

COURAGE

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

The root of the word courage means “work of the heart.” We can encourage others or discourage others, giving heart or refraining from giving heart. Interestingly, the root of the word bravery means savage, and we neither enbrave nor disbrave others, which suggests that bravery may be more solo and courage more connected.

Courage can be seen as a practice, a framework for promise-making, as promises are also held in the heart. Paul Tillich spoke of the courage to be, the existential choice of being. There are certainly those among us, possibly our own selves sometimes, who live lives of quiet desperation and find the courage simply to choose another day.

Tillich distinguished between general, free-floating anxiety and fear. For him, it is an act of courage to specify, to name what in particular frightens us. In this way, we can free ourselves from the fog of self-alienation and be awakened to responsibility. As in the story of Rumpelstiltskin, our fears can lose power when we learn their names.

Is courage, then, a choice? If so, when does the existential choice toward courage take place? If not, what could make courage inherent? When interviewed later, often those we call heroes repel such a term. When asked how they were able to enter burning buildings, save lives, face dangers, they say, “I didn’t even think about it.” Was there some process by which they’d readied themselves in advance, so that their existential choice toward courage had already been made? Or could the capacity toward courage be intrinsic?

Following acts of great heroism, adjusting to day-to-day life can be a burden. Heroes of Hurricane Katrina, who performed rescues even they hadn’t previously imagined, have spoken about the challenge, in post-Katrina life, of having fewer opportunities for courage. What is a hero when no heroism is needed? What role might circumstance itself, life itself, play in calling any one of us to courage?

Considering the connection of courage to heart, it’s interesting to consider the role of community in courage-making. Churches have the capacity both to discourage and to encourage. What permits a community, particularly a religious community, to have courage? Perhaps a religious community, like the Huguenots who harbored Jewish refugees during the Nazi regime, can embody courage through spiritual practice. Having been persecuted themselves, the Huguenots developed a spiritual resilience such that they lived, as if by habit or norm, into their existential choice toward courage.

Certainly courage can be an expression of faith. As we at Unity Church live into our own values of integrity, service, and joy, we may find new opportunities for spiritual resilience, structuring our space for expanded courage.

— By Ministerial Intern
Karen Van Fossan
with this month’s theme team:

Ruth Palmer, Pat Haff,
Rob Eller-Isaacs, Lisa Friedman,
Drew Danielson, Janne Eller-Isaacs,
Jennifer Nordstrom, and K.P. Hong

Courage Resources

Books

- The Courage to Be* by Paul Tillich
- The Courage to Create* by Rollo May
- The Courage to Teach* by Parker Palmer
- The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* by Jeanne Theoharis
- The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- The Color Purple* by Alice Walker
- The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Movies

- 42 (2013) American biographical sports film written and directed by Brian Helgeland about the integration of baseball player Jackie Robinson, who wore jersey number 42.
- Weapons of the Spirit* (1987). A documentary about the extraordinary French village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon during the Nazi rule in World War II.
- 12 Years a Slave* (2013) The story of Solomon Northup (Chiwetel Ejiofor), a free black man who is abducted and sold into slavery.
- Pay It Forward* (2000) A young boy (Haley Joel Osment) finds the courage to make the world a better place after his teacher gives him that chance.
- The Wizard of Oz* (1939) A journey to find the courage, heart, wisdom, and home that already lives inside each of us.

Just Words



I should have known better. I should have known that I was absolutely exhausted coming home from the conference I had helped lead. I knew that I hadn't slept well while at the conference. I was so concerned that it go well and those concerns kept me tossing and turning most of the nights I was in attendance. The conference was the first time the Unitarian Universalist Association had gathered ministers who are trying to serve congregations where sexual misconduct has occurred.

I was initially asked to serve as chaplain but then everyone decided that it made sense to bring me onto the leadership team. I was honored to be asked. And the conference did go well. It was only the beginning but at least we are trying to deal with sexual misconduct out in the open with intention and honesty. But again, I came home bone weary.

I came home so I didn't miss the Saturday session of Beloved Conversations. I had volunteered to participate in an exercise the previous week but when we ran out of time, the exercise was scratched. I arrived for the Saturday session and Jennifer politely asked if I was still willing. "Sure!" I said. I should have said, "I am feeling particularly exhausted and raw. Can you ask someone else?" But no, I was determined. It was a group-wide demonstration of what is called microaggressions. Microaggressions are statements that are often made in an off-hand way that insult people due to race, gender, sexual orientation and physical appearance and ability. They are often unconscious and yet over time, demean, diminish and deny the personhood of the recipient of the microaggressive act.

In the role play, I was an artistically inclined woman in a family of science and math superstars. Four other people circled me saying statements that meant no harm, but nonetheless demeaned the person I was playing. Before the exercise, I had never heard of the term microaggression. But within an hour of the role play, I heard unintended and innocent statements coming out of my mouth that clearly could have been interpreted as statements of microaggression. I certainly didn't mean them that way, but when heard from a different vantage point, I could understand how someone else might interpret them differently. We have so much to learn in our efforts to be an anti-oppressive institution. I have so much to learn.

The work of becoming an intentionally anti-racist and anti-oppressive faith community is hard work. It is the peeling away of so many cultural and societal shaped attitudes. It is the work of slowly recognizing our own part of the unfolding story. It is working to let go of the single narrative. It is the commitment to examine our many assumptions, to try on someone else's experience and try a new way. It is the path of a courageous community. It is the path we walk together.

— Janne

Contacting Unity's Pastoral Care Team

Unity Church Pastoral Care Team members are specially trained and formally commissioned members of the congregation who work with our ministers to lend support to parishioners in moments of challenge, crisis, and celebration. Interactions are confidential and no information is shared unless a congregant indicates that he or she would like others in the congregation to be involved or informed.

If you (or someone you know within our congregation) are in need of the services of Unity Church's Pastoral Care Team, please contact Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x106 or fill out the online form at <http://www.unityunitarian.org/pastoral-care.html>.

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Laura Thompson and Emily Kampa
married
December 21, 2013

Office Hours

The Church Office will be closed on January 1 for the New Year holiday and on January 20 for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

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JANUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION

January Worship Calendar

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

January 5: Tolling of Bells

We begin each new year with a memorial service for those who have died in the previous year. Everyone will have an opportunity to acknowledge those they've loved and lost.

January 12: Everyday Heroes

Rob Eller-Isaacs

The word hero is often used to describe firefighters, police officers, members of the military and others whose work requires a particular kind of courage. We want to expand the meaning of the word to include those who cultivate the spiritual resilience, compassion and clarity that justice work requires. Rob will be joined by worship associates Joan and Segundo Velasquez in an exploration of the kind of heroism that we need for the long haul.

January 19: The Irresistible Call

Rev. Kathleen McTigue

This Sunday we remember the courage and vision of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and the transformative movement he helped lead. Far from being a passive act, this choice of remembrance is also a way to locate within our own lives the compelling call to justice — and the courage to respond.

The Rev. Kathleen McTigue served as a parish minister for 25 years, first in North Carolina and then New Haven, CT. She now serves as director to the new Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice, a joint project of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

January 26: One More Step

Janne Eller-Isaacs

When we think of courage we often think of the grand gestures and actions that galvanized communities and nations. This Sunday, Janne and worship associate Drew Ross will explore the courage involved in the long hard march that involves the determination and resilience of one step in front of the other.

January Offering Recipients

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

January 5: War Legacies Project: Bob Feldman Fund

The War Legacies Project focuses on the long-term impacts of war to develop a fuller understanding of the costs of war, and conducts programs that help mitigate the effects of war at home and abroad. Currently their work is focused on the long-term health and environmental impacts of the use of Agent Orange during the Vietnam war. During the war, Bob Feldman was stationed in Bien Hoa, Vietnam, and died in 2006 of illness connected to lymphoma. This fund was established in his name to support families in Vietnam who have been impacted by exposure to Agent Orange. The fund is a way to provide support for children and grandchildren still suffering the effects of Agent Orange by providing decent shelter and adaptive equipment. Unity Church members Beverly Heydinger, Rick Heydinger, Estelle Brouwer, and the late Gary DeCramer were friends of Bob Feldman.

January 12: Bolder Options

Bolder Options is an innovative organization focused on healthy youth development. The activity-based, one-on-one mentoring program, wellness activities and leadership opportunities coordinate family, community, school and county resources in a united effort to support youth who are at-risk for dropping out of school or becoming involved in delinquent or unhealthy behaviors. Bolder Options engages youth and their adult mentors in goal setting, physical activity, tutoring and community involvement to build confidence and encourage healthy life skills. Over the course of a year together, each child and his/her mentor complete three 5K running or 15+ mile bike races as a way to help the child increase self-esteem and connection to their community. Unity member Heidi Mastrud is the Outreach Director for Bolder Options.

January 19: Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) has a rich history of offering hands-on experiences in human-rights work with grassroots partners throughout the world. Over the years, thousands of people have joined the UUSC on short-term JustWorks trips to put their values into action by exploring the root causes of injustice and lending their hands to vital work that advances human rights. Today, the UUSC collaborates with the Unitarian Universalist Association to continue this history of service learning through the Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice (UUCSJ). With a broad range of trips and programs for current leaders and future activists of any age, UUCSJ increases the capacity of Unitarian Universalists to catalyze justice. They are offering service opportunities in Haiti, New Orleans, Guatemala, and along the U.S./Mexico border. UUCSJ programs are grounded in Unitarian Universalist history and theology, contemplative practice, social-change theory, and multicultural competency.

January 26: Holdeen India Program

The Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Program (UUHIP) works with organizations of India's most excluded and oppressed peoples including women, dalits, and so-called "untouchables" who fall outside the caste system as well as the adivasis (tribals) who are India's indigenous peoples, especially migrant, bonded and landless agricultural laborers. UUHIP supports their efforts to participate fully in the social, economic and political life of India. Unity Church members, Laney Ohmans and Wendy Harris both spent a summer teaching in one of the UUHIP programs. As part of their sabbatical, Unity Church Co-ministers visited some of the Holdeen programs and a group of congregants journeyed to India in March of 2012 for a first-hand look at several programs of this impressive grassroots organization.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / ANTI-RACISM LEADERSHIP TEAM

Board of Trustees

From Steve Harper, Chair

When I look back on my first year on the Board of Trustees, I am struck once again by the courageous and vulnerable conversations I witnessed and participated in as our community envisioned a new future for itself. We now enter the New Year with a new set of Ends — aspirational statements describing who we want to be in the next five years. These Ends serve as a vision for us as individuals (Within), as a community of faith (Among), and as a force for servant leadership in the wider world (Beyond).

When I was nominated to be Chair of the Board for this coming year, I thought about Maya Angelou's statement that "Courage is the most important of the virtues, because without courage you can't practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage."

What does it mean to have courage?

I think for the Board this year it means looking carefully and open-heartedly at some challenging longer-term issues. A preliminary (but no means exhaustive) list includes:

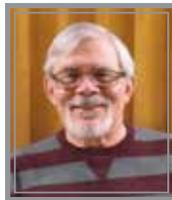
1. What does it mean to have "moral owners" outside of our church, and how do we, as a Board, engage with them on a more consistent basis? What virtues do we want to bring to those conversations?
2. What are the budget implications if and when we need to assume long term debt related to recent capital improvements?
3. How do we start planning for the senior leadership retirements that will be happening sometime in the not-too-distant future?
4. What other concerns do members of our community believe deserve Board attention?

These (and many other) issues will be occupying our attention this year and I am humbled by the opportunity to help facilitate the vital discussions surrounding them. I welcome any input you are willing to share with me and I can be reached via email at SteveHarper.home@gmail.com.

Welcome New ARLT Members

From Pauline Eichten, Anti-Racism Leadership Team

We'd like to introduce the new members of the Anti-Racism Leadership team (ARLT) recently appointed by the Board of Trustees. We look forward to the new energy and perspectives they will bring as they join current team members Pauline Eichten, Brooke Darst Rice, Mary-Margaret Zindren, and Avi Viswanathan. Over the past year, four team members have rotated off the team or resigned for personal reasons including Alana Howey, Mary Morris, Rob Fulton, and Drew Danielson (who has taken on a staff position). We thank them for their service.



Peter Heege: I joined Unity Church in 1966 while I was a student at Macalester, during the tenure of the remarkable Arthur Foote, and have recently returned to active membership after a long hiatus. I was in publishing and book distribution for 33 years, and in non-profit business management at Intermedia Arts in Minneapolis for five years. I'm now semi-retired and work part-time from home as the business manager for The UpTake, an on-line citizen journalism non-profit. I'm passionate about racial and social justice and about anti-racist institutional transformation. I hope to bring that passion to bear to further the already substantial work done by the staff and congregation of the church I love.



Jill Hendricksen: My husband Jim and I joined Unity Church in 2003. Our two sons Nathan and Samuel attend Crossroads Elementary in St. Paul and RE classes on Sundays. I am the Executive Director at Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation, a non-profit housing development organization serving the Frogtown and Summit University neighborhoods. I have a BA from St. Cloud State University in Urban and Regional Affairs and am recent alum of the 2013 Shannon Leadership Institute. I have been a Coming of Age mentor and teach middle school grades in Religious Education. I am passionate about social, racial, and economic justice issues and the dire inequities that are prevalent in our community. I am proud to belong to a faith community that embraces anti-racism and equity within our institution as well as the broader community.



Gabrielle Mead: I grew up outside of Chicago and lived on the East Coast and abroad before my husband and I made the Twin Cities our home nine years ago. My work focuses on addressing discrimination and harassment, and training on issues of equity and diversity. My girls, ages three and nine, keep me moving, thinking, and inspired. My husband keeps me balanced. I love to run and read. I bring to the ARLT an enthusiasm for learning, an interest in self-reflection, a commitment to anti-racism work, and a willingness to engage in these difficult and emotional conversations. I look forward to growing with our church community.



Kelley Nelson: After growing up in the Northeast, I moved to St. Paul 10 years ago with my native Twin Cities husband to raise our family. We live one block away from Unity Church so consider it both our neighbor and spiritual home. While we have attended services off and on since 2005, we first became members this fall. I have taught in Spirit Play and co-facilitated the Junior High Social Justice Youth Group, in addition to serving on the Religious Education Ministry Team. Professionally, I was the Co-Director of Diversity for The Blake School in Minneapolis prior to becoming an at-home mom and active parent volunteer with the St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS). Now that my boys are in third and first grade, I have re-entered the work force most recently as a Community Partnership Coordinator with SPPS. I welcome the opportunity to help Unity Church realize its vision as an anti-racist multicultural institution.

MINISTERIAL INTERNS

Jennifer Nordstrom

2013-14 Hallman Ministerial Intern



December was a whirl of snow, cold, love, and struggle. We passed through the longest night of the year, some shockingly early low temperatures (seriously, Minnesota, you scared this recent transplant; I thought that was going to last for six months!), and a month of considering incarnation—the divine spark embodied in each of us. Now we begin the new year and move into January: fewer parties, fewer farenheits, more quiet settling in to the reality of winter.

Even though we just celebrated the promise of new life, the miraculous, the baby's birth, and the return of the sun, that hope can be hard to hold onto in the bleak days of January in Minnesota. We might be experiencing the post-holiday crash, might be convinced winter will last forever, or might be yearning for missing loved ones. January calls us to courage, to do the work of the heart.

How can we take heart when the forecast seems bleak and the spirit feels icy? Courage can come in many forms, from seemingly-small acts to huge leaps, but all of it takes practice. Courage is like a muscle we strengthen through exercise. The process can be similar to trying to begin an exercise routine. You can put yourself on a courage exercise plan to strengthen your heart. Make a goal for the month: what one fear would you like to face this month? Imagine a scenario that would mean you have accomplished this. What are some practices that would lead you toward that scenario? You might imagine both mental/emotional exercises (visualizations, writing, reading, etc.) and exercises in the world. Put them in order from easiest to most difficult.

Make sure the first one just pushes up against the edge of your comfort zone: you have to start where you are. You do not want to give yourself a heart attack by trying to run five miles or face your biggest fear on Day 1. Think about where you are now, and go one step further than that. How did it feel? How do you feel having done it? What can you imagine yourself doing next? Maybe you want to repeat step 1 a few times; that is fine. When I first started running, something I have been intimidated by and detested my entire life, I repeated my first run four or five times until it felt easy. Do the first step of your courage exercise plan until you feel confident, then move to step 2. My running increases all felt different: some felt easy, others felt like I was going to *die*. Over a period of three months, I worked my way up to running over 2 miles, something I thought was impossible when I began. I just needed to make the decision to do it, begin where I was, and then put one foot in front of the other, one step at a time.

If you want to talk with me about creating a courage plan, email me (jennifer@unityunitarian.org) or stop by my office. We can encourage each other.

Karen Van Fossan

2013-15 Ministerial Intern



"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it."

— Nelson Mandela

I saw my classmates from Africa cry when we got word that Nelson Mandela had died. They bowed their heads in prayer with much of the rest of the class. I stood out in the hall, after stopping at the long, slender window in the door. With a few of my other classmates, I'd been late arriving from another class. Hesitant to interrupt, we shared silence in the hall. Somehow, all four of us at the threshold were Euro-American. Witnessing the loss in our African classmates' faces, we reached for comparisons from our own continent.

"It's like losing..." We paused.

"Martin Luther King," we concurred.

I don't think any one of us was alive during Martin Luther King Jr.'s lifetime. And yet that was as close as we could come to comprehending the collective loss of Nelson Mandela.

Across time and distance, I have taken hope from their courage. It wasn't only Mandela and King, though. Often, their actions were the actions of communities, people justly afraid together and mutually encouraged.

The life of Nelson Mandela teaches me not only about individual courage but also community courage. Another classmate of mine, an African-American man, has shared an African saying based on the philosophy of Ubuntu, or the quality of being human: "I am because we are."

As I waited in the hall, I bowed my head in thanks for Nelson Mandela and also the community that holds his courage within its own.

Karen Van Fossan can be reached by email at karenv@unityunitarian.org and by phone at 651-228-1456 x109.

Scan the codes below with your smart phone to find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter!



Welcome Words

Happy New Year! I always look forward to these bright winter days and the fresh start of a new chapter of life and living. It takes courage to start something new.

We have to center ourselves and prepare to walk into the unknown, to greet an unfolding future whose gifts and challenges we cannot yet see. It is not always easy. I think of this each Sunday as I have the privilege of welcoming visitors who have had the courage to walk through our doors for the first time, to enter into a sanctuary or classroom of new faces with the hope of a warm welcome and the discovery of kindred spirits. I remind myself that, at its best, our faith invites us to celebrate the daily acts of courage that help to shape our humanity. It invites us to honor the weekly acts of courage that call us to come together in religious community and to be challenged and moved by what we experience. Even more, it invites us to claim the courage to bear witness to the love and hope we have found in this world, despite its sorrow and tragedy. In this time of new beginnings, may our courage be enough for each of us to take those brave first steps into new adventures. And may we may we discover new friendships along the way. See you in church!

Rev. Lisa Friedman

Director of Congregational Life

Pathway to Membership Classes

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

Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

Wednesday, January 15: 7:15–8:30 p.m. ~also offered ~
Sunday, January 26: 5:45–7:00 p.m.

If you have been visiting and would like to find out more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation, we invite you to join us for a *Welcome to Unity* class.

Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Exploration

**Three night series: Thursday, January 16, 23, 30
6:30-8:30 p.m. (includes light supper)** ~also offered ~
Saturday, February 22: 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. (potluck lunch)

In this class, we will have an opportunity to share part of our religious journey, to take a more in depth look at the history of Unity Church, to discuss the expectations and benefits of membership, and get to know the programs and ministries of the congregation.

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

Wednesday, January 29: 7:15-8:30 p.m.

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

Ongoing Groups at Unity Church

These groups are open to all members and friends of Unity Church. If you are looking to connect with a group, please contact the person listed below, visit the church website at www.unityunitarian.org for meeting information, or call the church office at 651-228-1456.

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

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

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (January 16) from Noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org for more information.

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

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

Living With Grief Group: A group for people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (January 21) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org for more information.

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, January 6 and 20 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578 for more information.

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

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. The book they will be discussing on January 14 is *Orphan Masters Son* by Jon Adam Johnson. Contact Jack Hawthorne at jack.hawthorne@comcast.net for more information.

Unity Bridge Club: Friday, January 3, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209.

Women's Retirement Group: Second and Fourth Thursday of the month (January 9 and 23) from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Leah Doherty at doher001@umn.edu.

Zen Meditation: Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. Contact Ken Ford at kford5@comcast.net.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Pictured left to right: Scott Griesbach, Tom Ellis, David Holm, Rebecca Stewart, Anne Brataas, Chico Hathaway, Dave Kaminski, Charles Cooke, Drew Ross, Beth Yokom, Larry Yokom, James Larson

Charles Cooke: In 1989 I went to a young adults group at First Unitarian Society and met my wife Kathy, who grew up at Unity Church. We were married here and our children Claire and William have benefited from the quality liberal religious education including OWL, COA and Tower Club. I see them with open minds, accepting and celebrating the differences of others and ready to go out in the world with a set of tools to make their own choices! Becoming a member and signing the membership book was an honor for me. I really never thought I would find a religious home but my experiences all have been positive — thank you Unity Church!

Susan Foote: I am Professor Emerita at the University of Minnesota. My current passions are Minnesota history, travel to San



Francisco where I grew up, time with family and trying to age gracefully. I attended Unity's Christmas pageant 50 years ago, but am moved to join now to experience this congregation's values of integrity, community and joy.

Dave Kaminski: I found Unity Church about 25 years ago, but I guess I can procrastinate a bit. In the mean time, Unity activities I've enjoyed include: A New Look at the Bible, a covenant group, three New Orleans trips, mens groups, Heart to Heart with my wife Barb, and serving on a Welcome Team.

James Larson: I am a retired chemist and live in St. Paul. My current passions

include music, endeavoring to play my piano, nutrition, science in general and cosmology in particular, and environmental issues. Retirement has provided me the time to think and to question beliefs picked up as a child. As a scientist, a church without a creed is now the only type that works for me since I can no longer accept most religious beliefs. I can, however, whole heartedly embrace the values and community at Unity Church.

Kelley and Matt Nelson: Our family is thrilled to officially join the Unity family! As a passionate advocate for social justice and a consultant in the area of educational equity, Kelley finds that worshipping at Unity Church is an extension of her core beliefs and those she and Matt hope to impart to their two school-aged boys. Matt was raised in the Congregational faith and credits that upbringing with shaping his progressive views and creating his childhood community. We look forward to continued involvement with the community outreach and religious education.

Rebecca Stewart and David Holm: The Stewart-Holm family has been attending Unity Church for six years. We have joyfully, finally, officially become members. We are Rebecca, David, Bjorn, Sev and Oskar, and you can usually find us at Wellspring Wednesday or the 4:30 service. We love to have adventures — in the woods, in the snow, on the water, and on the road. Unity Church is the place

for us to find peace and feel supported by a loving community. We give thanks for being here together.

Beth Yokom: Descending from a LONG line of dedicated Swedish Lutherans, I attended a Lutheran college where I met Larry, my husband. However, finding Unity Church feels like coming home to me — a place that welcomes my searching and questioning. I care deeply about children, families and parenting as I supervise Early Childhood programs for Anoka-Hennepin Schools. We have two grown children, and recently moved to St. Paul from Arden Hills. I love the North Shore, nature, reading, singing, biking, walking, traveling, knitting and am a wannabe quilter.

Larry Yokom: I work for 3M, currently on the SAP corporate systems conversion project. I've been married to Beth for 31 years and willingly came along as her spiritual searching led us to Unity Church. We both love Unity and have found our spiritual home here. I enjoy living in the city, creating pottery, walking, biking, traveling and "all things North Shore."

Drew Ross: A native Minnesotan, I returned after nearly two decades out west. I was raised in Christian Science, though as a teenager I took to the relativism of taoism. Kirsten Fischer and I were married at Unity Church in 2003. Our daughter, Ava, was welcomed as "one more redeemer" in 2004. In October 2012, the sermons on repentance and forgiveness resonated, which led to my becoming a worship associate.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather together midweek at church for food, fellowship, and learning. Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., followed by worship at 6:45 p.m., and an evening of rich programming beginning at 7:10 p.m. Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance. The cost for dinner is: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4 (children under age 2 are free), and \$20/family, and can be paid by cash or check. Financial assistance is available to cover the cost of dinners; contact Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107.

January 8

Dinner menu: roasted chicken (or tofu) with shallots, herbs and garlic, mashed potatoes, green salad, cheesecake bars

Artaria Quartet

The Artaria String Quartet returns with the second half of the Shostakovich quartet cycle. Two years ago the quartet presented three evenings of performance and conversation exploring these works written by one of the towering composers of the twentieth century.

This month Artaria will present five of the quartets; on January 8 quartets 5 and 11, January 15 quartets 13 and 14, and January 22, quartet 15 which he wrote as his own eulogy. Members of the quartet will discuss each work as well as Shostakovich's relationship with Stalin and the circumstances under which he had to live and create music in the Soviet Union.

Creedless Courage — Rev. Lisa Friedman

Unitarian Universalism is a creedless faith that asks us to consider ourselves to be life-long learners in religion. What does this mean to how we approach theology? Spiritual practice? What kind of courage does it take to examine our own beliefs and make life changes, as our beliefs evolve and grow?

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Martial Arts

This class will be an introduction to Southern Style 5 Animal Kung Fu and adults and youth age 12 years and up are welcome. This beautiful Chinese martial art emulates the disposition of the Tiger, Snake, Crane, Dragon, and Leopard. Our focus will be on studying the introductory form of this style and you can expect a practice which builds strength, conditioning, and flexibility which both calms and invigorates the spirit.

Unity Church member Bryan Kujawski has been practicing martial arts for about 25 years and kung fu for the past 12.

Religious Education Orientation

January 15

Artaria Quartet

The Courage to Heal Body, Mind, and Spirit: A Panel on Integrative Medicine and Healing

Integrative medicine is a popular term these days with many Americans using some form of it. Come hear from a panel of three Unity Church members whose life's work is a form of integrative medicine/healing, who will share their experiences and answer questions about health and healing.

Dr. Sarah Chambers is the owner of Crocus Hill Health Center on Grand Avenue in St. Paul and a Chiropractic Physician and Western Herbalist. Michelle Loken Price is a Licensed Acupuncturist and owner and practitioner at More Qi Acupuncture. Kristen Wernecke is a minister of healing who uses energy healing and massage therapy, along with health coaching and Grounding Meditation. Kristen recently published her first book, Choosing Conscious Health for a Vibrant Life.

Everyday Enjoyable Parenting

Dr. Marty Rossmann

Parents of toddlers to teens are invited to participate in five sessions (January 15 – February 12) on the topic of good parent-child relationships. No miracles are guaranteed but the discussion and group support holds promise for enhanced interactions. Enroll by January 6 to receive a free copy of the research-based book, *The 10 Best Principles of Good Parenting* by acclaimed psychologist, Laurence Steinberg. Marty Rossmann, Unity member and Professor Emerita of Family Education at the University of Minnesota, will guide the sessions. Email Marty at rossm001@umn.edu to sign up.

Welcome to Unity (see page 6)

A Class for Newcomers

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Martial Arts

January 22

Artaria Quartet (see January 8)

Ending the School to Prison Pipeline: Job Issues for Youth

This program will provide an overview of the difficulties in finding jobs for youth with criminal records. There will be testimony from a young man who was caught in the pipeline and then sought employment. The program will include suggestions for direct ways to help counteract job issues for youth of color stuck in the pipeline.

Everyday Enjoyable Parenting

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Martial Arts

January 29

Dinner menu: stuffed shells in sauce (cheese/spinach and cheese/sausage) with a GF/DF option, green salad, bread, and chocolate chip cookies

Concert with a Cause: Pavia Winds

Pavia Wind Quintet is one of the Midwest's most exciting young chamber music ensembles. Donations will be gratefully accepted for Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, a local effort providing housing for homeless youth.

Everyday Enjoyable Parenting

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Martial Arts

Embodied Practice at Wellspring Wednesday

Beginning in January we will offer one embodied practice opportunity each Wednesday evening through May. In January, we will explore martial arts; in March, multigenerational art-making; in April, forms of chanting. Our hope is that Unity Church may continue to grow in our engagement of heart, head, and body. Please contact Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107 with questions or suggestions.

Sign up for Group Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Director Sarah Cledwyn will be facilitating small groups in contemplative spiritual direction during monthly meetings beginning in January. An evening group will meet on the first Thursday of the month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. (The third Thursday group is full.) A daytime group will meet on the first Monday of each month from 10:00 a.m.-noon. Groups will run through June and the cost is \$30 per session for six sessions (\$180). Together we will support each other's work to keep our balance and to live into integrity, service and joy. If you have questions about spiritual direction, or the forming groups, please contact Sarah at sarahcledwyn@gmail.com or 651-699-9948. You can sign up online at www.unityunitarian.org or by contacting Sarah.

Every Day Enjoyable Parenting

Parents of toddlers to teens are invited to participate in five sessions (Wednesdays, January 15-February 12, 2014) on the topic of good parent-child relationships. No miracles are guaranteed but the discussion and group support holds promise for enhanced interactions. All who enroll by January 6 will receive a free copy of the research-based book, *The 10 Best Principles of Good Parenting* by internationally acclaimed psychologist, Laurence Steinberg. Marty Rossmann, Unity member and Professor Emerita of Family Education at the University of Minnesota, will guide the sessions. Sign up by emailing rossm001@umn.edu. Childcare will be available.

Elders Circle Group

Tuesday, January 21 • 1:00-2:30 p.m. • Robbins Parlor

The Elders Circle is a group of church elders (self-identified) who get together monthly for fellowship, reflection, and fun. For more information, contact Hallman Ministerial Intern Jennifer Nordstrom at jennifer@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x 129.

Be a Host for Sources Suppers in February

In the Sources Supper tradition, during the week of February 8-15, 2014, we will come together to tell the story of Unitarian Universalism and apply it to our lives today. There are two options to participate in this opportunity for community building and spiritual deepening: in one another's homes on February 8 and 15, and at the church on February 8. If you would like to be a host for a Sources Supper in your home for 6-10 people on either the 8th or the 15th, please let Lisa Friedman know at lisa@unityunitarian.org. To read about the origins of the Sources Supper and the key events covered, go to www.SourcesSupper.org.

Make Camp UniStar Part of Your Summer!

50+ years of Unitarian tradition located on Star Island in Cass Lake, Minnesota

Imagine... An inter-generational camp with activities for all.

Imagine... Never needing your credit card, no cars to contend with, no stores wanting your business, no TV.

Imagine... Freshly prepared food three times a day, miles of trails to hike alone or with others, sailboats, kayaks, canoes and windsurfers to use as you like, a sandy beach and swim area, participation in a hands-on daily workshop or a thought provoking talk.

That is Camp UniStar.

For further information about summer 2014 programs and registration, please visit www.CampUniStar.org.

Committed Couples Class

The path of being in a committed relationship is a demanding path full of all kinds of challenges and opportunities. The goal of the committed couple's class is to enhance relationships no matter what state they are in.

People in a committed partnership sometimes believe that their issues are unique. Often that isn't the case and as couples share, camaraderie and understanding increase.

The committed couple's class is intended to promote healthy and productive conversations about our relationships. Participants are often amazed at how often they laugh at themselves as other couples share the same story.

Committed Couples is a class designed to support all couples who are committed to one another. We cover issues like finances, spirituality, the impact of family of origin issues, parenting, intimacy and conflict. We share and work in small groups and as couples. Each creates a relationship vision together which serves as a foundation for the work we do. If you have questions, please contact Janne at the Church Office.

Led by Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs, the Committed Couples class will be held Thursday evenings, January 30; February 6, 20, 27; and March 6, 13, 20, from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. Registration is free for pledging members of Unity Church and \$110 for non-pledging friends. To register, please contact Marcy Mann-Anderson by email at marcy@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x110.

Contact Christy Randall by email at christy@unityunitarian.org at the Church Office by Sunday, January 19, to request childcare.

WOMEN'S RETREAT / MUSIC MINISTRY

MIND BODY SPIRIT

THE GATHERING

6th Annual
Unity Church
Women's Retreat
Saturday, January 25

The Gathering is a one-day women's spiritual retreat held at Unity Church. This year's theme is "Mind/Body/Spirit." Join us in an opportunity to reflect on the wholeness of our lives — through worship, song, movement, writing, drumming, conversation, and contemplation. Watch for a special announcement about this year's keynote speaker.

Registration is limited to 125 women from ages 18 to 108. The cost is \$40. Breakfast, lunch and a social hour at the end of the day are included in the cost. Massage and spiritual direction are available at additional cost. Childcare is provided.

Registration will be online at www.unityunitarian.org and in the Parish Hall on Sundays beginning January 5. Gift certificates and financial aid are available.



Special Opportunities for Your Musical Journey

Artaria String Quartet at Wellspring Wednesday Wednesdays, January 8, 15, and 22



The Artaria String Quartet returns with the second half of the Shostakovich quartet cycle. Two years ago the quartet presented three evenings of performance and conversation exploring these monumental works written by one of the towering composers of the twentieth century. This month Artaria will present five of the quartets; on January 8th quartets 5 and 11, January 15th quartets 13 and 14, and January 22nd, quartet 15 which he wrote as his own eulogy. Members of the quartet will discuss each work, as well as Shostakovich's complicated relationship with Stalin and the impossible circumstances under which he had to live and create music in the Soviet Union. Turn to page 8 for details about Wellspring Wednesday.

Concerts with a Cause at Wellspring Wednesday

Donations will be gratefully accepted for Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, a local effort providing housing for homeless youth.

January 29: Pavia Winds

March 12: Sarah Carmack, Ruth Palmer and other guests

April 2: One Voice Mixed Chorus (special collection for specific GLBT youth housing)

April 9: Unity Singers

Unity Church Children's Musical

Performances: February 27, 28, and March 1, 2014

Now in its 25th year, the Unity Children's Musical gives 6th-8th graders a chance to perform in an original, high-quality production. Participating in the musical has been a rite of passage and transformative experience for many of our young people. Auditions (in the Foote Room) and a simultaneous parent meeting (in the Anderson Library) will be on Sunday, January 5, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Performances are February 27, 28, and March 1. Tech week starts Sunday, February 23. Questions? Please contact Susan Hinze at susanhinze@hotmail.com or Peggy Lin at peggy.lin@gmail.com.

Arthur Foote Music Weekend: Voices of Hope

Spirituals Project Workshop: Arthur Jones, guest clinician

Saturday, May 3 • 12:00-2:00 • Sanctuary

"Our mission is to preserve and revitalize the music and teachings of the sacred songs called "spirituals," created and first sung by enslaved Africans in America in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Spirituals Project is a broad-based initiative to explore the many, varied dimensions of African American spirituals as art form, tradition and tool; and to invite all people to experience the joy and power of this dynamic music and gift from African Americans to the world."

Concert of Community Choirs

Saturday, May 3 • 2:00-3:00 p.m. • Sanctuary

Foote Music Sunday: Voices of Hope

Sunday, May 4, 2014, during all three services

Unity Choir • Children's Choir • Unity Singers • Women's Ensemble • Unity Percussion
Laura Sewell, cello • Special Guest, Arthur Jones, from The Spirituals Project



What's New in the Library and Bookstall!

From the libraries and Bookstall by Louise Merriam, Library and Bookstall Team

January is when many of us make resolutions to change our lives in big and small ways. We try to lose weight, exercise more, save money or be nicer to our neighbors. A less common but equally worthy January goal is developing our interior lives more fully. Those who wish to follow this path can get started by visiting the Unity libraries, where they can find books that can help seekers take the first steps.

Open all day on Sundays, the Anderson Library on the second floor includes the following titles that could get you started on exercising your spiritual side:

- *Collected Meditations*: The library has three volumes in this series, including *What We Share* (vol. 2), *Singing in the Night* (vol. 5), and *Day of Promise* (vol. 1)
- *Simply Pray: Modern Spiritual Practice to Deepen Your Life* (2005)
- *A Book of Pagan Prayer* (2002)
- *Beginner's Grace: Bringing Prayer to Life* (2010) by Kate Braestrup
- *The Energy of Prayer: How to Deepen Your Spiritual Practice* (2006) by Thich Nhat Hanh
- *Writing the Sacred Journey: Art and Practice of Spiritual Memoir* (2005) by Elizabeth J. Andrew (2005)
- *Everyday Spiritual Practice: Simple Pathways for Enriching Your Life* (2001) by Scott W. Alexander
- *To Bless the Space Between Us: A Book of Blessings* (2008) by John O'Donohue

These and similar volumes are also available for purchase in the Bookstall on Sunday mornings. Books on prayer and blessings for children and families can be found in the Whitman Children's Library on the lower level in the religious education wing.

January fact: Did you know that Arthur Foote, minister of Unity Church from 1945 to 1970, was born on January 18? Many of Rev. Foote's sermons are available in the historical collection of the Anderson Library, carefully bound as pamphlets before the era of podcasts and recordings made the earlier preservation techniques obsolete.

JANUARY

Parish Hall Artist

Maura Williams

Maura Williams has been a member of the Unity congregation since the early 1980s and has enjoyed sharing her artwork in the Parish Hall over the years.

Current work is a series called *Seasons*. The intention of this body of work is to take a closer look at landscape elements to better appreciate the extraordinary nature of ordinary nature. It's a way of acknowledging the intricate complexity, diversity, and beauty in natural scenes we might walk past everyday. Some subjects are prompted to particular glory by time of year or by an unexpected aspect. Some are placeholders in the cyclic rhythms that measure our years. Each reveals a vision that happened to catch my attention.

I work from photographs that I take on my own walks. Settling on the final composition of a drawing strikes me as no less critical to the artistic process than putting color to paper to flesh out the illusion.

The medium for *Seasons* drawings is oil pastel on Plike, a hard-surfaced, acid-free, Italian paper.

Open Page Writing Sessions

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, Open Page writing sessions are opportunities to correspond with the "still, small voice within." Using stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, participants reflect on the month's theme in their own words and on their own pages. No writing experience is necessary.

Open Page: Courage

Sunday, January 12 • 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Free; RSVP required to karen@unityunitarian.org

"It is in the small things we see it," writes Anne Sexton of courage. "The child's first step, as awesome as an earthquake. The first time you rode a bike. . . ." But its reputation also rises from larger evidence of daring and defiance. This guided writing session explores the nature and sources of courage and its movement large and small within our lives.

Now Accepting Book Sale Donations!

You've been sitting on that pile of already-read books since last April! Donate them to this year's High School Youth Book Sale (April 12 and 13). Drop books (in boxes or sturdy bags, please) in the R.E. office.

Out of date textbooks, equipment manuals, and obscure reference books do not sell. Please find another way to recycle these books instead of bringing them to church. Thanks!



REGIFT...and REJOICE

Holiday Regifting Sale, Sunday January 12

Did Santa bring something that's not your size, your style, or your idea of fun?

Donate your brand-new but unwanted gifts to Unity Church. We'll sell them to someone else, turning your discards into cash.

Proceeds will benefit Unity's international outreach ministry teams.

What: Holiday regifting sale

When: Sunday January 12, 2014

Where: Unity Church Parish Hall

Time: Right after each service

Donate your unwanted treasures!

Shop for fabulous recycled bargains!

Warm and Groomed and on the Way!

From the Restorative and Racial Justice Teams

Men and women released from prison face huge challenges. They start with finding a bed and enough to eat on the first day out—nothing compared to finding an employer and/or a landlord who will hire or rent to an ex-offender. Doing either is difficult without transportation, especially during the winter, and who would want to apply for a job or an apartment without the basics for personal grooming?

These little things mean a lot to those trying to make good after doing their time. That's why Unity's Restorative Justice and Racial Justice Teams are asking you to help provide the following items for its community partner, Amicus, who assists ex-offenders in need:

- New gloves, hats, scarves, and socks
- Hand and foot warmers
- Hygiene items such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, and shaving cream
- Bus passes or the cash to buy bus passes

This collection will continue through February. You can bring them on Sundays to the Restorative/Racial Justice table in the Parish Hall or leave them at Pat Haff's office anytime. *Thank you!*

Evergreen Foodshelf

The third Sunday of every month is Evergreen Food Drive Sunday. Donations can be brought anytime and should be placed in the wicker trunks located at the Holly and Portland Avenue entrances. Suggested items for January 19: canned or dry spaghetti, canned stews, pancake mix, and syrup.

How it works: Bring your new, unused and unwanted items to the "regifting table" in the Parish Hall on Sunday, January 5 or Sunday January 12. Estimate their value and get a receipt for your tax-deductible contribution. **We'll sell items at a discount at the Regifting Sale, on January 12.**

All proceeds from the Regifting Sale benefit the work of Community Outreach Teams that support Mano a Mano International Partners (which works in Bolivia) and our Partner Church in Homorodszepter, Transylvania. Unsold items will be given to charity. **Questions?** Contact Andrea Bond by email at abond50@me.com, or Karen Abraham, phone 651-699-5590.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Welcome a Guest to Your Table

Guest at Your Table is an annual tradition in which Unity members nurture a spirit of gratitude and "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations" and support the work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (<http://www.uusc.org/guest>).



The first way: Each year the UUSC asks that we set an extra place at our table for one of the tens of thousands of people around the world who are changing their lives for the better with our help. Place a bowl, jar, or other container at that place. Then, donate the cost of one portion of whatever you're having at each meal and place that money in the container. Keep this going through January 18.

The second way: This year, youth and mentors in Unity's Coming of Age program are offering a unique opportunity to support the work of the UUSC. Congregation members can sponsor a youth/mentor pair as they undertake a service project. By sponsoring their service, you will match funds for hours worked, with all proceeds going to the larger work of the UUSC. If this alternative sounds interesting, please follow these steps:

1. Please stop by the Coming of Age table in the Parish Hall after worship or fill out the online form at www.unityunitarian.org to sponsor our youth and mentors and learn about the service projects they have chosen to undertake this year.
2. The youth/mentor and the people they serve will be "guests" at your family dining table. A mentor/youth pair will contact you with information and updates about their service experience, reminding you to set aside your designated sponsorship amount.
3. At each meal, your family "feeds" a designated container with money. Again, set a place for the container, maybe even bring a chair, and imagine that the box is really a neighbor in need.

Regardless of how you choose to welcome a guest, all proceeds will go to the UUSC. On Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Sunday (January 19, 2014) bring your collected funds in the form of a check made out to Unity Church, and we will send them on to the UUSC. Contact Drew Danielson at drew@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x112.

This year, as a special bonus, any single contribution over \$100.00 will be matched by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock.

Sustainable Agriculture Group

Thursday, January 9 • 5:30-7:30 p.m. DeCramer Room

Unity's Sustainable Agriculture group is hosting a hands-on learning workshop on fermentation and we're making sauerkraut! Join us for food, fellowship and business, and then walk over to the kitchen where we will make our own sauerkraut (or whatever other fermented food you bring). We will also discuss how we can be more sustainable in our own food processes, and plan our next learning workshops. BYO food to ferment.

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



Understanding Mass Incarceration...

Ending the Cradle to Prison Pipeline

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

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

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

Upcoming! January 22 • 7:10 p.m.

Job Issues for Youth Caught in the Pipeline

This program will provide an overview of the difficulties in finding jobs for youth with criminal records. There will be testimony from a young man who was caught in the pipeline and then sought employment. The program will include suggestions for direct ways to help counteract job issues for youth of color stuck in the pipeline.

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

SPRING 2014: HOUSING

March 26: Housing issues for youth caught in pipeline.

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

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Pitter-pattering Questions

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

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



"A child of seven is excited by being told that Tommy opened a door and saw a dragon. But a child of three is excited by being told that Tommy opened a door." For life itself with no need to mention dragons, wrote poet and theologian G.K. Chesterton, is astonishingly alive and enchanted for the child.

I think of that as I try to contain my laughter and hilarity at my daughter's indefatigable pattern of opening things—all sorts of things like toy bins, tubes of toothpaste, refrigerator doors, crayon boxes, ice cream bins—and my ever-flagging attempts to close the lid, top, door, cap, cover and put things back where they belong. Parents trapped in the Sisyphean tragedy, right!? Children who are masters at opening; and grown-ups forever trying to preserve some sense of closure, and perhaps in the process maturing into childhood. Maturing into childhood?

The journey of teaching and accompanying our children this first semester has brought me closer than before to the threshold of ambiguity and ambivalence. *Ambiguity* from the lack of precision about what we commonly mean by "children" who are forever shifting developmentally and never staying put, from moral debates about the nature of children as being fundamentally good or bad or blank slate, about whether our primary role is to teach them or learn from them, about reinforcing positive behavior or applying corrective teaching, about whether to attribute spiritual maturity or immaturity to children, and much more. But further, children touch the *ambivalence* many of us feel in our delight and frustration, our attraction-pull to care and fear-retreat from responsibility, in our reach for closeness and need for distance. And when ambiguity in our *understanding* combines with ambivalence in our *emotions*, the two can collude to paralyze our relationship with children and ourselves. Our best attempts to make children feel welcomed and loved do not necessarily bring round our unacknowledged emotional and intellectual conflicts; conflicts that diminish the careful listening and steady care needed for our children to carry on their symbolic-creative work; conflicts that can leave us as adults feeling torn, guilty, inadequate, and frustrated, right there with Sisyphus.

But ambiguity and ambivalence are also the timeless authenticators of being on a spiritual path, that we stand at the threshold of a greater mystery. And if we can remain open at that threshold, something greater promises to meet us and enclose us in a larger embrace. Compared with other species who achieve closure earlier in development, the young of our species have a long period of biological and existential vulnerability that gestate the complex language and creativity needed for flourishing. Our children are not only masters at opening, they **are** opening and vulnerability. Even as they trust us to offer needed closure as they grow, children beckon us to step into opening with them, until in the play of opening and closing, we finally learn the quintessential task of trusting. This is teaching-as-spiritual practice that our teachers know, and for whom I have immense gratitude for showing us how to mature into childhood.

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

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

R.E. Updates and Reminders

Spirit Play: Classes resume January 5. Please wonder together with your children about the stories they are hearing. Please remember to sign-in and sign-out your preschooler and take a moment to thank a teacher!

Workshop Rotation: Classes begin January 5 with new question and theme: "The Sacred Within." New Journey Guides will take on the role, with a "passing of the torch" on January 12! Please make sure your family has the chance to meet and connect with your child's new Journey Guide.

Junior High (Grades 6, 7 and 8): Our second semester classes begin January 26: High Feasts and Holy Days II, UU History and Identity, and Religions of Star Trek. If you find joy in being with children and seeing them alive with curiosity, please consider being a teacher as we still need help filling positions. Please contact kp@unityunitarian.org if you are interested.

Coming of Age: Our signature spiritual growth and enrichment program for 9th graders and youth in worship together. Subsequent meetings for the month will begin to address the question "How do we live in the face of death and loss?"

Please note: January 31 is the overnight "Sacred Spaces" for youth and mentors

Over the winter break, youth and mentors will complete their service project, not only as part of their COA experience but to support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (see page 5 for details).

Our Whole Lives: Our holistic sexuality and relationship program resumes on January 8 bringing attention to sexually transmitted infections.

Tower Club: Our high school youth group will resume January 5 with ongoing attention to the integration of their faith and spirituality into their many life commitments. Youth will also begin to prepare for upcoming Interfaith Youth Day of Service with partners in the Twin Cities.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Become a Chalice Lighter!

Do you have a child in grades 3-6 who may like to light the chalice during church services? We're offering a two-part training for interested children on the following dates:

Wednesday, January 22 • 6:45-8:15 p.m.

Saturday, February 1 • 2:00-3:30 p.m.

During the training sessions, children will learn about the meaning and history of the symbol of our faith, the seven Unitarian Universalist principles, and how the worship service is structured to include the chalice and the principles we hold dear. Advance registration is required and at least one parent must attend both learning experiences with their child.

To register for this training, please email Erika Sanders at esanders878@gmail.com. If your child would like to become a chalice lighter but can't attend these sessions, please let Erika know of other dates and times that work for your family.

R.E. Families

Thank your Journey Guide!

Families of children in grades 1-6 take note: our current Journey Guides finish their ministry on January 12 and our new Journey Guides take over for the remainder of the program year. Please consider preparing a note or a token of gratitude with your child and bring it to share with his or her group's dedicated volunteer before or after class. If you're not sure who your child's Journey Guide is, email kp@unityunitarian.org.

5th and 6th graders lend a helping hand!



This fall, a group of Unity Church parents of 5th and 6th graders planned hands-on service opportunities for their kids. The purpose was to better connect this large group of kids with each other and members of our community in need of help. As an initial voyage, a fabulous group of kids (and parents) provided yard clean up for two Unity families. The results were eye-opening, and the kids had a great time (see photo above!).

The Children's Musical is coming!

Please save these dates!

Now in its 25th year, the Unity Children's Musical gives 6th-8th graders a chance to perform in an original, high-quality production. Participating in the musical has been a rite of passage and transformative experience for many of our young people. If your child is planning to participate this year, please mark these important dates on your family calendar:

- Auditions (in the Foote Room) and a simultaneous parent meeting (in the Anderson Library) will be on Sunday, January 5, from 1:30-3:30 p.m.
- Performances are February 27, 28, and March 1
- Tech week starts Sunday, February 23

Questions? Please contact Susan Hinze at susanhinze@hotmail.com or Peggy Lin at peggy.peggylin@gmail.com.

Teacher Orientation

Attention new Journey Guides, Junior High, and Workshop Rotation teachers!

New teacher orientation will be offered on Saturday, January 11, from 10:00 a.m.-noon, and again on Wednesday, January 15, from 7:15-8:30 p.m. Please register for orientation online at www.unityunitarian.org/teacher-information.html.

Spirit Play Families

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

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

Sunday, February 9

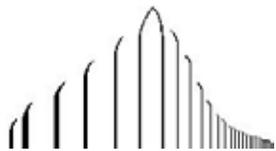
9:00-11:00 a.m. for children enrolled in Spirit Play at 9:00
3:30-5:30 p.m. for children enrolled in Spirit Play at 4:30

Sunday February 23

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

The Young Unitarian Universalist (UU) Families group will teach and demonstrate a ritual that brings the seven UU principles to life for children as they prepare for sleep. Children will also make and string UU principles beads that help guide them through the ritual. For families interested but unable to participate this round, there will be another opportunity in the spring. For more information, please contact Pamela Johnson at pamelajohnson@onebeacon.com or Director of Religious Education K.P. Hong at kp@unityunitarian.org.





UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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

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Samuel Morgan Community Forum

Faith and Justice: Saying Yes and Saying No

Saturday, January 18 • 9:00 a.m.–Noon • Parish Hall

Unitarian Universalists are famous (or infamous!) for our involvement in social justice issues, but we often give little attention to the ways in which our spirituality can inform and sustain our work for justice. Join us to explore how we might listen deeply not only to the needs of the world, but to the compelling mandates of our faith. There will be plenty of time for questions and conversation. Please email martha@unityunitarian.org if you plan to attend this forum.

Child care is available by request to christy@unityunitarian.org.



The Rev. Kathleen McTigue served as a parish minister for 25 years, first in North Carolina and then New Haven, CT. She now serves as Director to the new Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice, a joint project of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Rev. McTigue will be the pulpit guest during all three worship services on Sunday, January 19. Please turn to page 3 for details.

MIND BODY SPIRIT

THE GATHERING

6th Annual
Unity Church
Women's Retreat

Saturday, January 25

Turn to page 9 for details.