

Love

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

We could count the ways — of love, that is. Poets have done it; philosophers and theologians too. And lovers, usually without numbers. We could categorize it and define it — ask ourselves where does *eros* end and *agape* begin? What separates the love of attraction and desire from divinely rooted, selfless love? Where does *philia*, the love found in friendship, enter in?

But love's place, especially in religious life and community, is perhaps less about the names and types of love than it is about the practice of loving. How might we *choose* to love and to live with an ethic of love? "We would all love better," claimed writer bell hooks, "if we used it as a verb."

As a verb, and one embedded in this incarnate world, we discover quickly that love is a messy thing and not always harmonious. To really give ourselves to the act of loving brings our heart into relationship not only with joy and desire, with attraction and satisfaction, but also inevitably with disappointment and anguish, with vexation and, at some point, also grief and loss. Some have noted the profound message embedded in John Coltrane's recording, *Love Supreme*, titled as Coltrane's personal faith statement and more than a nod to God and the power of divine love. In the recording, Coltrane repeats the "Love Supreme" motif in no less than twelve different keys, at times euphonic, and other times dissonant, as if to musically express the observation included in his liner notes: "No road is an easy one, but they all go back to God."

If God is love, as many teachings and people say, and as our own heart's longing may confirm, it is no simple thing to align our lives with love's demands and to "go back to God."

Author Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., notes that James Baldwin too repeatedly returned to the necessity — and challenges — of love, equating it with salvation, which Baldwin defines as "the beginning of union with all that is or has been or will ever be," insisting "there is no salvation without love." Of course, the salvation Baldwin named is no otherworldly time and place, but the salvation of our collective soul, here and now, living in this land tormented by racial hatred and oppression. How to practice love as a verb in *this* world, in *these* times, is a question still salient today.

We might be comforted to learn that research of the human brain has found that love is not merely a heartfelt counter-balance to human reason. It is, in fact, hardwired *into* the brain itself. Our natural connection to one another — in physical and emotional interdependence — has evolved within the human limbic brain as a necessity of survival.

To be sure, we have developed many ways to avoid love's call into larger unity, and this has been at great cost, individually and collectively. "There is life without love," wrote Mary Oliver. "It is not worth a bent penny, or a scuffed shoe. It is not worth the body of a dead dog nine days unburied."

The work of religion might be described as claiming life's larger worth by inspiring and equipping us

to choose and practice love anyway. Despite our fear of disappointment or loss. Despite our culture's messages that love is desirable but fleeting, personal but not political, attractive but impractical. Despite the forces that would have us believe we can have love in our lives without challenging the lovelessness of oppression in the world. We are called, in the name of love, to imagine and remember the larger wholeness in which we all belong and, in so doing, to recover our wholeness within. That is the difficult road by which we return to God.

"When you hear, a mile away and still out of sight," Oliver's poem continues, "the churn of the water as it begins to swirl and roil, fretting around the sharp rocks . . . when you feel the mist on your mouth and sense ahead the embattlement, the long falls plunging and steaming — then row, row for your life toward it."

*By Karen Hering on behalf of this month's theme team:
Andrea LeSonde Anastos,
Drew Danielson, Ray Hommeyer,
KP Hong, Kathy Hurt, and
Laura Park (and adapted from an earlier commUNITY reflection by
Karen Hering).*

Love Theme Resources

For further reflection on this theme, a variety of resources are listed in this month's Chalice Circle packet available at www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html and by request from karen@unityunitarian.org.



Interim Reflections

I confess that when I saw love was to be our worship theme for February, I sighed and rolled my eyes. Crafting services about love during February that steer clear of all the usual tropes and dewy-eyed images of love that are all around us in the month of Valentine's Day is not an easy assignment.

Yet love is a timeless spiritual theme, lifted up by all traditions as a central spiritual experience — except in our own Unitarian Universalism. The seven principles, the core statements of what draws us together and what we commit to, are strangely missing any mention of love. I wonder how that happened, as those drafting the principles thought of so many critical values to fold into the principles and in the process somehow forgot about love.

Or perhaps chose quite intentionally to skip mention of love given how widely and deeply love is misunderstood and trivialized. Perhaps we are supposed to notice its absence in the principles as a way of prodding us to consider just what our own tradition has to say about love and why.

A spiritual perspective on love will have no sweetness about it, no easy words to say about it nor handy definitions for it. Love is a bundle of paradoxes, both tough and tender, both steely eyed and forgiving, both challenging and accepting, both committed to stay the course and ready at any moment to change, timeless in how it can transcend time, mortal and transient in how it seems to slip by so quickly.

Small wonder that the authors of the principles opted to leave love out, for those complex paradoxes would not boil down to the terse declarative style of the principles. But it seems to me that if I lived in accordance with the principles, I would surely be living a loving life. And maybe those principles were intended to accomplish that all along, to guide and move us towards the spiritual center where love abides.

In faith, hope, and love,
Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt

The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Ruth Stryker-Gordon

August 20, 1925 – December 17, 2021

In Celebration

Abraham Arthur Angert born one more redeemer
January 3, 2022, to parents Julie and Isaac Angert

George Phillips Parker born one more redeemer
January 9, 2022, to parents Eve Sexe and Henry Parker

Brae Charlie Bosc born one more redeemer
January 9, 2022, to parents Sheila and Jamie Bosc



The Library-Bookstall Team

The 150th Anniversary of Unity Church and The Unity Congregation Book Read

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

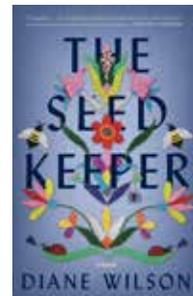
Outward growth is good: Inward growth is a good deal better. May our Unity Church have the first! But let us make sure that it has the last! — William Channing Gannett, second Minister of Unity Church, 1879

The Sesquicentennial of Unity Church: On February 11, 1872, Mr. John Effinger preached his first sermon to a group of St. Paul Unitarians and that was the birth of Unity Church as we know it today. After 150 years and with a call to a 15th minister in progress, it's clear that Unity Church has experienced great outward and inward growth, as envisioned for us so long ago. Fifty founding members signed the membership book that year, the same book that all new members continue to sign today. We have quite the history and several ways to learn more about it. Here are just a few:

- *The Story of Unity Church, 1872-1972* by Elinor Otto. A revised edition includes additional photographs and information, published in 2021. Available in the Unity Bookstall and Anderson Library.
- *Sacred Place* by Pauline Eichten and Ellen Green, 2005. Available in the Anderson Library and ask about it in the Unity Bookstall.
- A history page on Unity's website with historical photos: www.unityunitarian.org/unity-church-history.html
- **Coming up:** A look back at our first 50 years by the Unity History Teaching Team, **"Before the Cornerstone: Our Sesquicentennial Roots" on Wednesday, February 2, at 7:00 p.m.** Details on page 8.

The 2022 Unity Congregation Book Read: *The Seed Keeper* by Diane Wilson

This is the story of Rosalie Iron Wing, of growing up, facing the life she has chosen, and of listening to her ancestors, taking courage from their forethought in saving seeds and from their resilience despite trauma and terrorism brought upon them by white men. It's beautifully told and will lift all who enter its pages. Book discussions (at Unity and on Zoom) will be on **Wellspring Wednesday, March 2, at 7:00 p.m.** Register for the Zoom discussion here: <https://bit.ly/BookRead22>.



New in the Justice Database: "Healing in Action: A Toolkit for Black Lives Matter Healing Justice & Direct Action." Learn more about it here: <https://bit.ly/JusticeData>.

SUNDAY SERVICES / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Join us in-person at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. each week for Sunday services. Masks are required for in-person worship. The 9:00 a.m. service is livestreamed, please use the links below to access the stream.

February 6: *Beauty and the Beast*

Livestream: <https://youtu.be/5rc9kHvgybE>

Seeing another through the eyes of love can mean seeing a perfect version of the other, as love may soften imperfections or make them seem more interesting differences than problematic flaws. What do we see when we try to turn that loving gaze on ourselves? This service begins the month long focus on the theme of love by starting with the place all love starts, where love often breaks down, namely in the challenge of loving oneself and what that means in our spiritual growth. Musicians: Unity Singers

February 13: *But Is It Love?*

Livestream: <https://youtu.be/BhAyl7KG2Oo>

Our culture has very clear, and relentlessly sweet, definitions for what it means to fall in love and how that unfolds in a relationship. Those cultural definitions are unhelpful in the reality of relationships and the ongoing challenges they bring. Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt and worship associate Rebecca Flood reflect on the ways love changes and deepens as one undertakes a spiritual journey in earnest — for that journey often brings a very different way of knowing love. Musicians: Unity Choir

February 20: *Love in the Time of Hatred*

Livestream: <https://youtu.be/qp94hlgSDNs>

Many spiritual traditions call on us to love our enemies, to meet those who oppose us with love rather than hate. But to love one who we have come to experience as an enemy is a tall order, maybe possible only for the saints among us. Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt and worship associate Nancy Dilts wrestle with the call to love enemies to see whether we might actually live into that call. Musicians: Unity Choir

February 27: *A Love that Helps Us Lose Our Balance*

Livestream: <https://youtu.be/rvbn0EbVDyU>

Love, at its most basic, is decentering — shifting us from the stability of self-centered living into the gravitational pull of kinship and connection. In times of change that also steal our balance, love invites us to lean into relationship with others and with uncertainty itself. Rev. Karen Hering and worship associate Ray Wiedmeyer consider love's urging to decenter ourselves and, in so doing, discover who we are and might yet become in a changing world. The service includes the congregation's blessing of this year's Thresholds Group and all those currently living on the cusp of significant change. Musicians: Women's Ensemble

Seventy percent of our Sunday offering is given to a community non-profit recipient and thirty percent supports the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church. Donations are gratefully accepted online at <https://bit.ly/sundayoffering>.

February 6: RISE

Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment (RISE) exists to amplify the voice and power of Muslim women from all races and countries by building relationships within and beyond the Muslim community. RISE is committed to weaving the voices of Muslim women into the larger fabric of American life. This collection will be dedicated to community engagement training. Unity Church member Angela Wilcox is an advocate for RISE.

February 13: d.a.c.

discapitados abriendo caminos (d.a.c.) holds the hand of the Latino family with a disabled family member, helping them navigate educational, healthcare, and economic resources to foster peer support. Its staff helps families work through myriad cultural, language, and legal barriers opening pathways to integrated living opportunities. This year marks d.a.c.'s 25th year of service. Unity Church member Linda Kjerland is a d.a.c. board member and volunteer.

February 20: Frogtown Green

The mission of Frogtown Green is to make Frogtown the greenest, healthiest, and most beautiful neighborhood in Saint Paul. To this end, Frogtown Green advocates for green spaces, promotes sustainable activities, and manages several parklets, urban farms, and gardens throughout Frogtown. Unity Church member Patricia Ohmans is an energy oasis behind Frogtown Green.

February 27: Give Us Wings

Give Us Wings in St. Paul works to build and maintain trusting relationships with rural communities in Kenya and Uganda. Together, volunteers and locals organize projects, provide business training, and develop ways of meeting the medical and educational needs of the community. This collection will help support a maternity ward to serve the health needs of new mothers and their babies. Unity Church member Dave Kaminsky and his family have recently returned from a Give Us Wings trip to Uganda.

Nominate an organization to receive the offering:
unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html.

Congregational Love

Louise Livesay-Al, Board Chair



As we enter into the month focused on love and I look ahead at this year of transition on top of all the other stresses out there, in my life and our

collective lives, I am thinking about my love for Unity Church.

Unity has been, now for over 20 years, a constant companion in my life through good times and hard times. It has called me to task, pushed me to go deeper, challenged me to question my beliefs and assumptions, and made me a better person because of that hard work. It has offered opportunities to connect with people of all ages, let me lean into it in times of need when my marriage struggled, ended, and when I lost my parents. It has celebrated many moments with me and my family — two Celebrations of New Lives, my marriage to Marc, thresholds of my children — and asked my children to grapple with important questions and think about their beliefs, knowing that it is an individual spiritual journey. They may not have fully appreciated all that Unity offered them, but I know they will over time.

We have dealt with losses of incredible Unity staff and ministers and been repeatedly gifted with new talented staff. This time will be no different. We are a collective body, not defined by any one person. Our church and our faith is timeless yet ever developing, changing ... and constant. We will continue to be here for one another. Unity Church will continue to be here for us. It feels unconditional to me. That is congregational love!

Update from the Ministerial Search Team

Marg Walker, on behalf of the Ministerial Search Team: Avi Viswanathan, Betsy Hearn, Mary Baremore, Morgan France-Ramirez, Pauline Eichten, Lia Rivamonte, Jake Rueter, and Dan Huelster

You may be among the nearly 300 people who participated in the congregational listening sessions and focus groups hosted by the Ministerial Search Team last fall. But did you know that we also hosted several listening sessions with staff? We wanted to learn about the different areas of work that keep church life going, so that we can faithfully represent the complexity of Unity Church to ministerial applicants. We also wanted to hear about what staff have been through in this turbulent pandemic era from which we are still slowly emerging. So we asked the question we also had posed to the congregation: *For a year and a half, the building was closed but church was open. What would you like to tell us about your experience during that time?* Here are a few of the things we learned.

Almost nothing stopped, and almost everything got harder. Staff all had to learn new skills — things they never signed up for. They immediately had to figure out how to make programs and worship services available online, and while we could choose to opt out or stay home, they were the essential workers who had to deliver. It was a constant scramble, at a time when they, too, were going through a lot personally with the pandemic. It was discouraging to occasionally hear from us when we were disappointed or felt disconnected despite their efforts. But they never gave up on us. The urgency to serve the congregation was always the foremost concern.

Some things were transformed in a very good direction. The pandemic jump-started technology improvements that had been on the back burner for some time. Communication and audio upgrades, tech-assisted work sharing, online giving, and other innovations will serve the church well for years to come. New efficiencies were realized. They learned to cover for each other's jobs to a greater extent, and to continue to work as a team remotely. Staff was able to really tend to the building, making improvements and upgrades that are hard to accomplish when the building is in full use.

It was a time of consequential learning. One thing staff learned is that authentic church really can happen via technology — not only meaningful worship, but new ways to produce music, new and innovative programs, and creative opportunities to forge and deepen relationships. Another is that Unity has evolved over time into a pace of church life that is extraordinarily demanding — it might be wise to take stock of what is reasonable to expect. Most important, staff became more intimately aware that as they fulfill their role in keeping the engines stoked and running, they are also engaged in the work of ministry.

By hosting these meetings, the MST learned something, too: this staff is extraordinary. Yes, we already knew that. But in some ways, we were like the child coming home from school to find a snack available and dinner on the way, a place to hang our coat, the furnace functioning — reliable routines grounded in family love. Guess what? Staff loves their work, and this church — and that means, by implication, all of us. Let's not forget to tell them we love them back.

To learn more about the work and process of the Ministerial Search Team, please visit their webpage at <https://www.unityunitarian.org/ministerial-transition.html>.

The Double Helix: A Model for Building Beloved Community

Erika Sanders, Beloved Community Staff Team



Last autumn, Unity congregants met for a program called **SoulWork**, a rich learning opportunity in which we explored how spiritual development and racial justice work intersect. During the gathering, Rev. KP Hong, Laura Park, and Angela Wilcox introduced the [Double Helix Model of Faith Formation and Antiracism Multicultural Work](#). To find out more about the development of the model, I interviewed Laura Park, Director of Membership and Hospitality and member of the Beloved Community Staff Team.

ES: *What was the motive behind the creation of the double helix model? What was your goal, or what need were you working to meet?*

LP: For some years, we have been working to define pathways of spiritual development, to be more explicit about the possibilities for faith formation at Unity. We asked ourselves how we could describe those opportunities for spiritual development in the categories of *within*, *among*, and *beyond* in ways that made sense. As our congregation moved more deeply into antiracism and multicultural efforts, the question of how that work intersected with faith formation became powerful. **We asked, “What does it mean to be a person of faith who is also actively antiracist?”**

Over the course of 2020 and 2021, we worked to identify the specific links between faith formation and antiracism multicultural work, and find a metaphor for the growth we hoped could come from this work. Was it a river? A garden? Rev. KP Hong came up with the double helix. Then, we began to think about how the parts of a double helix enabled us to communicate in a visual way. The bonding between the two halves of the helix—faith formation and antiracism multicultural work—are a powerful image for growth.

ES: *What do you think are the strengths of this model?*

LP: It evokes the life-giving nature of this faith tradition, and grounds our antiracist, multicultural work in specific church contexts. It’s visually compelling — the components of the model share space in a way that makes it hard to overlook any one component. And it’s a model that we can engage with repeatedly over time since it doesn’t represent growth solely as a linear process.

ES: *Do other congregations use anything similar?*

LP: Not to my knowledge, so far. I’ve shared our model with my colleagues at other congregations, and no one has seen anything quite like this. What may be unique about this double helix model is how it invites people to think about their own behavior, and to be accountable for specific practices that get us to antiracist outcomes. Truly, I think this model is unique to this congregation, and has grown out of long-term work we’ve done together.

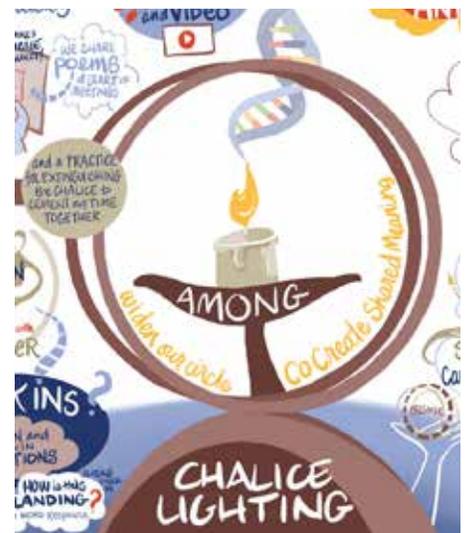
ES: *How will Unity groups use the model, and what characteristics of the model are most important as they do so?*

LP: We have invited small groups to consider their *among* practices in depth — that is, the practices that help us “go deep quickly” and “engage antiracism and multiculturalism together.” First, do we have a practice that brings us together as we start our work in small groups? If so, what readings do we use? What questions do we ask during check-in if we include one? What do we say as we light the chalice? As groups begin using it together, it should feel approachable as a team. Later, we’ll invite people to consider what happens during meetings and other encounters with each other. What are the practices that deepen intimacy and shared vulnerability? What are the

practices of accountability to antiracist, multicultural work? **The emphasis on how we do work among ourselves as a church community is crucial for this model to be effective.**

ES: *What do you hope people will discover as they begin to use the model?*

LP: I hope it opens up a sense of possibility and exploration about the intersection of faith formation and antiracist, multicultural work. I hope that it helps us examine things we take for granted — for instance, the lighting of a chalice — and compels us to ask new questions and try new things. Ultimately, we hope the model encourages us to make deeper and more meaningful promises to ourselves, each other, and the world. It’s sometimes difficult to talk about promises and Unitarian Universalism as a covenantal faith. A model like the double helix may make those conversations more concrete.



For more information about Unity’s work to build Beloved Community, please visit the [Beloved Community News blog](#) and look for the monthly article in *commUNITY*. For more information on SoulWork, see [Beloved Community News-October 2021](#) and the [SoulWork playlist of videos](#) on Unity’s YouTube channel.

WELCOME NEWCOMERS / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS



Welcome Words

Laura Park, Director of Membership and Hospitality

I usually write my column for newcomers to the church, to invite you into pathways to explore our faith community. This month's column, however, is for everyone, and particularly our established members, inviting you to better know our newcomers and new members and the ways they are enriching our shared pursuit of the church's ends (<https://bit.ly/unityends>).

Our newcomers and new members come ready to help us "create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships." They are bringing their whole selves to church and are expecting and building "an ever-widening circle of belonging for all people." When they see more possibility for us to nurture mutual belonging, they are clear and forthright in their feedback. May we continue to listen closely to each other and practice covenantal ways of being together that deepen relationship across difference.

They are here to grow their "capacity for wonder and spiritual deepening." Many have never had a formal church experience before. Many want a different experience from the church of their past. Some experience meaning in the idea of a higher power. Just as many others do not. They are all, however, searching for the meaning of faith in a complex world and appreciate the church's ability to both uplift and challenge. May we continue to find loving ways to engage spiritual practice together.

They are here to ground their work for justice. The double helix intersection of spiritual development and antiracist multiculturalism (see page 5) resonates deeply, and they are looking for ways to make that real in their congregational connections and beyond. Together, may we continue to "discover and pursue our individual and collective work to advance justice, wholeness, and equity for people, our Earth, and all life on it."

If you're one of our newcomers, I'm here to help answer your questions about congregational life and the pathways you might explore to know the church better and deepen your spiritual life. Contact me at laura@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110. I look forward to getting to know you!

Pathway to Membership Classes

Explore a deeper connection to Unity Church and the commitments and opportunities of membership. Contact Laura Park at laura@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110 with questions or to participate.

Finding Yourself at Unity • Sundays • 10:15-11:15 a.m.

Gannett Room in-person and online at bit.ly/fyonline

Finding Yourself at Unity includes eight classes that you can attend in any order to better understand how Unity Church supports our faith journeys, our work to build Beloved Community, and our efforts to bless the world. February offerings:

February 6: Social Justice and Community Outreach

February 13: Building Tour

February 20: Religious Education for Children, Youth, and Adults

February 27: Q&A with the Minister

Committing to Unity • Thursday, March 31 • 7:00 p.m.

This session, for people ready to become members, 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 need meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church.

Fellowship Groups

For more conversation about getting connected, contact Laura Park at laura@unityunitarian.org.

Afterthoughts offers time immediately following the 9:00 service to discuss the service.

Caregivers Group meets on the third Thursday of the month.

Evergreen Quilters: This quilting group meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month.

Families Living with Mental Health Challenges meets the first Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Five Animal Kung Fu meets Saturdays, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Living With Grief Group meets on the third Tuesday of the month.

Men's Breakfast Group meets monthly on the first Saturday for breakfast from 8:30-10:00 a.m.

Men's Coffee Group meets every other Wednesday, February 9 and 23, at 10:00 a.m. for light-hearted conversation.

Men's Conversation Group meets Mondays, February 7 and 21, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Men's Retirement Circle: Monday, February 14 and 28, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

New Look at the Bible meets the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Recovery from White Conditioning meets Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Textile Arts Group meets online the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc.

Unity Book Club meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. February 8 discussion: *How Iceland Changed the World: The Big History of a Small Island* by Egill Bjarnason

Women In Retirement meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Sarah Stevenson



A Minnesotan, I was introduced to the wider world as a high school exchange student to Sweden. Intercultural learning has been a passion ever since, and I found a career with international exchange programs at the university level. Now retired, I came to Unity Church in my search for a meaningful spiritual practice and community.

Marjorie Otto



Hello! My name is Marjorie; I use she/her pronouns. I live in Maplewood with my husband, Carl, our two cats, and a couple of beehives. My passions include writing, reading, being outdoors, and striving to help the world be a more compassionate place, which is what brings me to Unity.

Lauren Gunderson



Lauren Gunderson is happy to have found a non-creedal religious community committed to cultivating gratitude and integrity while working for peace and justice in the world. She lives in St. Paul and is a genetic counselor at a cancer care center. She enjoys hiking, cooking, and the Thursday NYT crossword.

LauraSue and Ron Schlatter



LauraSue: My husband Ron and I joined Unity Church around 1997 when our children were 9 and 7, after attending for several years. We were gone from around 2013-2019 and are delighted to be back. My passions: family, friendships, learning to be an antiracist, our cats, Administrative Law, and reading/listening to books.

Ron: We are returning members who first came to Unity Church when our kids were young, looking for a spiritual community that embraced our different religious backgrounds. We all formed lasting friendships which I hope to deepen, and, while making new ones, continue my search for relevance and understanding.

Jenni Bubke and Mike Thell



Jenni Bubke and Mike Thell found their way to Unity Church during the pandemic. Both moved to St. Paul in 2019 and started attending in the fall of 2020. Jenni is passionate about antiracism, while Mike is passionate about history and housing issues. Both love to spend time outdoors with their two very active dogs!

Tad and Kate Jennings



Tad and Kate Jennings met in Chicago and married 30 years ago. After they started their family, they moved to Kate's family farm in Baldwin, Wisconsin, where they raised their two children. In 2019, they moved to St. Paul, where they could more easily enjoy concerts, theaters, and restaurants. Tad will retire from his work as facilities director of the River Falls Housing Authority in April. Kate plans to continue working as Deputy Treasurer of St. Croix County.

finn schneider



finn schneider felt a tug toward Unity Church they simply could not ignore. They are eager and humbled to deepen and complicate their understanding of the sacred and their commitment to equity and collective liberation alongside the thoughtful, values-driven, relationship-focused members of this community. finn works in education and enjoys spending time outdoors with their rescue dog Sprout.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday gathers a multigenerational church community Wednesday evenings to nourish right and holy relationship among us and deepen our life of faith grounded in spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural work. The Wellspring Wednesday experience includes:

- Sharing meaningful time and, when the requirement to mask in the building is lifted, nourishing food together.
- Brief multigenerational worship in-person in the Ames Chapel and on Zoom (bit.ly/wwchapelreg) from 6:30 to 6:50 p.m.
- Opportunities to play, learn, and practice with one another. See upcoming programs below!

February 2

Before the Cornerstone: Our Sesquicentennial Roots **The Unity Church History Teaching Team**

Register: <https://bit.ly/B4Cornerstone>

In honor of Unity Church's 150th anniversary, the History Teaching Team explores church history before 1905, when we laid the cornerstone of our current church building. Who founded Unity Church? What was the context in which they covenanted together to form a new church? Where was the church located and why did we move to our current location? How does our founding still influence us today?



February 16

Open Page Writing Session: Love as Destiny and Desire

Register: https://bit.ly/OP_Love

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

Board Game Night

In-person in the Center Room

Open to everyone; kids are welcome with their adult(s)! We'll have a variety of easy to learn board games available for players age 10 and up. Or, bring a favorite board game that you would like to play.

February 9

A Spiritual Practice to Feed Your Soul: Lectio Divina

Register: <https://bit.ly/Lectio21-22>

Following a centuries-old Benedictine spiritual practice of contemplative reading, meet online to share in Lectio Divina. In this invitation to receive the wisdom and gifts of poetry, each session engages the group in hearing a particular poem read aloud multiple times, listening for "what is found there." Rather than analyzing the poem, group members lift up what they heard and how the poem spoke to them. Led by Shelley Butler, this practice is a rich way to receive the gifts of poetry in a small group setting. Drop-in attendance is welcome. Register once to attend one or all future sessions on the second Wednesday of each month. Also available fourth Sundays at 4:30 p.m. See page 10 for details.

Love Visioning

Register: <https://bit.ly/Activ8Love>

Toronto artist Chris Emmanuel shares images from his project, Activate Love, in which he has created a deck of love cards based on 55 paintings depicting different types of love with inclusive imagery. How might we break down barriers to love — especially when the world's concepts and assumptions conflict with our spiritual beliefs? This online session offers an opportunity to come face to face with the often-unconscious stereotypes, biases, and assumptions that can influence our understandings and practices of love. Participants will view some of these images and join in conversations about expanding our capacity for loving beyond boundaries.

February 23

Confronting the Reality of Relationship Abuse

Register: https://bit.ly/WA_UCU

What does it mean to be "our sister's keeper"? In the U.S., one in three women and one in four men have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner. Domestic violence (DV), sometimes called intimate partner violence or relationship abuse, touches the lives of nearly everyone. Join Estelle Brouwer, Unity Church member and executive director of local DV advocacy organization Women's Advocates, for a multi-media exploration of the ways in which relationship violence permeates our community and culture, and a conversation about how our liberal faith might call us to respond.

Antiracism Literacy Partners

Register: <https://bit.ly/ALPfeb22>

What does it take to be racially literate and engaged in antiracism in a day-to-day way? Where do we find resources and support in our ongoing learning about systemic racism and the work of dismantling it? Whether you attended previous sessions or are just checking it out now, this program is an easy entry into finding antiracism books, podcasts, and videos, as well as discussion partners for talking about them. Come to choose a resource, sign up for a buddy or small group, and receive discussion guidelines. This program is part of Unity's Finding Our Next Right Action efforts. Questions? Contact Becky Gonzalez-Campoy at beckygc83@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY / ART TEAM

Bring It Home MN

Ending Homelessness in Minnesota

Can you Zoom with us and your representative?

Unity's Affordable Housing Team is very hopeful about Bring It Home MN, an initiative by which the state would fund housing vouchers for *all* Minnesotans who qualify. With our state's more than \$7 billion surplus, this legislative session affords us a unique opportunity to get this passed! Last year, this popular bill had so many representatives signing on that a clone bill was created to hold all of the co-signers! But it didn't make it through the Senate. We want to get it passed *this* year!

We need you to Zoom with us as we re-visit our representatives to shore up their commitment from last year. Other organizations are meeting with them, too, but we need to be the strongest voice. Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative is spearheading this effort (with many coalition members). February 14-18 is Beacon's lobby week. You would be part of a small, trained group for a Zoom visit with your representative. You do not need to be an expert on the issue, but there is power in numbers. For background about the Bring It Home MN initiative, please visit <https://www.bringithomeminnesota.org/>.

If you are able to join us, or have questions, contact Dayna Kennedy at 651-675-8029 or daynamelissa@icloud.com.

Gun Sense Team Update

Guns without gunlocks invites what we see all too often, children shooting children. The Ramsey County District Attorney's office provides gunlocks free at locations around St. Paul including Public Health, Rondo Public Library, and Hallie Q. Brown Center. It is recommended that you phone before going.

Unity Church also provides free gunlocks supplied by the District Attorney's Office. Email Richard Birger at rmbirger@yahoo.com, a member of the Gun Sense Team, to arrange for a gunlock, to ask questions, or inquire about the work of the Unity Gun Sense Team.

You are welcome to join our meetings and work! The Gun Sense Team meets on the second Tuesday of every month, February 8, 4:30-5:30 p.m. on Zoom. Email Richard to receive the meeting link.

Support Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf

During the month of December Unity Church members and friends donated 295 pounds of food to the food shelf. Thank you! Please continue helping our neighbors by bringing an item for the food shelf each time you come to church!

For February the food shelf is seeking donations of: toilet paper, paper towels, disinfectant wipes, shampoo and conditioner, body wash and lotion, and hand soap.

Parish Hall Artist: Brendan Kramp



Brendan Kramp is a Minneapolis-based artist working out of his studio in the Casket Arts Building in Northeast Minneapolis. Born and raised in the Twin Cities, Brendan lived abroad for ten years in the United Kingdom and France, in addition to travels to several countries and cities that inform his artwork.

Brendan concentrates on urban and natural scenes with a strong sense of atmosphere and light. Many of the urban interiors, including coffee shops and industrial creative spaces, draw from his travels to different cities and attempts to capture the feeling of each place. Similarly, the local landmarks and interiors convey a special sense of some of the more everyday and unknown spaces that make up the Twin Cities. In each of them, Brendan seeks to convey the feeling and mood of each space while telling stories through the characters and architecture that form the painting. Brendan has degrees in English Literature and Creative Writing which strongly influence his work. He is self-taught as a visual artist after courses that he took in high school.

The paintings on show at Unity Church represent work that Brendan has undertaken over the past four years, including some international scenes and local favorites. The concentrations on light, perspective, and group portraiture are themes that repeat throughout much of his work.

Brendan shows nationally at fairs and exhibitions, and opens his studio regularly at the Casket Arts Building located at 681 17th Ave NE, Minneapolis 55413. You can see more on his website at <http://www.brendankramp.com> and also on his instagram account [@brendan_kramp_studio](https://www.instagram.com/brendan_kramp_studio).



Pitter-pattering Questions

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

Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation

For those of us caught in this moment of disbelief and despair at America's state of disarray, scholar and author Eddie Glaude, Jr., recounts an extraordinary moment of love. In the spring semester of 1963, James Baldwin spoke to a captive audience at Howard University, and after the symposium, he gathered at an apartment with a group of student activists. The hour was late, and Baldwin looked upon the students with worry, "like an older brother who did not know exactly how to protect them from the dangers he already glimpsed ahead." Baldwin was left to speak the final words:

*Well, here we are, my younger brothers and sisters. Here's how matters stand. I, Jimmy Baldwin, as a black writer, must in some way represent you. Now, you didn't elect me and I didn't ask for it, but here we are." All eyes were fixed on him. "Everything I write will in some way reflect on you. So... what do we do? I'll make you a pledge. If you will promise your elder brother that you will never, ever accept any of the many derogatory, degrading, and reductive definitions that this society has ready for you, then I, Jimmy Baldwin, promise you I shall never betray you." It was an avowal of love... (from *Begin Again*, 2020)*

Such *covenantal* love does not move in that sentimental and "infantile American sense of being made happy but in the tough and universal sense of quest and daring and growth," Baldwin repeatedly reminded us, a love that refuses to reduce the other to our terms and definitions as the condition for their lovability. Covenantal love matures desire's self-interest and hunger to have our object right where we can have it, to master it, to alter the other into something more transparent (and therefore more safe) onto which we can place our desire without any unsettling effect. Covenantal love names the pretense that our desires are somehow innocent of projections, negations, idealizations, and distortions, asking us to wonder why love's standard storyline remains overwhelmingly white, Western, heterosexual, and possessive in its logic. Covenantal love knows all too well that the interactions of capitalism and human desire cannot thrive without the constant stimulation and transactional strategies of desire. Our children and youth are everywhere socialized into what feels like love the way they are socialized into the commodities market, where personal autonomy, comfort, choice, consent, and fulfillment seemingly function alike in both relations of intimacy and profit-generating consumption.

Where does desire's anxiety, distortion, transience, and aggression get to grow up other than in covenantal love — a love wrought in accountability? A love forged on the anvil of covenantal relations, made true, strong, annealed, flexible, corrosion-resistant, consequential, and ever-attentive to the character of love itself. "Love does not begin and end the way we seem to think it does," admonished Baldwin. "Love is a battle. Love is a war. Love is growing up." For all our idealized talk of *unconditional love*, where else is it made real than in *covenantal love*? What other avowal of love is worthy of our children?

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

Sangha Practice

At the heart of Buddhist practice is the commitment to awaken — to step into our doubts and predicaments and hear the roaring of life at the still point of a turning universe. Through weekly practice of meditation, we discover a clarity of mind attentive and accountable to each moment of life's flow, and touch the mystery of our original face. This group is open to anyone interested, no experience necessary, and instructions will be provided. Tuesdays, 4:30-6:00 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. Questions? Please contact kp@unityunitarian.org.

Qigong and Tai Ji

Tuesday, February 8

Noon-1:00 p.m.

In-person at Unity Church

Open your heart, allow yourself time to be still to practice living in the present moment. This class includes Tai Ji, Qigong, meditation and poetry. The practice is a safe and gentle form of exercise for people of all ages. No experience necessary. Wear comfortable shoes and loose clothing. A free will offering will be taken. Masks and vaccination are required. To participate, please sign up at <https://bit.ly/feb22qigong>.

Lectio Divina

Sunday, February 27 • 4:30 p.m.

Register: <https://bit.ly/LectioSun>

Following a centuries-old Benedictine spiritual practice of contemplative reading, meet online to share in Lectio Divina. In this invitation to receive the wisdom and gifts of poetry, each session engages the group in hearing a particular poem read aloud, listening for "what is found there." Led by Lisa Wersal, this practice is a rich way to receive the gifts of poetry in a small group setting. Drop-in attendance is welcome.

MUSIC MINISTRY / ARTIST IN RESIDENCE



Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries

For a musician, “love” might be the simplest, most straightforward theme to program (except, perhaps for “Christmas”.) There is no shortage of music about love: romantic love, platonic love, parental love, forbidden love, doomed love, love in times of war, young love, old love, God’s love... there is plenty of music to choose from. And yet, for musicians to practice love in their own art is not

simple or straightforward. How do you sing about love when you hate the sound of your own voice? How do you listen with love when you are conditioned to hate every wrong note? Singing about love is easy; practicing love in our singing can be remarkably difficult.

In every field, we can learn a lot about love from those that minister to the marginalized. As a musician, I am inspired in that sense by my colleague and friend André de Quadros, who works regularly in the neglected spaces such as the American prison system, homeless shelters, and refugee centers. To carry out his work, he identifies six practices that I see as fundamental to practicing love as musicians:

1. Practice proximity. We are conditioned to draw lines and barriers between musician and audience, between singers and instrumentalists; the pandemic makes this harder than ever, but proximity makes the practice of love more natural and straightforward.
2. Practice listening. Musicians are trained to perform. Instead, perform less and listen more, and listen in different ways: listen with your ears but also with your eyes, heart, and mind.
3. Practice hope. Even in the darkest of times hope is an intrinsic human quality; as a musician ask yourself: what can you do to help?
4. Practice compassion. Beyond empathy, beyond communication, compassion is an often overlooked aspect that should be present in every musical performance.
5. Re-assess your values. As musicians, we are conditioned to care more about the sound than anything else. Things are good and excellent if they sound wonderful. There is a great deal more to care about than the sound.
6. Practice trust. As we enter our third year of pandemic, we’ve come to realize how interconnected we really are and how much we depend on the goodwill of others. It all falls apart if we do not cultivate and practice trust.

Unity's Artist in Residence Program

Now Accepting Applications

Deadline: February 25

The Artist in Residence program at Unity Church seeks to cultivate generative relationships between the church and creatives across diverse art forms, to undertake a period of focused work that amplifies the congregation’s vision of becoming a multicultural, antiracist Beloved Community. Through the exchange between the artist(s) and church community, presenting and sharing both the creative work and process, the program seeks to activate our imagination, foster relationships among and beyond our church walls, inspire spiritual and emotional growth, and open the church community to larger dimensions in the work of making cultural change.

The Artist in Residence program invites Twin Cities artists across disciplines (media arts, dance, music, literature, theater, performance, visual arts, or other) to apply for a four to six-month residency in which the artist will create new artistic work and engage the church community with meaningful arts experiences to culminate in a public presentation of new work. Unity Church will provide compensation and support of up to \$7,000 for project research, development, community engagement programming, and the public presentation.

Get all the details on Unity's website, and please share this invitation with local artists you know and love!

<https://www.unityunitarian.org/artist-in-residence.html>

Border CrosSing Presents "Camino y Cielo"

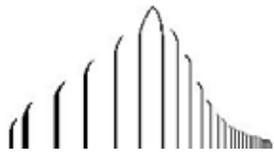
Friday, February 25, and Saturday, February 26 • 7:00 p.m. • Unity Church

World premieres of works commissioned from Linda Kachelmeier and Nico Gutierrez. More information at www.bordercrossingmn.org.

Zoom Sings

Saturday, February 5 and 19, and March 5 and 19 • 10:00–11:30 a.m.

Saturday morning Zoom conversations about the hymns in our hymnal *Singing the Living Tradition*. We sing each hymn and discuss its history, poetry, music, and theology. We started with hymn #1 last year, and now we are more than a hundred hymns in! Anyone can join at any time. These sessions are open to everyone, including family and friends, and will continue to be offered an alternative to singing in-person. Email ahmed@unityunitarian.org to participate.



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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651-228-1456 • fax: 651-228-0927 • www.unityunitarian.org • unity@unityunitarian.org

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**TIME SENSITIVE
MATERIAL**

Buy a Pie!

Support Queer Prom and Youth Pride

The annual Pi(e) Day (3.14.22) Bake Sale is here! Order a blueberry, apple crumble, or French silk pie in the Parish Hall on Sundays during February, or order online at <https://bit.ly/pieday22>. Plan to pick up your pie(s) on Sunday, March 6, between 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. A limited number of pies will be made, so order early!



Volunteers are needed to help with the annual "Pies for Queer Prom" baking sessions! To volunteer, email Kevin Ely at kevin.m.ely@gmail.com. No baking experience needed. Volunteer bakers have a lot of fun and are *essential* to the success of the fundraiser.

Winter Warm-up Drive: Continues Through February

Help people recently released from prison by donating warm clothing and hygiene items. **New items only please! Size XL and larger are of greatest need.**

- Winter coats, long underwear, T-shirts, hats, gloves, boots, and scarves
- Deodorant, toothpaste, hand lotion, soap, shampoo, hand sanitizer, and washcloths
- Tote bags to carry items

Donate financially or drop off items at Unity Church in the Parish Hall on Sunday mornings or at the front desk M-F, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Questions? Please contact Ray Wiedmeyer at 651-808-7790 or raka1260@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATES

**MARCH
10
11
12**

**UNITY CHURCH
CHILDREN'S MUSICAL**