots!:** A drop-in playgroup for families with kids through preschool age. Monday and Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-noon. Contact Michelle Hill at [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto: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](mailto:jack.hawthorne@comcast.net). Upcoming discussions:

February 14: *Bohemian Flats* by Mary Relindes Ellis

March 14: *Just Mercy – A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson

**Unity Bridge Club:** The Bridge Club will meet on Friday, February 3, 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 9 and 23) of each month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org)

**Young Adults:** Potluck on Tuesday, February 28, 6:30 p.m.

**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 7) beginning at 5:00 p.m. Contact Ken Ford at [kenfaure@gmail.com](mailto:kenfaure@gmail.com)

**The 28th Annual Children's Musical Presents  
A Beautiful Tale Told for a Divisive Time**

**SHADES  
OF  
HUMANITY**

**Unity's 6th, 7th, and 8th Graders  
Written and Directed by Mary Blouin Auffert  
Music by Sandy Waterman**

As is the tradition at Unity, 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 28th year as composer of the musical score.

**PERFORMANCES**

Thursday, March 2 • 7:00 PM  
Friday, March 3 • 7:00 PM  
Saturday, March 4 • 5:30 PM  
*In the Sanctuary at Unity Church*

**TICKETS**

\$6/adult • \$4/child • \$20/Family  
*Purchase tickets online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org)  
in the Parish Hall beginning February 11,  
and at the door on the evening of the performance.*

# 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 in the Ames Chapel 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, and \$20/family. Children under the age two are free. Email Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) for financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner.

## February 1

*Dinner: Stuffed peppers, roasted potatoes, salad*

### **Calling Minnesota Home: Local Issues and Trends in Immigration**

Immigration has been a contentious topic in our political discourse and it will be even more so with the current administration. This presentation introduces the various immigrant groups who call Minnesota home, explores the current immigration detention laws, and gives some advice about how people can get involved. *Gail Anderson has been an interfaith activist for more than a decade. In her roles at the Minnesota Council of Churches, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, and founder of EmpathyWorks she works to build bridges of understanding. She also serves on the board of Conversations with Friends, a non-profit which supports people in immigration detention.*

### **Bible Study: Old Strong Stories**

Let's take a deep look at how scripture can benefit our lives. Pastor Danny Givens, Jr., of Above Every Name Ministries and Rob Eller-Isaacs will lead this Bible study.

### **New Family Religious Education Orientation**

This session with Rev. K.P. Hong, Director of Religious Education, is for families new to Unity Church who would like to learn more about religious education for children and youth.

### **Yoga Movement and Mindfulness: Non-stealing**

*Wellspring Wednesday yoga classes combine movement with a study of yoga philosophy.*

This week's theme, *Asteya*, addresses the idea of not taking anything that has not been freely given. This includes fostering a consciousness of how we ask for others' time, demand another's attention, or using something for a different purpose to that intended, or beyond the time permitted by its owner. As we move through our series of poses, we will take time to reflect on this concept of non-stealing. No previous yoga experience is required. Bring a mat if you have one. We will have a few available for loan.

### **Textile Arts**

Bring your knitting, crocheting, tatting, embroidery, needlepoint, and cross stitch for an evening of fellowship and service. All ages and levels of experience are welcome! Contact Linda Mandeville with questions at [lindamandeville41@gmail.com](mailto:lindamandeville41@gmail.com).

### **Learn and Play Go: A Chinese Board Game**

Anyone above the age of 10 is welcome.

*Please note that the **Tween Group** is on break during the Children's Musical and will resume in March.*

## February 8

*Dinner: Greek meatballs, salad, rice, and orange cookies*

### **Mano a Mano Stories: A Book Reading and Conversation**

Unity's Library Team will host a reading of *La Familia: An International Love Story* by author Dr. Mary Martin. Dr. Martin based this book on her three years of interviewing in Minnesota and Bolivia, then weaving stories of Mano a Mano and those who formed this non-profit organization into a lovely, inspiring tapestry. Long-time Unity Church member Ellen Green served as her editor. *La Familia* provides a moving account of childhood challenges, intercultural pitfalls, and the ultimate creation of grassroots international partnership at its best. All proceeds from book sales go directly to Mano a Mano.

### **A Parent Circle hosted by the UU Families Initiative**

Do you ever feel that you need an ECFE class for your tween or teen? Looking back, does raising an infant seem relatively easy? How can we call upon our Unitarian Universalist values to help us navigate? Unity's UU Families Initiative is hosting a Parent Circle targeting these transitional years. You are invited to come with an idea of a current challenge you would be willing to share with the group.

Parent Circles are drop-in, facilitated discussion groups on parenting topics related to values and spirituality. The UU Families Initiative has two goals: to develop shared principles and common practices for raising our children religiously in the Unitarian Universalist tradition, and to develop a community of families raising our children religiously at Unity Church.

### **Yoga Movement and Mindfulness: Brahmacharya**

This week's theme, *Brahmacharya*, means "non-excess." This practice of moderation shows up differently for each of us. For some, it means not eating a whole bag of chips. For others, it means managing their energy by abstaining from practices that sap it in unhealthy ways — like excessive drinking or exercising to a place of injury.

### **Welcome to Unity**

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.

### **Unity Ukesters**

Come join us for a laid back time of jammin' on your ukulele. Beginners to pros, ages 8-120 welcome! Show up with your uke, copies of music you wish to share, and an open mind.

### **Bible Study: Old Strong Stories**

### **Learn and Play Go: A Chinese Board Game**

*The **Mother/Daughter film group** will resume in March.*



# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

## February 15

*Dinner: Red beans and rice, roasted vegetables, bread pudding*

### **The Promise of the Paris Climate Accord with Dr. Roopali Phadke**

The signing of the Paris climate treaty in 2016 committed nearly every nation in the world to tackling climate change. A Macalester College delegation attended this ambitious and inspirational summit, and dispatched stories from Paris. Join Professor Roopali Phadke and three of her students to reflect on the landmark accord, why it is under threat now, and how it can be saved.

### **Open Page Writing Session with Karen Hering: Prayer, A Posture of Listening**

Free; RSVP required to [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org)

"There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground," the poet Rumi reminded us long ago. This session on prayer explores the many prayerful possibilities in our own daily lives, including the prayer of deep listening and writing what we hear on our own page. Open Page writing session participants use stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, to reflect on the monthly theme in their own words and on their own pages.

### **UU History Book Club**

Want to learn more about UU history? Curious about all those great authors quoted in Sunday sermons? Join the monthly UU History Book Club. February's book will be *Out of the Flames* by Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone. Questions about the group? Please contact Krista Hanson at [klfhanson@yahoo.com](mailto:klfhanson@yahoo.com).

### **Yoga Movement and Mindfulness: Aparigraha**

Wellspring Wednesday yoga classes combine movement with a study of yoga philosophy. Aparigraha is the practice of non-possessiveness or non-attachment. In this week's practice, we'll reflect on the idea of Aparigraha as it relates to our human desires and societal norms. We will pay particular attention to how we move through our yoga poses, working toward approaching them with curiosity rather than a desired outcome.

### **Textile Arts**

#### **Learn and Play Go: A Chinese Board Game**

## February 22

*Dinner: Garlic roasted pork over farro pilaf with roasted vegetables*

### **The 2017 Unity Church Congregation Read: DISCUSSION**

**"All the Real Indians Died Off" And 20 Other Myths About Native Americans**

**By Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and Dina Gilio-Whitaker**

Copies of the book are available in the Unity Bookstall and the Anderson Library, as well as a book read guide that includes reading and titles for youth and children.

### **Christian Fellowship**

Join Pastor Danny Givens of Above Every Name Ministries, Unity member Tom Duke, and Ministerial Intern Nic Cable to explore what a communal space for Christian identity and practice might look like at Unity Church. We invite you to be a part of a deeper conversation about imagining how study, ritual, fellowship, and worship can fit into the life of this diverse and meaningful religious community.

### **Yoga Movement and Mindfulness: Review of the Namas**

This week we'll recap our practices of the previous weeks: Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya, Aparigraha, and explore the intersection of all. We'll practice breath work (Pranayama), movement (Asana), symbolic hand gestures (Mudra), sacred messages (Mantra) and resting the mind (Meditation).

### **Unity Ukesters**

#### **Learn and Play Go: A Chinese Board Game**

## Volunteer Corner

If you are interested in any of these volunteer opportunities, please contact [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org).

### **Obama Elementary**

Obama Elementary is looking for volunteer support in their enrichment classes on Wednesday mornings and afternoons. If you are creative, flexible, fun, and excited about the opportunity to impact our school system in a positive way, this is perfect for you. Enrichment classes include: crochet, building bridges, newscasting, improv, and much, much more! Volunteers will be asked to work 1-4 hours on Wednesdays. If you aren't able to volunteer, but you'd like to help, the classes have extensive wish lists.

### **We need extra help in the kitchen – volunteer with Food Ministry!**

We are looking for volunteers to do easy kitchen tasks. Feel free to sign up just one time or multiple times. No need for any special skills or training. We'll teach you everything you need to know. We also have opportunities for families to volunteer together. Please join us in the kitchen for fun and fellowship. Sundays: February 5, 19, and 26, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Tuesdays: February 21 and 28, from 4:00-6:00 p.m.

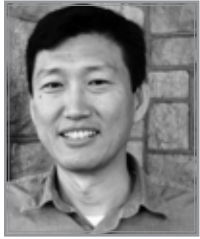
Wednesdays: February 1, 15, and 22, from 3:30-7:30 p.m.

### **Sunday Welcome Teams**

We are currently looking for additional Welcome Team members at morning services. Volunteers are needed to greet members and visitors as they arrive to church, welcome them to Religious Education and to worship, pass out orders of service, ring the church bell, collect and count the offertory, and assist with serving coffee after the service. Welcome Team members are asked to serve at one service once per month.

## Pitter-pattering Questions

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



from KP Hong, Director of Religious Education

The prescribed communal prayer *salāt* remains one of the most striking, iconic images of Sunni Muslims, with row upon row of believers standing shoulder to shoulder, facing the Kaaba in prayer. These prayer lines, of course, are not serried ranks but rather concentric circles when viewed on a global scale. And the turning of one's face as a whole community toward a single centering point, five times daily, have led some to translate *Ahl al-Qibla* (literally "people who face the Kaaba in prayer") as "people of the point." Prayer that points to or points out — or makes a point, gets to the point, keeps us on point, asks what's the point — but by whatever means pierces through and punctuates our circumferential awareness with the Sacred. This physical analogue of the constant spiritual-existential reorientation that any believer needs could not be more apropos for our spiritual practice with children and youth for whom life feels perpetually at a turning point. If prayer reorients and centers, it will be because our children find themselves held in sacred language, drawn by a presence that dwells within our words toward wonder, humility, gratitude, forgiveness, and trust that are emblematic of prayer. Sacred language that marks every threshold they face with the promise of deep identity rather than fearful threat. Our children may not be facing Mecca during religious education, but isn't prayer the point of it all?

Amid the turbulent turning point in the political life of our nation, I think of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry who saw the world with a poet's eye: "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea." Poets remind us that words are not merely illustrative but generative, stirring us on to build ships equal to our longing for the immensity of the sea. Isn't this the work we do with religious language — our rituals, practices, traditions — planting in our children's hearts a sacred longing for immensities worthy of their lives? Isn't this emphatically so with prayer as sacred speech?

But it does not take long for words and languages to die. It can happen in a single generation, and dead languages are exceedingly difficult to revitalize. Linguists who study the lifecycle of dying languages point to the key indicator of morbidity: lack of young speakers of that particular language. Crucial for the ongoing life of a language are children who are actively being taught that particular language for regular, dynamic, and productive use *beyond passive recognition*; children who are fluent in faith and dexterous enough to stir on building of vessels necessary for democracy and justice and beloved community, even as such vital languages are continually endangered.

"Language is the main instrument of humanity's refusal to accept the world as it is." (George Steiner) With language, we resist and question and imagine new worlds. In the onslaught of tweets that reduce our world to tribalism, protectionism, greed, and fear, teaching our children fluency in a sacred language with which to engage the world more deftly, complexly, creatively, lovingly, and truthfully is an imperative... until our children finally dream in the sacred language of immensities.

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

**Summer Camp at Unity! Mark your calendars!**

July 10-14 • July 17-21 • July 24-28

## February

### Parish Hall Artist

Linda Ricklefs Baudry

I make my mark, using color as emotion, creating a space that invites contemplation. Exploring the richness of color and playing with the vibrancy of life, I search beyond what the eye sees to find the inner celebration. The lens focus tightens and blurs along the way, images overlapping — the old patterns shift to the unforeseen.

From bold backlit profiles and deep shadows to ethereal shifting assumptions, I am intrigued with nature's dual aspects of fragility and strength. I grew up in the dense woods, the rolling farmland and the countless lakes and rivers of Minnesota. Flora dancing in the breeze. Summer thunderstorms ominous in their portent and delivery. Morning mists and formidable waves, in the varied moods of water. The comfort of gazing over a field of grain turned golden by the sun. These experiences have all touched me and inspired my art.

I received my B.A. in Studio Arts and Mathematics, studying at Saint Olaf College, Dartmouth College and Pratt-Phoenix School of Design. Exhibitions include multiple juried shows throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin, and my paintings reside in collections both nationwide and abroad. I maintain a studio/gallery at the Northrup King Building in the renowned Northeast Minneapolis Arts District.

For additional information, please go to [www.StudioLRB.com](http://www.StudioLRB.com).

*Beginning in March, Unity Church's Art Team will begin accepting applications for 2017-18 Parish Hall exhibits. Please watch for details with a deadline for submission of May 1, 2017.*

## Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries



"Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent" — Victor Hugo

"Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness." — Maya Angelou

"After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music." — Aldous Huxley, *Music at Night and Other Essays*

"Where words leave off, music begins." — Heinrich Heine

"Music . . . can name the unnameable and communicate the unknowable." — Leonard Bernstein

"The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing ... For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited." — C. S. Lewis

Prayer is often represented as a sustained focus of thought or intent. If so, then musicians are in a constant state of prayer. Music so often, particularly sung text, immediately takes us into an exaggerated sense of time, asking one to nourish a thought with far greater expanse of any moment. Think of how a musical line extends the 'saying' of any word beyond our norm of expressive timing. Add to that the unique sense of receiving and sending sound from and to unknown places which reach corners within listeners that they were not even aware needed to be bathed with sound. Touching and reaching, releasing and accepting, focusing and opening. All these ideas are part of that connection we seek and find in music. As Emily Dickinson says, "Prayer is the little implement through which men reach where presence is denied them."

And, as many of the quotes above suggest, music is the enabler which helps us enter that "presence denied."

The 28th Annual Children's Musical Presents  
A Beautiful Tale Told for a Divisive Time

SHADES  
OF  
HUMANITY

MARCH 2, 3, AND 4, 2017



## Channel Post-Inauguration Anxiety into Action: The Congregation Book Read

From Shelley Butler, Library and Bookstall Team

Why won't the Washington r-word NFL football team change their racist name? Of all the things to do to overcome racism, surely this is the simplest. Scores of people, organizations, school boards, colleges, and even the U.S. Patent Office is against the name. Yet, even though they don't seem to like him very much, many and perhaps most fans turn a blind eye to the racism and support team owner Daniel Snyder's vow to NEVER change the name. Sound familiar?

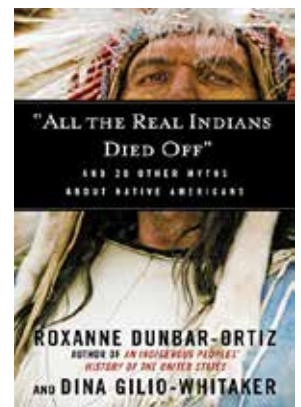
Dan Steinberg of the Washington Post notes in "How covering the Redskins name debate prepared me for Donald Trump's win," that the more the media attacked Trump, the more his supporters loved him; like the Snyder situation. As reporters, talk show hosts, newspapers, sports columnists and commentators blast Snyder for refusing to change the name, Snyder defenders applaud him for standing up to out-of-touch media. It should be no surprise then that among those who support keeping the name is none other than Donald J. Trump himself.

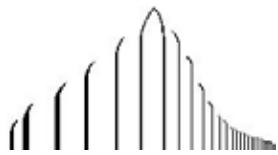
If we were not awake to the vast extent of it before, it is now continually slapping us in the face that racism is widespread and openly acceptable in America from sparsely-populated rural areas to the nation's capital and the White House.

In our discussions about what title to choose for the book read this year, the issue of post-election despondency came up. Can our choice help somehow?

Yes. Exposing the truth is one of the many components of anti-racism and allyship. For many? most? of us, the truth about the 21 myths outlined in "All the Read Indians Died Off" and 20 Other Myths About Native Americans was not taught to us in our schools, by our parents, or by our clergy and Sunday School teachers. Now is the time to read and learn. Then, consider joining a book discussion to reflect and listen: Sunday, February 12, at 12:30 p.m., and Wednesday, February 22, at 7:10 p.m.

Like Nas says, "read more, learn more, change the globe."





# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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## CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

### Sex, Gender, and Spirit A MEN'S RETREAT AT UNITY Saturday, February 4

Join with members and friends of Unity Church in an all day Men's Retreat on Saturday, February 4, from 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., as we explore the intersection of important issues and discover ways to live with greater integrity and meaning.

Registration and details: <http://bit.ly/ucumensretreat>

### Bedtime Ritual Workshop Sunday, February 5

Bedtime Ritual training is being offered to all families with children enrolled in Spirit Play. **There will be no regular Spirit Play classes that Sunday.**



The UU Families Initiative is a parent-led project that has worked to create family rituals for raising children religiously in the Unitarian Universalist tradition. All Spirit Play families, both new and those already familiar with this beautiful ritual, are strongly encouraged to participate in either the ritual training or refresher "reboot" session. For more information and to RSVP, please visit [www.unityunitarian.org/uu-families-initiative.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/uu-families-initiative.html).

### Buy a Pie!

#### Support Unity's Rainbow Chalice Alliance

Pi(e) Day (3/14/17) is fast approaching and Unity's Rainbow Chalice Alliance (RCA) will be preparing wonderful blueberry, apple, and French silk pies for you to purchase.



The pies are prepared and frozen so you can bake them whenever you want. Orders will be accepted in the Parish Hall beginning in February and a limited number of pies will be available. Pies will be available for pickup on Sunday, March 12.

Thanks to your financial support through the purchase of these pices, RCA is able to participate at Q-Quest conferences and help fund Queer Prom and Youth Pride in the spring.

Interested in participating in pie baking this year with a fun and fabulous group of bakers? Please contact Elizabeth Giffin at [egiffin19@yahoo.com](mailto:egiffin19@yahoo.com) to volunteer.

### Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for Sunday worship, contact Martha Tilton at 651-228-1456 x105 or [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org).