

## Choosing

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 faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community.

We stand in front of the cereal aisle in our local grocery store where there are likely a hundred different brands of cereal with dozens more choices at our fingertips. *Should I go for Cheerios the supposedly healthier choice than my kid-comfort food Lucky Charms? Oatmeal? High in fiber and carbs. Granola? Good grains, but high in sugar. Maybe... I'll just skip breakfast. I've heard that fasting before noon is a good strategy.*

And so it goes. Every day we are faced with innumerable choices. Whether these choices are trivial or life — changing, personal or institutional, the degree to which we are asked — and assumed — to make choices continues to grow exponentially. Having such an abundance of choice can be liberating — or paralyzing. Which one will you choose — or, do you even have a choice?

Americans have typically embraced having choice not as a luxury of privilege, but a necessity for happiness. When a person feels they have no choices — no options — it understandably could give rise to resentment and misery. Those who have been incarcerated have said that one of the hardest things about being in prison is the lack of choices. You are told what to do and when. It is the antithesis of freedom. So, logic suggests that having options allows people to select precisely what makes them happiest. But, as studies show, abundant choice can also make for misery. A study conducted in the early 2000s tested the theory that people became more happy when their choices expanded. That seems counter intuitive! Yet, as the study revealed, between those who were the “maximizers,” that is, those who aimed to always make the best possible

choice vs the “satisfiers,” i.e, those who aimed for “good enough,” the “maximizers” were the most unhappy.

Part of the reason for this puzzling conclusion is that the “maximizers” were often haunted by nagging doubts about what was *not* chosen. They worry about all those options which were not chosen. Might they have been better than the one that was? What did you miss by making a choice?

It's one thing to be haunted by choice over relatively minor decisions, but we are also faced with life-changing decisions. Do I continue treatment for a life-threatening illness, or do I not? Do I choose to continue with this pregnancy, even though I did not plan to become pregnant? The physicians tell me that if they don't amputate, I will lose my life instead of a limb. What's most important? Do I choose to end my life in the presence of family, friends and loved ones, using Medical Aid in Dying or do I let nature take its course?

These are ethical decisions developed from one's own moral and ethical philosophy. Look up ethics on Wikipedia and you'll find literally dozens of differing ethical frameworks which human beings have made to guide their choice. For example, situational ethics would say determining what's right or wrong depends on the situation. On the opposite end is ethical absolutism, the belief that one rule must apply to all societies, individuals and circumstances regardless of the situation. Moral absolutists may, for example, look to Christian scriptures for answers to moral questions, believing that scripture is authoritative throughout all time. What guides your own moral and ethical decision-making?

In 2024, we are aware that we will be asked to make several major decisions, both as a congregation and as a nation. Making a decision will always be fraught with doubt, uncertainty and perhaps no small measure of fear, because we understand that the stakes are high. Whether a choice for the next senior minister at Unity Church, or the next President of the United States, there are pros and cons with whatever choice is made.

And yet, this is where the word “capacity” continues to inform our choices. How can we build the capacity to not only make decisions but to live with the consequences of those decisions? That is the reason for our spiritual practice. That is one of the reasons why we sit in contemplation, or read inspiring scripture or text, or have a spiritual director or trusted therapist or coach, or attend Chalice Circles and engage in deep and honest conversation with one another. It's why we cultivate a quiet space inside to listen to what our truth is telling us.

Sugar free oatmeal or Lucky Charms? Red pill or blue pill? Should I stay or should I go? You get to choose. We — your fellow spiritual sojourners — get to help.

*Rev. Kathleen Rolenz  
with this month's theme team:  
Ahmed Anzuldúa, Rev. Lara Cowtan,  
Drew Danielson, Rev. KP Hong,  
Rev. Andrea La Sonde Anastos,  
and Nelson Moroukian*

### Theme Resources

For further reflection on the theme, see this month's spiritual practice packet, available online at [unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html](http://unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html).

# IN THE MEANTIME



## Five Developmental Tasks of Interim Ministry: Leadership Development

Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Interim Senior Minister

*What will you do with your one, wild and precious life?* That phrase, lifted from a poem by Mary Oliver has struck a chord with many. It's a meme, it's cross-stitched on samplers and made into posters. Yet, the reason it's captured our attention is because it asks an essential question. If we have only so much

breath left in us — whether measured in minutes, days, weeks or years — our discerning question is: What do I want to do with my precious time and energy? How do you choose where to spend yourself?

In a sermon I offered last year, I spoke about the five practices that have shaped my life: daily practice, weekly worship, monthly service, annual retreat and lifetime pilgrimage. I'm pretty disciplined around most of the above save for one: monthly service. Sometimes I find it's hard to choose between all the opportunities to be of service. Do I give money to the person on the side of the highway? Do I join a group at church that serves the local community? Do I commit to service through legislative action?


One of my tasks as your interim minister is to evaluate and strengthen your practices around volunteer recruitment and leadership development. The reason this is one of the five developmental tasks of interim ministry is because in long-time ministries, ministers and leaders fall into a pattern of asking people they already know to volunteer for church activities. This happens not necessarily because the ministers/leaders want to replicate themselves, but because time is often too short and finding, recruiting, equipping and supporting brand new volunteers is time-consuming. They tend to ask people whose gifts and talents they already know.

Finding your way into Unity's large and robust programmatic life can be challenging, as you discern your involvement with the congregation. For the long-time member, the question is: Do I want to continue to do the same thing I've been doing for "x" years, or should I try something different? For the newer member the question may be: How do I find — and then choose — the volunteer path that is right for me, given my time, energy and other commitments?

In early to mid-March, I'll be offering a program titled Leadership Development: Your Next Steps at Unity Church. This program is especially designed for our newest members but those thinking about making a transition in their volunteerism or leadership roles are also welcome. This will combine spiritual practice with practical tips on how to find a ministry of volunteer service that nurtures your spirit, builds community and is of service to Unity Church and to the wider world.

If you have been coming to Unity for a while and *haven't* found your footing on the path to shared ministry, please reach out to Laura Park or to me. We'd love to help you answer the question, *What will you do with your one, wild and precious life?*

Keeping the Faith,  
Kathleen

What is one behavior you do or have observed someone else doing at Unity Church that builds a community of integrity, openhearted engagement, and courageous action? Submit your response online 

## The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

William (Bill) Gray

January 17, 1941–

January 14, 2023

Don Brunquell

September 4, 1952–

December 30, 2023

## Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday worship service, please contact Suki Sun at [sunflowerselflove@gmail.com](mailto:sunflowerselflove@gmail.com).

## Healthy Congregation Covenant

In the fall of 2022, Interim Senior Minister Rev. Kathleen Rolenz realized that members of Unity Church were interested in creating a Healthy Congregation Covenant. A Healthy Congregation Covenant is an aspirational statement of how members will be in "healthy relationship" with one another.

Unity Church has many covenants, but not one that can help guide members when they are in conflict with one another. This process is the beginning of a conversation about the values that Unity Church members share that would comprise a draft covenant for the congregation. To get the process underway, Rev. Rolenz would like you to answer the question: What is one behavior you do or have observed someone else doing at Unity Church that builds a community of integrity, openhearted engagement, and courageous action?

Submit your response online at [unityunitarian.org/congregation-covenant.html](http://unityunitarian.org/congregation-covenant.html)

# FEBRUARY SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

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## Sunday Worship Services

Sunday services are held at 9:00 and 11:15 a.m., except where noted. The 9:00 a.m. service is also offered via livestream. Religious Education programs for children and youth are held Sundays during our service times.

### February 4: *The Blessings of Congregational Conflict* **Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley**

Livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=ugOnuNt2ZJQ](https://youtube.com/watch?v=ugOnuNt2ZJQ)

Anyone who has endured messy and bitter conflicts in a congregation may not be able to see how there could be an opportunity of a blessing in the midst of the pain. But conflicts will inevitably occur and it is possible to learn new ways of approaching them that can allow for growth and learning, and even transformation.

Rev. Cooley is a lifelong Unitarian Universalist and has served as a minister for over 30 years in both congregational and denominational settings. She is an Accredited Interim Minister and faculty of the Interim Minister's Network, and currently serves as the Developmental Minister at the First UU Church of Columbus, OH.

### February 11: *If It's Not One Thing, It's Another* **Rev. Kathleen Rolenz**

Livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=3bpjCWOdwEI](https://youtube.com/watch?v=3bpjCWOdwEI)

Saturday Night Live comedian Gilda Radner made famous the phrase "If it's not one thing, it's another...it's always something!" And isn't that true? We are constantly called to choose one person or one thing over another; often accompanied by conflicting feelings about those choices. This Sunday we'll dive deeper into the February theme of choosing, and the role chance, choice, free will and determinism play in our lives.

### February 18: *Love Is a Choice* **Rev. Lara Cowtan**

Livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=-05gX-t8BLk](https://youtube.com/watch?v=-05gX-t8BLk)

"We respond to the call of love because it *is* our common theological core. It is what can and does motivate us and illuminates our deepest commitments to each other." These words are from the UUA Board in their Charge to the Article II Study Commission. This Sunday we will consider how our Unitarian Universalist faith and values are expressed in our lives and in our religious communities as we consider the proposal from the Article II Study Commission that deepens and expands the language of the Seven Principles to include commitments and actions, with love at the center.

### February 25: *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* **Rev. Kathleen Rolenz**

Livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=V1NCRqrUXAs](https://youtube.com/watch?v=V1NCRqrUXAs)

Sometimes in life we are faced with seemingly impossible choices. This sermon will pick up on the themes introduced on February 11 and take them even further into the spiritual, theological, ethical and moral realms of our daily living.

## Offering Recipients

Each week, sixty percent of our Sunday offering is given to a community non-profit and forty percent supports the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church. Donations are gratefully accepted online at [bit.ly/sundayoffering](https://bit.ly/sundayoffering).

### February 4: Ujamaa Place

Ujamaa Place is a direct service organization that stabilizes and transforms the lives of African American men, ages 18-30, by teaching them how to navigate inequality, poverty, and a criminal justice system built to perpetuate recidivism. Each man has an individual plan and works with trained coaches to achieve stable housing, increase educational opportunities, secure and retain employment, reconnect with family, and eliminate contact with the penal system. This collection will help underwrite the monthly training expenses for Ujamaa participants. [ujamaaplace.org](https://ujamaaplace.org)

### February 11: Como Connects

Como Connects (formerly Como Park Living at Home Block Nurse Program) links older adults in the Como Park/Falcon Heights neighborhoods with community resources. Their services support independence, increase opportunities for socialization, and promote safety for adults as they age. The services they provide include transportation to/from medical appointments, in-home foot care, homemaking, food delivery and chore support. This collection will support socialization programs intended to nurture mind and spirit vitality essential for integrated well-being. [comoconnects.org](https://comoconnects.org)

### February 18: Planting People, Growing Justice

Planting People, Growing Justice (PPGJ) has helped thousands of students discover their potential by planting seeds of social change through education programs targeting the statistic that one in four children in the U.S. has not learned how to read by fourth grade. These children are four times more likely to drop out of school. This collection will support PPGJ's youth education programming which provides learning labs at local schools. Unity Church members Russel Balenger and Ray Wiedmeyer are Planting People, Growing Justice advocates. [ppgjli.org](https://ppgjli.org)

### February 25: Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team

Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team provides lifelong opportunities for spiritual growth, learning, and engagement in racial and restorative healing within the Unity Church community. It encourages shared ministry and intentionally widening the circles of power, opportunity, and access within and beyond Unity Church. This collection will support the team's community advocacy in response to the endemic injustice and oppression within contemporary society.

[unityunitarian.org/racial-and-restorative-justice.html](https://unityunitarian.org/racial-and-restorative-justice.html)



# BOARD OF TRUSTEES



## Connecting and Planning

**Louise Livesay-Al, Chair**

January is always the start of a new Unity Church Board of Trustees. Three people roll off and three new people roll on. You might think it is still the same board, and while much of our work continues from the previous year with some new initiatives or tasks year to year, having three new members creates a whole new board. We are a new body, learning to work together, learning from one another and finding a new collective vision and energy in our work together. I am so grateful for the willingness of our three new trustees, Claire Cooke, Marcia Hayes, and Jackie Duffus Boyd, to commit to three years of service. They hit the ground running with insights, openness and curiosity — ready to learn and contribute!

On January 12 and 13, 2024, the new board had our annual retreat with the executive team and we spent time getting to know each other, connecting as a board and talking about and planning what lies ahead for us. Some of the topics we worked on include:

- Our covenant with one another as executive team and board of trustees
- Board disciplines, speaking with one voice, how our congregational role changes while serving as a trustee, and how we engage around conflict or disagreements
- A case study to understand Policy Governance in our work
- Review of financial statements through a Policy Governance lens
- The tasks in the year ahead and how to organize as a board to most effectively carry out our work
- Board work as spiritual practice through the Double-Helix, Antidotes to White Supremacy and a monthly generative question.

It was a rich, engaging and deep couple days. The board and executive team will be dealing with two significant transitions this year. In February, Laura Park will begin her new role as executive director, spending the first few weeks in February overlapping with Barbara Hubbard before we celebrate Barbara and her invaluable tenure at Unity Church at a celebration scheduled for March 17 (see page 7). In August we will welcome our new senior minister after we say goodbye to Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, who has been and continues to be an incredible guide for us during her two-year interim ministry. We are very lucky to have her at Unity Church!

The board has also decided that we want to have our new minister in place for approximately six months before we start the next ends renewal process. The board will begin the process pre-work in 2024, and be ready to begin the ends renewal process in February 2025.

One focus we have this year, that the board is very excited to discuss and plan for, is how to best use the board designated Currier Fund that was set aside from the incredibly generous gift from Helener Currier's bequest to Unity Church in 2019.

We will continue to do our regular work of monitoring and evaluating the executive team's work at our monthly meetings, looking at what policies and bylaw changes are needed to effectively govern Unity Church, conducting a congregational survey, linking with our stakeholders, and fostering the leadership and recruitment of our trustees. There will be many opportunities for you to engage with our work during 2024. I look forward to leading the board as chair through this dynamic and exciting year. Stay tuned!

## Transforming Conflict

A Workshop with  
Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley



**Saturday, February 3**

**9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

**Parish Hall and online via Zoom**

**Register by January 29:**

[bit.ly/transformingconflict](https://bit.ly/transformingconflict)

In this workshop, we'll explore some of the root causes behind conflict, learn about how to create a new culture of learning, explore tools for change, and engage with case studies to help us embody these learnings. After lunch, members of individual congregations will meet to explore how to take these learnings into their congregations.

Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley will be our pulpit guest on Sunday, February 4.



**commUNITY** is the monthly newsletter of Unity Church. Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Subscriptions are free to those who make pledges to Unity Church and are available to others for \$30/year.

# MINISTERIAL SEARCH TEAM

## How Are We Going to Choose?

Jennie Smith on behalf of Unity's Ministerial Search Team

During a Ministerial Search Team (MST) meeting last fall, we donned our new MST t-shirts, a thoughtful gift from Richard Lau's wife, Heather. As we delved into the congregational record, discussions revolved around the messages and themes gleaned from the congregation, uncovering universal themes like our music program, while conflicting opinions arose on matters such as "good preaching," the role of humor in the service, and what constitutes good pastoral care. The challenge of how to find someone who aligns with diverse preferences, makes discerning choices amid unknown options, and upholds our covenants, seemed daunting.

Surrounded with a word cloud of considerations, the words "choose" and "how" echoed persistently. How are we going to choose? Noting our setting in the Gannett Room, Angela Wilcox drew a parallel with the church's history (which we were well acquainted with at that point in writing the congregational record). According to our church's historical documentation when referring to William Channing Gannett, the congregation had once faced uncertainty about his liberal views, his lack of ordination, being considered too young, and lacking enough experience to minister to our congregation. While we have no way of knowing what Gannett or the congregants truly felt, empathy abounds in the millions of experiences and stories. (Please refer to Unity's website for the complete story.)

In Rev. Cooley's book, she writes about the purpose of the church:

*When we think that our purpose is to make everyone completely happy about all things that happen in a congregation, we end up hamstringing the church's ability to*



*make progress on a mission. Trying to make everyone happy turns our attention inward rather than outward. It allows the needs of certain individuals to overtake the needs of the whole and, in essence, to hold the congregation hostage. And on the individual level, it impairs the ability of people to really learn and open themselves up to the transformational opportunities of conflict.*

Rev. Cooley's insights caution against the futile pursuit of making everyone happy, emphasizing the necessity of progress over unanimous contentment. It means embracing transformative opportunities, turning our attention outward and prioritizing the needs of the entire community.

During our December, "Engaging Awareness, Disrupting Dominance," workshop, Alfonso Wenker reminded us that we are a non-prescriptive religion of diverse, independent thinkers who tend to not like being told what to do or think. So the idea that we're all going to agree on one person is unlikely, and the necessary result of 85 percent of the congregation voting to call a minister is challenging. While there is no fantasy minister that

will be the answer to all the needs of our congregation, there truly is beauty in imperfection — it means there is room for transformation... together.

After reflecting on what Angela had reminded us, about our church's first ministerial selection, we all took a deep breath, ate something sweet or salty (or both), and returned to work on the congregational record. On our way out, we stopped to take a team photo, in our MST t-shirts, with Gannett's picture behind us.

Gannett is on the team. We extend this team spirit to all involved. Past search team members, candidates, staff, volunteers, and you, who chose to read this long article, are all a part of this team. What can you keep doing during this stage in the search? Keep listening to each other, keep talking to each other. Listen, share... repeat.

With humility and courage, we move forward with this work, in service of the beloved community that we seek to make real.

Unity's Ministerial Search Team (as pictured left to right in the photo on this page): Ray Wiedmeyer, Angela Wilcox, Rebecca Flood, Tara Romanov Messana, Kat Sherman-Hoehn, Jennie Smith, Richard Lau

# BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM



## Antiracism Work and the Canadian Unitarian Council

Rev. Lara Cowtan, Minister of Congregational Care and Beloved Community Staff Team member

It had been almost twenty years since I had lived in Canada when I returned in 2019. In my absence, a new territory had been created, Nunavut (official language is Inuit), and what were once called the Queen Charlotte Islands had formally been renamed Haida Gwaii, in recognition of the Haida people who live there (official language is Haida). Special holidays had been created and awareness of native history, culture and tradition was growing. Land acknowledgement statements were commonplace at the beginning of any kind of public gathering.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2008 to 2015) brought about some major changes in laws, policies, and public awareness pertaining to Indigenous rights, equity, and inclusion. In 2014, the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) and Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada (UUMOC) issued a statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission ([bit.ly/cucetrec](http://bit.ly/cucetrec)). In it is a commitment to assemble and promote educational materials for congregations on the history and impact of the Indian residential school system, and to uphold the recommendations of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([bit.ly/unind](http://bit.ly/unind)).

General public awareness about racism and oppression seemed to be on the rise, especially as immigrant communities from African and Asian nations grew, as did racially-motivated violent crime.

Following the death of George Floyd in May 2020, the CUC issued a statement ([bit.ly/cucstate](http://bit.ly/cucstate)) mourning the deaths of people of color, and hosted a series of conversations, workshops and roundtables to discuss and begin work to address systemic racism. A Dismantling Racism Study Group was formed ([bit.ly/cucdrfr](http://bit.ly/cucdrfr)),

tasked with interviewing, assessing, and making recommendations to the CUC. We were all immersed in learning about the long history of anti-black racism and discrimination in Canada. Recommendations from the group are being implemented, including investment of resources at the national and congregational level, and creating/assembling antiracism material for education and worship for congregations.

Then, in May 2021, the horrific discovery of the remains of 215 children buried in unmarked graves at the site of a former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia shocked the nation. My heart broke wide open and joined with Indigenous communities as the news rolled through in a firestorm of grieving. This was just the beginning of a series of similar discoveries from other sites of some of the 140 Indian Residential Schools which operated across Canada from 1831 into the closing decades of the 20th Century.

I was, at the time, serving as interim minister in Vancouver, British Columbia. There are three distinct tribes who have lived on the land where the city of Vancouver sprawls along the coast: the Musqueam, Squamish and Tseil-Watuth First Nations. Every worship service began with an acknowledgment of being uninvited residents on their land and of our responsibility to work to dismantle the ongoing impact of settler colonialism. Following the discovery, the acknowledgment went deeper to lift up the generational trauma of the victims and families of survivors of the residential school system ([bit.ly/canirss](http://bit.ly/canirss)), and the work of the congregation to be in good relationship with the areas native communities also deepened.

Each year, September 30 marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, an important step

in reconciliation, and Orange Shirt Day, an Indigenous-led public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools. Approximately 150,000 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families, placed in residential schools, stripped of their culture, language and identities, their names changed, and hair shorn. They were forbidden to speak their own languages, suffered horrific abuses and poor conditions, and several thousand died. I was never taught a single thing about residential schools when I was in school.

In the wake of this upswell of awareness, engagement, and response to the tireless work of leaders across Canada, on Saturday, November 27, 2021, 95% of the 104 Canadian Unitarian Universalist delegates to a special meeting of the CUC voted in favor of the motion to approve adding an 8th Principle to the current Seven Principles ([bit.ly/cuc7prin](http://bit.ly/cuc7prin)) with language modified to the Canadian context. It reads:

*We, the member congregations of the Canadian Unitarian Council, covenant to affirm and promote: Individual and communal action that accountably dismantles racism and systemic barriers to full inclusion in ourselves and our institutions.*

Truth, healing and reconciliation, dismantling racism and oppressive systems of colonial and white supremacy is a long and deeply spiritual process of self-awareness and relationship-building. I am committed to the work of dismantling racism and systemic barriers to full inclusion in myself, in our congregations and in society at large. May we all continue to learn, grow heal, and live into the dream of beloved community.





# BARBARA HUBBARD RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

## The Unrestricted Gifts of Barbara Hubbard

### A Celebration of 25 Years

As so many of us know, Executive Director Barbara Hubbard has given her mind, body, heart, and soul to us at Unity Church for 25 years! Now it's time to celebrate her gifts and accomplishments as we release her into retirement.

**Retirement celebration save the date: Sunday, March 17, 4:00 p.m.**

Barbara has touched so many of us in so many ways. **Please do share your stories, memories, and photos; they will be used in the March 17 celebration and given to Barbara as a keepsake from the congregation.** Please send stories and pictures — by February 26 — using this online form: [bit.ly/bhubbsmems](http://bit.ly/bhubbsmems).

As the weeks grow short before Barbara's retirement, it's important to reflect on her contributions to Unity Church. The executive director role she hands off to Laura Park is not the original job for which she was hired. You may not know this but at the time of Barbara's second interview for Unity's director of finance job, she was offered a position with a different organization with better pay and benefits. As she tells it, she followed her heart and accepted the job at Unity Church. Are we ever grateful that she did!

Barbara came to Unity Church on August 1, 1998, during a turbulent time in our history when the church's finances were handled by the minister and a committee. Within months of being hired, the board of trustees developed the executive team model, and Barbara was quickly promoted to director of administration.

From the beginning, Barbara has brought all her humanity, kindness, selflessness, dedication, and deep integrity to the task. She found an invaluable colleague in Song Thao, professionalized our church finances, worked extremely well with congregational fundraising and with the board, and has been shaping a more secure financial future for us ever since.

Now, with only weeks left in her tenure, Barbara is still not done. She and Laura are currently organizing a development ministry team, an internal organization capable of sustaining development of funding for years to come.

We can never fully reciprocate all that Barbara has shared with us, but we hope to express our appreciation with an offering from the congregation that honors two important areas of her life: a gift that will enhance her much-loved exploration of the outdoors, and a gift that will be used to reflect her love of this beloved church.

**You are invited to contribute to Barbara's retirement gift fund**, so we can express our gratitude for her years of servant leadership to Unity Church. Please give generously as a tribute to her steady, loving presence in our lives: [bit.ly/bhubbsretire](http://bit.ly/bhubbsretire).

Thank you from the Barbara Hubbard Celebration Team:

Jackie Smith (chair), Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Shelley Butler, Barbi Byers, and Lee Carey



### SAVE THE DATE!

## The Unrestricted Gifts of Barbara Hubbard A Celebration of 25 Years

Sunday, March 17 | 4:00 p.m. | Unity Church

Submit a story or photo of Barbara for the celebration and a keepsake from the congregation: [bit.ly/bhubbsmems](http://bit.ly/bhubbsmems)

Contribute to Barbara's retirement gift fund: [bit.ly/bhubbsretire](http://bit.ly/bhubbsretire)

# WELCOME NEWCOMERS



## Welcome Words

**Laura Park, Director of Membership and Hospitality**

Becoming a member of Unity Church is all about choosing. Choosing this community as your spiritual home. Choosing a faith with interesting, complicated questions and no pat answers. Choosing the ways you'll offer your time, your talents, your financial contributions to steward the congregation's future. Choosing the congregation again and again as your relationship

with it deepens, even when it disappoints you. Choosing your path of spiritual and antiracist multicultural practice within yourself, among the congregation, and beyond in the world.

As a newcomer, you've made the first choice: to walk in the door and see what's here. As you explore, let me know what questions I can answer about congregational life and the pathways you might explore to deepen your life of faith and antiracist multicultural practice. Contact me at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110. I look forward to getting to know you!

## Pathway to Membership Classes

The offerings below invite you to explore a deeper connection to Unity Church and the commitments and opportunities of membership. Questions? Please contact Laura Park, Director of Membership and Hospitality, [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

### *Finding Yourself at Unity: For Visitors and Inquirers*

**Sundays 10:15 a.m. | Drop-ins welcome; childcare in the nursery.**

**Gannett Room or online via Zoom: [bit.ly/fyonline](https://bit.ly/fyonline)**

Attend the sessions in any order, which include Unitarian Universalist History; Faith Formation for Children, Youth, and Adults; Congregational and Pastoral Care; Q & A with a Minister; Worship & the Liturgical Year; Social Justice & Community Outreach; Membership 101 & Congregational Life, and a Building Tour. Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time. This month's offerings:

February 4: Worship and the Liturgical Year

February 11: Congregational and Pastoral Care

February 18: Religious Education for Children, Youth, and Adults

February 25: Community Outreach and Social Justice

### *Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church*

**Tuesday, May 7 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

*Develop personal practice to help you find and keep your balance.*

*Develop the skills of intimacy that let you go deep quickly with strangers.*

*Take the compassion that rises from doing the first two and use it to bless the world.*

This is how Unity Church talks about its expectations of membership. Does the invitation into this ongoing work resonate with you? 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. Let Laura Park know you're interested in participating or to ask questions. She can also arrange a private signing ceremony.

## Fellowship Groups

Visit [unityunitarian.org/fellowship-groups.html](https://unityunitarian.org/fellowship-groups.html) or contact Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).

**Afterthoughts** offers time after 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 third Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

**Kung Fu** meets Saturday mornings, 9:00-10:00 a.m., in the Body Room.

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

**Men's Coffee Group** meets every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. for light-hearted conversation.

**Men's Conversation Group** meets on Zoom Monday, February 5 and 19, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Men's Retirement Circle:** Monday, February 12 and 26, 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 on the first Wednesday 1:00-2:30 p.m., and third Wednesday 7:10-8:00 p.m. of each month. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc.

**Unity Book Club** meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. February 13: *The Covenant of Water* by Abrahman Verghese

**Women in Retirement** meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., in the Center Room. Social hour at noon!

**Young Adult Group** (ages 18-35) — all are welcome. Email [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org)



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Row 1: Ruth Lencowski, Darcie Vandegrift, Dani Hudrlik, Joshua Smith, Toni Lee, Laura Riskedahl-Hampton, Berry Farrington  
Row 2: Kristopher Lencowski, Peter DeLong, Sam Brown, Lynn Indihar, Derrick Hansen

**Sam Brown** is originally from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and came to Unity as a 30+ year member of UU congregations. Sam lives in Plymouth; works at VAA as drafter; enjoys photography, puppetry, Lego, and dancing; and look forward to meeting more community members at coffee hour and while serving as a Welcome Team volunteer.

**Suzanne De Young** worked in a school in northern Minnesota for 35 years as both a librarian and a teacher. She now lives in West St. Paul, surrounded by books, gardens, and various handcrafts. Suzanne has two cats and a little old dog. She loves discussing ideas, books, and social justice issues.



**Peter DeLong** is the son of the late Jacqueline DeLong, proud papa of Walter and Francine, and husband to Berry Farrington. Peter came for the community ministry and stays for the donuts. He plays banjo! Have you completed the Grotto Ave traverse?

**Berry Farrington** lives with her husband Pete DeLong and kids Francine and Walter. Her religious upbringing included several UU fellowships in New York. Unity's music, the youth musical, and old and new friends drew her to take the step into membership.

**Derrick Hanson** is Dad to two wonderful young women. He finds involvement in advocacy for social justice rewarding and the uplifting message of the church to align with his relationship to God.

**Dani Hudrlik** lives in West St. Paul with her husband Joshua and her dog Pepper. Currently she drives a Zamboni and is trying to learn to crochet. She has been circling around Unity's atmosphere for years and is delighted to finally be here with the many thoughtful and involved people.

**Lynn Indihar** has lived in St. Paul, with her husband, for almost 42 years. They have two adult children and are retired. During the covid pandemic Lynn started attending Unity services online. She considers gardening a spiritual practice. In 2024 Lynn will be fighting for democracy and the planet.

**Toni Lee** first attended Unity with her daughter, Marina, in the summer of 2017. They have volunteered on Wellspring Wednesdays for several years and regularly attend the Circle of Peace. Toni appreciates and participates in the programming offered at Unity and enjoys being part of the Unity community.

**Kristopher and Ruth Lencowski** are very excited to be joining Unity Church. Ruth works as a Speech Language Pathologist at Nokomis Montessori North. Kristopher is

Director of Park Operations for Ramsey County Parks and Recreation. They love going on adventures outdoors with their two young children, Hiro and Hana. They are passionate about equity in their communities, climate justice, and raising their children with compassionate integrity.

**Rebecca MacKenzie** is delighted to be back in the Twin Cities and returning as a member at Unity Church. Rebecca works in the nonprofit world as a volunteer coordinator. Her favorite pastimes include baking, walking her dog, hiking and kayaking.



For **Laura Riskedahl-Hampton**, teaching and working as a librarian, and for the American Red Cross kept her busy in my 20s, followed by a great 36-year career as a flight attendant. Laura was married to Bill Hampton for 37 happy and adventure-filled years.

**Joshua Smith** enjoys games, reading, and the quiet times in life, and looks forward to finding a place in the Unity community.

**Darcie Vandergrift** moved to St. Paul to take a job as a sociologist in regional government. She lives with partner, Victor, and dog, Gus. Time outdoors, her job and family, and reading are among her joys. Previously, she was a UU in Des Moines and Madison.

# Funding Our Future

## Unity Church–Unitarian AUCTION FUNDRAISER *with a twist*



~~~~~  
Saturday  
March 2  
2024

Doors Open  
6:00 PM

Live Auction  
8:00 PM  
~~~~~

Admission, including delicious food and beverages: \$20.00  
Fun, fellowship, and exciting bidding.  
Fill up your scavenger hunt punch card.  
Childcare available.

Visit [unityunitarian.org/fundraiser](https://unityunitarian.org/fundraiser) for details about making a donation, purchasing tickets, and volunteering.  
Unity Church-Unitarian | 733 Portland Avenue, St. Paul, MN

# FUNDING OUR FUTURE

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**Let's get together, online and live, and fund our church's future!**



## Donate an item for the auction!

<https://bit.ly/ucauction24>

Time at a vacation home, a gathering where you share your unique skill (wine tasting, painting, crafting, cooking), a behind-the-scenes tour somewhere special, a once-a-month treat (pie, soup, cookies, cake). Everyone has something to offer! Don't have space to host in your home? You can host at the church! Contact Laura Park ([laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org)) for help figuring out an item to donate. **Donation deadline: February 15, 5:00 p.m.** If you prefer to make a financial contribution in support of the fundraiser, please visit [bit.ly/ucugivenow](https://bit.ly/ucugivenow) and select "Fundraiser Donation" from the drop-down menu.



## Ask your favorite businesses for auction donations!

[bit.ly/ucauctionbiz](https://bit.ly/ucauctionbiz)

Think services, gift cards, tickets, admissions... Barbi Byers ([barbiby7780@gmail.com](mailto:barbiby7780@gmail.com)) has everything you need to make this an easy ask. **Donation deadline: February 15, 5:00 p.m.**



## Purchase discount activity tickets in advance!

[bit.ly/ucauctiontix](https://bit.ly/ucauctiontix)

Use these tickets for games, activities, the raffle and more! Discount tickets available Sundays in Parish Hall through February 25, or purchase tickets online and pick them up the night of the auction. Tickets will also be available at the auction.



## Sign up to volunteer!

[bit.ly/ucauctionvol](https://bit.ly/ucauctionvol)

We have many opportunities to pitch in, a little or a lot. Sign up for specific tasks Friday and Saturday, March 1 and 2. If you'd like to take on a task in February, check out the list: [bit.ly/ucauctiontasks](https://bit.ly/ucauctiontasks). Contact Laura Park with questions ([laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org)).



## Attend the auction!

[bit.ly/ucauctionadmit](https://bit.ly/ucauctionadmit)

Saturday, March 2 | 6:00 p.m. | Unity Church—Unitarian

Admission: \$20.00. Admission price includes delicious food and beverages, fun, fellowship, a scavenger hunt punch card, and exciting bidding. Watch for the link to our online auction — you can bid from anywhere! Childcare available.

**Have fun helping us raise \$40,000 to support Unity's mission and programs.**



# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

February 7

*Dinner: Chana masala, kachumber salad, rice, mango lassi, chocolate crinkle cookies*

## Planetary Health:

### Envisioning our Future with New and Ancient Eyes

Presented by Teddie Potter, PhD

Parish Hall and online via Zoom: [bit.ly/phafe](https://bit.ly/phafe)



The urgency to safeguard the health of the planet is felt by us all. Dr Potter is a leader in the international movement, Planetary Health, that offers a fresh way of seeing, based on old ways of knowing and Indigenous wisdom. Planetary Health is a solutions-oriented, transdisciplinary field and social movement focused on analyzing and addressing the impacts of human disruptions to Earth's natural systems on human health and all life on Earth. Her goal is to leave us feeling hopeful and called to join the global planetary health community. Everyone, everywhere has a role to play in achieving the Great Transition, the transformation to a world that optimizes the health and well-being of the planet and its inhabitants — of the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Dr. Potter writes: "Everything is interconnected. The Mississippi River flows through our veins, maintaining the lives of our cells. The air we pollute is the air we inhale. The food we ingest impacts our health and the health of the entire planet. This Interconnection within Nature is one of the five core domains of Planetary Health. "

Dr. Potter ([bit.ly/ucutepot](https://bit.ly/ucutepot)) is a clinical professor and the inaugural director of the Center for Planetary Health and Environmental Justice at the School of Nursing at the University of Minnesota. She serves on, guides, and chairs numerous health and environment organizations nationally and locally. Most recently she partnered with the International Council of Nurses to launch Nursing for Planetary Health, a global nursing movement.

### Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza

In-person, Choir Room

Beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Learn basic violin posture, note reading, and more! Send Mayra an email at [mayraquitzia@gmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

### Religious Education New Family Orientation

In-person, Gannett Room

Are you a new or visiting family, interested in learning more about Unity's religious education programs for children and youth? We offer Religious Education New Family Orientation on the first Wednesday of every month. Let Nelson Moroukian ([nelson@unityunitarian.org](mailto:nelson@unityunitarian.org)) know a week in advance that you plan to attend.

February 14

*Dinner: Meatloaf, tomato and farro salad, ginger cookies*

## Self-Compassion and Loving Kindness: Practice and Dialogue

In-person, Robbins Parlor

Join Rev. KP Hong and Jenny Wilson for an exploration of self-compassion and the loving kindness meditation in particular.

They'll share their understandings and approaches in dialogue with each other and invite your questions and reflections on these practices of love.



## Lectio Divina

Online via Zoom: [bit.ly/Lectio2023-24](https://bit.ly/Lectio2023-24)

Participate in a centuries-old monastic practice of listening, contemplating, and responding to sacred texts, modified with poetry for UU small group spiritual practice. Led by Lisa Wersal or Shelley Butler. A different poem at each session. On Wednesdays, join the Zoom from the Gannett Room at church! Questions? Contact Shelley at [library@unityunitarian.org](mailto:library@unityunitarian.org).

## Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza

In-person, Choir Room

Send Mayra an email at [mayraquitzia@gmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

## Wellspring Wednesday

Wellspring Wednesday gathers a multigenerational church community to nourish right and holy relationship among us and deepen our life of faith, grounded in spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural work. Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. in Parish Hall, a short chapel service begins at 6:40 p.m. in Ames Chapel, and programs begin at 7:10 p.m. Childcare is available.

The cost for dinner is \$10/adults, \$5/child (ages 5-12), \$3/child (ages 2-4), and \$25/family. If you need financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner, please email Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org). If you plan to join us and need a special dietary preparation (vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free options are available), please email Heidi Birkholz at [heidi@unityunitarian.org](mailto:heidi@unityunitarian.org).

### Help prepare a Wellspring Wednesday meal!

Sign up — [bit.ly/wwhosp](https://bit.ly/wwhosp) — for Monday grocery shopping, Tuesday night prep from 4:00-6:00 p.m., Wednesday support (cook, serve, clean up) from 4:00-5:30 or 5:00-7:30 p.m. We have such a good time in the kitchen together! One time, a few times, or many times, we could use your help! Many of these opportunities are perfect for families too. Questions? Contact Heidi Birkholz at [heidi@unityunitarian.org](mailto:heidi@unityunitarian.org).

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

February 21

*Dinner: Fried chicken, bean salad, braised collard greens and sun-dried tomatoes, key lime pie cookies*

## Spiritual Practice: What's Next?

In-person, Robbins Parlor

Rev. KP Hong offers this session for anyone working to develop spiritual practice and wanting the opportunity to reflect on how it's going. Individually and in small groups, we'll name where we are with spiritual practice and consider where we want to go next, especially in connecting spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural practice. We'll consider where we encounter the sacred and calibrate our spiritual practice to enter those encounters with more intention and attention. A perfect follow-up for anyone who attended the series on spiritual practice in the fall, and useful even if you weren't able to attend that series.



## Creating Covenant, Transforming Conflict

Parish Hall and online via Zoom: [bit.ly/createcovenant](https://bit.ly/createcovenant)

On February 3 Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley offered wisdom on how we might creatively engage with conflict. Throughout January and most of February, Rev. Kathleen collected *your* suggestions and ideas about creating a Healthy Congregation Covenant. This program will explore your responses to both the workshop and your answer to the question: What is one behavior you do or have observed someone else doing at Unity Church that builds a community of integrity, open-hearted engagement, and courageous action?

## A Taste of Coming of Age: What is our role (as individuals and the church) in striving for Beloved Community?

In-person, Robbins Parlor

This is the third of the five questions that young people in Unity's Coming of Age program address through the year-long crafting of their credo statements. In this session, facilitated by Coming of Age mentor and teacher of teachers Nate Schultz, we will turn the floor over to you, inviting your responses, and listening in as others grapple with their thoughts.

## Board Game Night

In-person, Anderson Library

Open to everyone; kids are welcome with their adult(s)! We'll have a variety of board games available that are easy to learn, or bring a favorite board game.

## Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza

In-person, Choir Room

Send Mayra an email at [mayraquitzia@gmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

February 28

*Dinner: Roasted salmon, green salad, summer squash, bars*

## Minnesota Multifaith Network and Minnesota's Interfaith Landscape

Parish Hall and online via Zoom: [bit.ly/mnmnf228](https://bit.ly/mnmnf228)

Unity Church is a supporter and founding member of the Minnesota Multifaith Network (MnMN), which supports faith and interfaith leaders and organizations working to build a more just and loving world. MnMN fills a critical role in Minnesota's increasingly diverse religious landscape as it weaves networks of good relationships and cooperation across all religious traditions, increases the impact of faith-based justice and service work, and equips leaders for all kinds of interfaith work. Tom Duke, Unity Church member who has been involved in MnMN since its founding, will describe MnMN's work and plans, overview Minnesota's many interfaith organizations and their work, and describe opportunities to get involved.



## Firearm Safety Education

In person, Robbins Parlor

Join Unity's Gun Sense Ministry Team for education concerning firearm safety. Come and learn answers to questions that many of us didn't know we had. We will also explore Senator John Marty's legislation and how best we can support efforts to move the legislation into action.

## Insights from the 2023 Congregational Survey

Gannett Room and online via Zoom: [bit.ly/consur24](https://bit.ly/consur24)

Did it matter that you completed the 2023 congregational survey? Come find out what the Board of Trustees learned from your input about our church's progress on our mission and ends and the impact our ministries have in our lives. We'll also explore feedback about the ministerial search from both the survey and the cottage meetings, as well as other interesting findings.

## Beginner Violin

In-person, Choir Room

Send Mayra an email at [mayraquitzia@gmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

Helping to prepare a  
Wellspring Wednesday meal is 10/10!  
Join us for our hospitality ministry during February!

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Firearm Safety Education

**Jo Lucas, Gun Sense Team**

Protect Minnesota reports that 54% of Minnesota households that own firearms, do not properly store them. Wellspring Wednesday on February 28 offers all of us the opportunity to learn about firearms, firearm safety, and legislative action in Minnesota. Turn to page 13 for details — we hope to see you there!

Come join in the work! The Gun Sense Team meets on the third Thursday of each month (February 15), 3:30-4:30 p.m., in-person and via Zoom. For more information and/or to be added to our email list, please contact us at [unityunitarian.org/gun-sense.html](http://unityunitarian.org/gun-sense.html).

## Housing and Services for Youth-led Families

**Dayna Kennedy, Housing Justice Team**

**Great News for Gladstone Crossing: \$14,700,000!**

Gladstone Crossing is a project with our team's partner Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative. This 140-unit building will provide housing in Maplewood for youth-led families. These families will receive wrap-around services addressing everything from parenting skills and employment guidance to recovery options and more. Gladstone scored so high on its application to Minnesota Housing that it received \$14.7M on its first round (often several rounds of applications is common). With just a little more fundraising, this project might be able to break ground this year! Thank you to those who turned out to support this project. Questions? Please contact Dayna Kennedy [daynamelissa@icloud.com](mailto:daynamelissa@icloud.com).

### *Project Home: Hands-on Ways to Help*

Project Home is looking for volunteers to serve meals as part of their weekend meal teams. Chef Omar takes care of meal preparation, but serving shifts are available in Saint Paul at Provincial House for lunch or dinner on Saturdays and Sundays. Sign up to volunteer or create a team of 3-6 people. Supervised older children are welcome to participate: [tinyurl.com/PHMealTeams2023](http://tinyurl.com/PHMealTeams2023). Help is also needed with building maintenance and monthly birthday celebrations.

If you'd like to find out more about our team, check out our monthly online meeting (second Tuesday of each month from 4:30-5:30 p.m.). Please contact Judy Miller for the Zoom link or with questions, [jmkmam@comcast.net](mailto:jmkmam@comcast.net).

## An Abundance of Warmth

**Nancy Heege, JJ Hill/Obama School Team**

Thanks to all who donated a wealth of warm winter items for the Mitten Tree! There were many hand-knit and crocheted items, along with lots of hats and mittens and scarves purchased by Unity Church families! We took most of the clothes to Project Home at the Provincial House, where many unhoused families live. The staff was very happy to receive them. Other items have been delivered to a local elementary school.



The school year is going well at JJ Hill Montessori Magnet School. Our volunteers are assisting beginning knitters, shelving books in the library, listening to children read, playing games to teach math facts and sight words. The staff are happy to see us and appreciative of our time spent with the children. We are building a relationship that will be a foundation for the future when the Obama building renovation is finished and the JJ Hill community moves in across the street from Unity Church.

## Worthy Now Pen Pals

**CLF Prison Ministry Network**

**Terri McNeil, Racial and Restorative Justice Team**

The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) is a congregation without walls, connecting people all over the world for spiritual growth, worship, learning, and mutual support. Their Prison Ministry Network, Worthy Now, invites people on both sides of prison walls into beloved community by declaring that all persons are worthy of love, respect, and support — not at some future time when we are better people — but as we are right now.

Most CLF members in prison are new to Unitarian Universalism and liberal faith traditions. They learn about Unitarian Universalism from mailings sent by CLF, and through letter writing in Worthy Now's Pen Pal program. The purpose of the pen pal program is to reach out with messages of your belief in their inherent dignity and worth.

I have learned so much by being on Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice Team, but by being a pen pal I found that I had many lessons yet to learn about supporting the healing of wounds caused by trauma, poverty, and the criminal justice system.

My first pen pal asked some hard questions (and still does!). She is open and honest and remarkably funny. It took a year for her to trust my acceptance of her crime and person. My second pen pal adds cartoon drawings, poems, and bible quotes to his letters. Each exchange offers a unique opportunity for deepening relationship.

Interested in learning more about becoming a Worthy Now pen pal? Please visit [worthynow.org/pen-pals](http://worthynow.org/pen-pals) for details about the program and the support offered through this ministry.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## The Spiritual Challenge of Facing the Climate Crisis

Lisa Burke, Act for the Earth Team

Several times a week worry wakes me in the wee hours of the morning, whispering, sometimes shouting, my fears for my children and grandchildren, about climate change and what losing the upcoming election would mean for the future of their generation, and our planet. Worry makes me feel helpless, even hopeless, wondering if my seemingly small actions will make a difference, and if it's already too late.

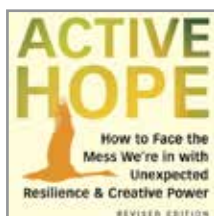
But in the light of day I see again that there is no room for helplessness, nor for minimization or denial. Climate change is real. The health of the planet and all of its inhabitants are inextricably linked in the interdependent web of all existence. And we all have a role to play. Each of us could be doing more, but every action matters. And taking action in community multiplies our efforts, and brings hope.

Unity's Act for the Earth Community Outreach Team is a place where I know my grief and anxiety will be honored, and shared. It's also a place to which members bring their hopeful energy, where we learn together and go forth with a shared vision for the future.

For many of us, the vision is enhanced by our workshop and book read of *Active Hope* by Joanna Macy in 2023, and our repetition and application of her "spiral" — a tool to help us move through what often feel like overwhelming challenges with gratitude and by honoring our pain, then seeing with new and ancient eyes, and finally going forth to be part of The Great Turning. This, Macy writes, happens best in community with others.

A recent planning session for the Wellspring Wednesday event with Dr. Teddie Potter (see page 12) left me feeling buoyed and inspired as connections between our work and her message were revealed. People activate around hope, Teddie reminded us, and not fear. We are all partners in planetary health and healing, and if we see what is possible we make decisions that move us towards that goal, towards The Great Transition. We have the skills and talents, Teddie asserted; what we need is a shared language and vision.

The Act for the Earth Team has many opportunities to act in community to cope, as well as address head-on the crisis of our generation. Join us for the upcoming events listed on this page, to remain spiritually resilient for the work ahead.



## Planetary Health

*Envisioning our Future with New and Ancient Eyes*

Presented by Teddie Potter, PhD

Wednesday, February 7 | 7:10 p.m.

Parish Hall and online via Zoom: [bit.ly/phafe](https://bit.ly/phafe)

Sponsored by Act for the Earth. See page 12 for details.

## We Are All in this Together

*A congregational retreat on the climate crisis*

Saturday, February 24 | 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Parish Hall | Registration: [bit.ly/afeclimateretreat](https://bit.ly/afeclimateretreat)

Check in and refreshments begin at 8:30 a.m. Sponsored by Act for the Earth

The alarming stories about the climate crisis keep coming — how can we form a meaningful response? There are solutions available, but it can feel overwhelming, confusing, or even that nothing we do matters.

Wherever you are, we are all in this together, facing what many call the biggest issue of our lives. Come to this congregational retreat to join a movement of people who feel your despair and seek solutions.

Expect to learn and discuss:

- Current research on high-impact climate actions we can each take
- Resources to develop your own plan
- Ways to build courage and resilience to address climate change
- Opportunities for further involvement and action, independently or within community.

In a circle of spiritual grounding and support, we welcome your questions, your fear, your guilt, your knowledge, experience, and ideas.

## Active Hope for Climate Resilience

Saturday, March 23 | 9:00 a.m.-noon | Unity Church

Registration: [bit.ly/ucuactivehope](https://bit.ly/ucuactivehope)

This three-hour workshop is an introduction to the work of Joanna Macy, an eco-philosopher and activist who has inspired thousands from around the world to maintain Active Hope in light of the ecological crisis. She gives us frameworks and practices of gratitude, grief, interconnection, and ultimately transformation to stay engaged and resilient in our work to save ourselves and our planet. The workshop will be offered by Jean Hammink and Julie Remington from Unity's Act for the Earth Team. It is part of an ongoing Active Hope program to bring this spiritual grounding work to all those at Unity who care about the climate crisis. Questions? Contact Jean Hammink at [jhammink@earthlink.net](mailto:jhammink@earthlink.net).



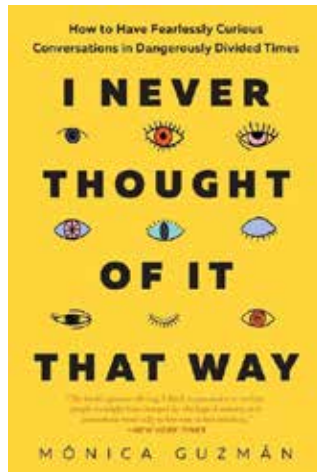
**The Library-Bookstall Team**

**Let's Talk! But How?**

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

We all know how to talk, right? To keep our better angels up front and treat everyone with equity and kindness? Well, thinking about several recent conversations about Israel/Palestine; the conversations after the last failed vote to call a minister; and today being Iowa caucus day, maybe not. With so much on the line, it's the right time to delve into ***Transforming Conflict: The Blessings of Congregational Turmoil***, and to attend a workshop by author Terasa Cooley. Fortunately, there are several copies in the Bookstall and the Anderson Library, and Terasa Cooley is coming to Unity Church to lead a workshop on Saturday, February 3, and to preach on Sunday, February 4.

Two other new books in the Anderson Library offer guidance as well. ***I Never Thought of It That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times*** by Mónica Guzmán, and ***In Search of Braver Angels: Getting Along Together in Troubled Times*** by David Blankenhorn.



Journalist Mónica Guzmán loves her parents, immigrants from Mexico who twice voted for Donald Trump. So, her inquiry into the political divide is personal, as well as an effort to help us all communicate across the divide with specific tools and insights. David Blankenhorn was motivated by the decrease in trust and increase in political antipathy to do something to restore civic trust and save the great American democracy experiment. Both authors are part of the Better Angels grassroots organization that has spread across the country to teach us how to talk across differences.

With another vote to call a minister coming up this spring, I'm confident that with the preparation for it by Rev. Kathleen, Louise Livesay-Al, and the board, as well as the tools and resources readily available to us, no matter what the outcome of the vote, we'll be more than OK — we'll be great!

*Turn to the back cover for Unity's Justice Database monthly recommendation.*

From the Archives Team

**Letters from Rev. Arthur Foote**



We recently received two letters written by Rev. Arthur Foote to his family in 1936 while traveling in Europe. After graduating from Meadville Theological School, he and his wife, Rebecca, spent that summer in Europe visiting Unitarian churches. Things were heating up in Europe and Arthur's father, Henry Wilder Foote II, and others influential in the UUA, had set up a preaching and travel schedule for them to assess the situation.

In the first letter ([bit.ly/footerom](http://bit.ly/footerom)), sent from Olomouc, Czechoslovakia, Foote writes about visiting Unitarian churches in Romania and notes "...the oppression is very real ... the hatred on both sides penetrates the atmosphere." This letter also includes a brief report on their visit to Poland and ends with their arrival in Czechoslovakia, anticipating meeting Norbert Čapek in Prague. (Čapek is known for starting the Flower Communion service in 1923, a tradition that continues at Unity Church.)

The second letter ([bit.ly/footecope](http://bit.ly/footecope)) is written ten days later from Copenhagen and recounts some of their time in Prague. They were able to spend time with Čapek and also attended the weekly summer service where Foote spoke briefly. He comments that he, "watched Čapek wind the congregation around his little finger. . . it was easy to see that this little old man was a masterful preacher."

Part of Foote's mission was to determine whether the congregation had any financial troubles as previous visitors thought the situation was dire. However, Foote was assured that "everything was going better."

After returning to the U.S. in the fall of 1936, Arthur and Rebecca drove across country to California. There he took on his ministry with two struggling churches in Stockton and Sacramento. He built up their memberships to respectable numbers before coming to Unity Church in 1945.

Archives Team members are Louise Merriam, Carol Miller, Patt Kelly, Eve Johnson, Pauline Eichten and Susan Foote (emerita).

# PARISH HALL ARTISTS / SPIRITUAL DEEPENING

## February Parish Hall Artists

### Suki Sun

In traditional Chinese ink painting, red is used to show the painter's signature, as a decoration, a footnote, never the main character. But I want to challenge the quiet role of "self" in my abstract Chinese ink work by making the red dot the "eye," the knower and the witness of these paintings.



Without any formal drawing training, my willingness to try creating something on a piece of blank paper is almost like a spiritual awakening and homecoming. In Chinese language, *creativity* (创意-literally translated into *create meaning*) and *wound* (创口-literally translated into *wound opening*) share the same character 创 which puts 冫 the symbol of a knife by 仓 the image of a barn of grains — the abundance of creativity is always there, just wait for us to cut it open.

It also reminds me that the true nature of creativity always includes navigating the process of "brokenness," no matter if it breaks our hearts or breaks our rules.

For me, it was both.

The year I started to paint, I was in Manhattan, the worst place you could be in the pandemic. When the whole world was shaking from a giant wound, I was also mourning the loss of meaningful relationships and career opportunities due to my alcohol use disorder. Looking back, it was my personal wound in the backdrop of the worldly suffering that propelled me to pick my brush and take risks on paper.

In each painting, I use one red dot that gives all the black shapes and lines a soul, a storyteller, an observer with a certain grounding quality: always round, almost the same size, no matter how its surroundings are loose, dense, flowy, or heavy.

As a daily meditator, making these paintings are like my meditation, these black strokes are often made within one breath, and through this minimalist approach, I create more space to manifest the "self" onto the paper.

I also like to call my painting practice a "breathing dance," as long as I devote my attention to "right here and right now," with each breath, something bigger than me always guides my brush to more wonder and awe, just like what I write in one of my poems—

We are not the dancers  
We are the dance  
We are being danced

### Bob Keller

I majored in art at Carleton College, graduating in 1973. I've worked in animation, done illustration and graphic design. I worked as a contractor at the Star Tribune Features Department doing illustration and page layout for the variety and taste sections. Throughout the 80s I did editorial illustrations for various publications.



I became interested in abstract art in college and since retiring began working on developing that direction in my painting.

My goal is to create paintings that look spontaneous and organic, as if not created by the human hand. I use lots of texture and multiple paint layers and different methods of application. My current work explores spontaneous creation, I start with quick broad marks, and then respond to what I see, adding and removing layers until the composition works for me, a sort of personal call and response.

In the last year I've had work shown at the Robbin Gallery as part of a two person show, the Hopkins Center for the Arts, The North Suburban Center for the Arts, The Ames Event Center and The Washburn (Wisconsin) Center for the Arts.

## Queer Theology

Tuesday, February 13 | 6:30-8:00 p.m.

In-person, Center Room

Queer Theology is a theological practice that attempts to erase boundaries that exist in religious traditions, to include rather than exclude more voices. Open to adults of all genders and sexual orientations. Contact Mike Huber for access to the readings or if you have any questions: [mikehuberece@gmail.com](mailto:mikehuberece@gmail.com).

## Lectio Divina

February 14 and 27 | 7:10 p.m.

Zoom: [bit.ly/Lectio2023-24](https://bit.ly/Lectio2023-24)

Participate in a centuries-old monastic practice of listening, contemplating, and responding to sacred texts; modified with poetry for Unitarian Universalist small group spiritual practice. Led by Lisa Wersal or Shelley Butler. Held at 7:10 p.m. on the second Wednesday and fourth Tuesday of each month. A different poem at each session. Questions? Contact Shelley at [library@unityunitarian.org](mailto:library@unityunitarian.org).

## Serve as a Worship Associate

Unity's worship associates program provides lay members an opportunity to participate in the co-creation of worship. The work of worship associates includes monthly evening meetings; theme, sermon, and service discussions; research on related readings; and occasionally offering original reflections during worship and serving as a summer worship leader.

You must be a member of Unity Church to apply. New associates will begin March 21, 2024. The deadline to apply is February 15, 2024. If you are interested in serving as a worship associate, please complete the online application: [bit.ly/ucuwaapp](https://bit.ly/ucuwaapp).



# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH



## Just Pick One!

**Drew Danielson**  
**Coordinator of Youth and Campus Ministries**

My family has had countless evenings ruined by the tyranny of available movie choices on Apple TV, Netflix, Amazon, etc.

“What should we watch? What streaming service should we go to? What are you in the mood for? Should we watch some previews?”

“Give me the dang controller! Just use search! I don’t care, just pick one!”

This completely trivial choice, or rather inability to make one, all too often ruins the mood, starts an argument, leaves everyone unsatisfied. Sometimes one or more of us goes off to be alone. Sometimes we pick a clinker, other times we land on something great. Always we swear to make a list, determine some way to improve our decision making. But then we never do.

Such a trivial first world problem. I could name dozens of other ongoing choice making dilemmas like this, and I feel guilty admitting the pain they cause me. I am by nature awful at choosing, I’m loathe to settle on a choice, I always second guess my decisions. It is not, I’ll protest, that I can’t be logical, can’t apply reasonable decision making skills, or that I resist input or analysis. I just can’t choose one definite path, thereby rejecting every other possible choice.

I do know that not everyone dithers and agonizes like this, but I also know modern society does its best to entice and confuse and push and pull all of us with a smorgasbord of choices both trivial and consequential. And I know my kids and your kids and all our youth are wrestling with many of these decisions every single day. In Tower Club almost every single discussion comes down to a question of how any of us will decide what is the right thing to do. How will I spend my time? What deserves my focus? To whom do I owe what? What college should I attend? What should I be? They absolutely know they are privileged to have so many options, such a sense of free will and the right to self-determination; they understand how rare and amazing their individualism and freedom is, that it is precious and valuable and not to be squandered. But that only makes it more fraught. You cannot waste it, and you cannot choose unwisely.

I’m reading *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese which begins with the arranged marriage of a 12-year-old, to a 40-year-old widower. I am horrified for her, but at least in the early stages, this adolescent enters her pre-determined life open to its demands and strangeness and challenges, accepts what is expected of her, asks no questions, seeking to please, to survive, to be of use. Her husband is kind and loving, and soon I’m romanticizing this simple, choice-free life, the certainty she gains in aiming to please a simple man, the comfort she finds in her bible and her orthodox Christian faith. “Ah, it would all be so easy!”

I’m not going to tell our kids they should renounce their free will. I will tell them I believe they should turn to our faith for guidance, that when we gather together and acknowledge we really can’t make all our decisions alone, nor should we, we’ll start to find if not answers, at least the right questions. We are not alone, we do not truly act alone. We choose better when we know that, when we allow ourselves to ask each other what is important.

Maybe we didn’t really want to even watch a movie!

## Child Care for Church Events

Unity Church offers childcare for church-wide events, free of charge. Nursery care is consistently provided for every Sunday service and Wellspring Wednesday program — no reservation is needed. Outside of these times, reservations for childcare are required. Please request childcare one week ahead of time by completing the online form: [unityunitarian.org/childcare-request-form.html](http://unityunitarian.org/childcare-request-form.html). Katrina Nichols, Unity’s Nursery Coordinator, will contact you to confirm the reservation.

*Mark your calendar!*

## Unity Church Youth Musical

*Performances March 7, 8, and 9*

Volunteers from the Unity Church community, ages 6th grade to adult are welcome to help with the crew, staging, costumes, technical help, marketing and programming. For high schoolers, this can count towards service hours. Interested? Contact Gabby Mead at [gabrielledmead@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielledmead@gmail.com) or Theresa Nelson at [theresanelson820@gmail.com](mailto:theresanelson820@gmail.com).

# MUSIC MINISTRY



## Music Notes

**Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries**

In music, the relationship between the frequencies of different notes is referred to as a musical interval. A musical interval represents the space between two pitches and can be expressed as a mathematical ratio. The fundamental interval is the octave, where one note's frequency is double the other. For instance, if the audio frequency of A is 440 Hz, an A one octave above vibrates at 880 Hz, and an A one octave below vibrates at 220 Hz.

When dealing with unaccompanied choral music, especially early music, we often operate within a system of perfect tuning, also known as just intonation. This system aims to achieve pure and simple frequency ratios between notes. For example, a perfect fifth has a frequency ratio of 3:2, signifying that the higher note vibrates three times for every two vibrations of the lower note. Musicians listen for a distinct ring that occurs when intervals are perfectly tuned. However, perfect tuning presents a challenge: as you shift to different keys or scales, the relationships between notes change, leading to dissonance and an overall lack of harmony if tuning isn't adjusted accordingly.

Singers can adapt their tuning during key changes, but instruments tuned using perfect intonation, face limitations in playing in tune across various keys. This challenge prompted the development of equal temperament, a compromise tuning system that allows playing in every key, albeit with slightly imperfect intervals. In equal temperament, the octave is divided into twelve equal parts, maintaining a fixed frequency ratio, facilitating key changes while maintaining the semblance of harmony. Equal temperament lacks pure intervals; for example, a perfect fifth is not 3:2 but rather a less refined 2.9966:2. Today, equal tuning, or temperament, is the standard for instrumental tuning, and perfect intonation is less used — most people cannot really hear the difference.

As someone who alternates between roles as a pianist and a choir director, transitioning between these roles requires adjustment. Returning to the piano after an immersive period in choral music poses difficulty because everything sounds hopelessly out of tune. The special ring that singers spend countless rehearsal hours listening for is just not there. Nothing sounds right, and it takes a while for my ear acclimate... and then, once my ear has made the transition, it no longer hears these intervals as out of tune.

Collectively, we made the choice to make every key and scale slightly imperfect, to allow us the possibility of journeying through every key and every scale. While this sacrificed the beauty and mathematical perfection of pure intervals, it also opened the doors to an incredible complexity of harmonic language, arguably one of humanity's most beautiful musical achievements. There is a deeper lesson in this, although I'm not sure if I can quite grasp it yet.

*Want to sing with a choir at Unity Church?*

Visit [unityunitarian.org/music-ministry.html](https://unityunitarian.org/music-ministry.html)

Email [ahmed@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ahmed@unityunitarian.org)!

## Reimagining the Choral Canon

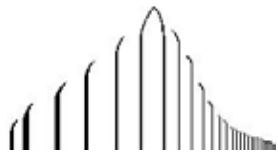
*with Dr. Anthony Trecek-King*

**Wednesday, March 13 | 7:10 p.m.  
Unity Church—Unitarian**



Join Border CrossSing for a Puentes/Bridges “Reimagining the Choral Canon” concert in collaboration with the Minnesota Chorale, featuring guest conductor Dr. Anthony Trecek-King. This concert features works by Margaret Bonds, H. T. Burleigh, Stephen Feigenbaum, Stacey Gibbs, Moses Hogan, Joel Thompson, Dr. Trecek-King, and Trevor Weston.

Dr. Anthony Trecek-King is a highly acclaimed choral conductor, scholar, pedagogue, and media personality with a career spanning over 20 years. He is an active guest conductor and serves as a Resident Conductor (chorus) with the Handel and Haydn Society. Recognized for his ability to create moving performances that exhibit a surprising range of dynamics and depth of expression, Dr. Trecek-King excels at cultivating vocal and instrumental musicians at all levels. Through his collaborative rehearsal style, he bridges the gap between high art and humanity, captivating audiences while maintaining exceptional sonic quality.



# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation  
Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director  
Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Interim Senior Minister  
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## Buy a Pie! Support Queer Prom and Youth Pride

The annual Pi(e) Day (3.14.24) Bake Sale is here! Order a blueberry, apple crumble, or French silk pie in Parish Hall on Sundays during February, or order online at [bit.ly/buyapie24](http://bit.ly/buyapie24). Plan to pick up your pie(s) on Sunday, March 10, between 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. The fruit pies are frozen and bake-at-home. 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! Baking will occur the evening of Friday, February 16, and the morning of Saturday, February 17. To volunteer, email Mike Huber at [mikehuberece@gmail.com](mailto:mikehuberece@gmail.com). No baking experience needed. Volunteer bakers have a lot of fun and are essential to the success of the fundraiser.



## Donate to Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf

Thank you for all of your generous donations in 2023! Let's make 2024 a banner year for donations to Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf! In 2022 we donated 3,145 pounds of food and household items. In 2023 we donated 3,541 pounds. During 2024 if each person just brought one more can of vegetables, or an extra bag of rice over what they normally bring, we could easily donate 4,000 pounds of food and household items. Two tons of food would be an incredible gesture of support!



For February the food shelf seeks donations of toilet paper, paper towels, disinfectant wipes, all-purpose cleaner, shampoo, conditioner, hand soap, body lotion and body wash. Canned and boxed food items are always appreciated.

Donations are also gratefully accepted online at [hallieqbrown.org](http://hallieqbrown.org). Thank you for your support!

## In The Justice Database

### Friends for a NonViolent World

The St. Paul organization, Friends for a NonViolent World, works to promote peace and justice using the principles of nonviolence to transform conflict and address the root causes of violence.

[bit.ly/JusticeData](http://bit.ly/JusticeData)

