

Resistance

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 January theme is Resistance.

Resistance is much more than whatever first comes to mind. Resistance has a complicated reputation, and deservedly so.

In the world of electricity, resistance makes the filament of an incandescent bulb burn bright. In medicine, our bodies develop resistance to illness, and microbes develop resistance to the drugs designed to stop illness. We need resistance to build up or maintain our muscles. Wind resistance slows down our cars and bicycles, while resistance provided by the wind makes for stronger trees.

In the physical realm, resistance can be desirable or undesirable. The same can be said for resistance in social or political work, or resistance in our hearts and minds.

Resistance can be thought of as an inability to sit with reality, either because one is holding onto a story that differs from reality, or because the reality needs changing. We resist because we feel things should be otherwise.

If we resist something over which don't have control – mortality, say, or winter – we may wonder what the outcome of our resistance might be. Resisting the loss of a loved one, understandable and visceral as it is, does not bring about the change that our hearts long for. And resisting the grief process does not mean that the grief ceases to exist.

But some kinds of resistance do help us bring about the reality we dream of. We saw such resistance at work here in Minnesota this past fall, with the defeat of the anti-marriage amendment. "Vote no" was the message, and the very essence of resistance is the word "no." It's a strong and primal word that's among the first that every child learns,

and the "no" votes carried the day.

The amendment campaign, with its focus on personal conversations, was a nonviolent effort to bring about political change; even so, some kinds of fear did surface. Such conversations could, and sometimes did, lead to rejection and estrangement. Accepting such fears and going forth anyway is part of bringing about change.

A resistor named Jesus sought to transform people's fears. Both Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., who studied Gandhi, knew that fear was going to be part of their world-changing resistance work. We can't resist if we resist our own fear.

Internal resistance can have other consequences. Do we resist seeing our own role in racism or climate change, or do we resist acknowledging the problems within our own family systems or communities? We are not always eager to hear and accept the harder truths about our loved ones or ourselves. And when we resist emotional vulnerability – in the interest of appearing "together" or "successful" – we miss out on ways we might grow.

Some kinds of resistance bring to mind the idea of strength or force – resistance fighters, for example, or a strong internal resistance that we might feel. Nonviolent resistance, however, requires strength but not force, an incredible vulnerability and courage at the same time. Nonviolent protesters putting their lives or safety on the line in the face of physical power can transform the force of the opposition, to the point that sometimes the lack of physical resistance makes it impossible for those possessing force to respond violently.

Resistance can also be conveyed through art. The blues, for example, can be seen as a form of resistance music. Blues music isn't about wallowing; it's about resilience and resistance.

"What's the best way to resist?" is a question that comes up regularly at Unity Church in conversations about social justice. And it's a question worth asking ourselves more broadly about the myriad kinds of resistance in our lives.

– Jim Foti on behalf of this month's cover article theme team:

Janne Eller-Isaacs, Kerri Meyer,
Lisa Friedman, Mae Gibson Wall,
Rob Eller-Isaacs, Ruth Palmer, and Pat Haff

Resistance Resources

BOOKS

Out of the Flames: The Remarkable Story of a Fearless Scholar, a Fatal Heresy, and One of the Rarest Books in the World, by Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone. A look at Michael Servetus, a 16th-century iconoclast whose ideas influenced Unitarianism.

In the Footsteps of Little Crow, by Curt Brown and David Joles. This e-book by two Twin Cities journalists tells the story of the 1862 U.S.-Dakota war through the eyes of a Dakota chief. Available for Kindle via Amazon.com.

Green Eggs and Ham is Dr. Seuss' tale of resistance to trying new things.

FILMS

Beasts of the Southern Wild takes place in an isolated corner of Louisiana where residents resist many aspects of mainstream culture. PG-13

Gandhi, tells the story of the non-violent resistance that led to India's independence.

Just Words

On Sunday, December 9, the snow just wouldn't stop. It got to where it was snowing an inch every 45 minutes. It was so lovely to watch from the new lobby as people arrived at church. A few families even delivered their children to the church by coming up the new ramp via sled. I know that I am a bit of a snow wimp, but I was very impressed that so many of you came to church in such heavy snow. What impressed me even more was the number of visitors we had in spite of the snow. I am not talking about the visitors who came to specifically see UUSC Executive Director Bill Schulz but the visitors who came to check out Unity Church. They came seeking a religious home, a place where their spirit might deepen and grow. I wish I had had the time to find out what motivated them to come out in such weather to visit our church. I also admired their bravery in declaring that, "I am here to see if this is a religious community I want to be a part of." Bill Schulz was also very impressed by the number of people who attended church in the storm. He was also impressed by your responsiveness and your singing ability!

Studies show that 55% of all adult Minnesotans claim membership with a religious community. That is an impressive number which rivals the south! I feel blessed to serve a community where church attendance and involvement is taken so seriously. Unitarian Universalism is stronger in the Twin Cities than most everywhere in the country. It is a fertile ground for liberal thought and therefore liberal religion. We have something tangible and real to offer people who are searching for a religious and spiritual home.

Increasing numbers of folks are turning away from organized religion. Many mainline churches are in trouble with church closures and consolidations happening all over the country. In the book *Christianity After Religion*, Diana Butler Bass quotes startling statistics for those of us who care about organized religion. The people who claim no religious affiliation has grown quite dramatically over the last few decades. But that doesn't mean people don't have spiritual lives. They do. People are looking for a direct and authentic relationship with the sacred, something they suspect will fulfill what they seek. They are not sure church is relevant any more. They are also comfortable with the possibility that God can show up just about anywhere and that worship can be found in cafes, concert halls and candle lighting ceremonies of their own making. They want to be involved in deep, relevant conversations. They just doubt if church can be a place where a divine encounter can be encouraged or possible. But often coming to a UU congregation is their last try at church.

It takes courage and determination to visit a religious community, especially alone. I honor the risk and vulnerability involved in taking that important first step. People are coming to our congregations with longing for community and connection, for reassurance and restoration, for a place to rest a weary spirit. They come looking for a place where the messages resonate with what they suspect is true. They come with questions and concerns and with a desire to make a difference in the world. When you see a person you do not recognize standing alone in coffee hour, please remember what it took for you to come to church the first time and honor their risk by saying "hello."

— Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs

Office Hours

The Church Office will be closed on January 1 for the New Year holiday and on January 21 for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Freya Joy Virginia Palmer

born one more redeemer

December 12, 2012

to parents

Joan and Mitch Gunderson-Palmer

and big brother Atticus

Whole Farm Co-op Deliveries



Buy meat, cheese, eggs and other local

sustainable produce from Whole Farm Coop farms and pick it up at Unity Church basement each month! Order from www.wholefarmcoop.com or call 1-320-732-3023 by Wednesday, January 9, and orders will be delivered on Wednesday, January 16. For more information contact Pat Haff at pat@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x126.

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JANUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday Worship Calendar

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

January 6: Tolling of Bells

We begin each new year with a memorial service for those who have died in the previous year. Rob and Janne will each eulogize men and women whose lives have shaped the world of art or politics, literature or science. Everyone will have an opportunity to acknowledge those they've loved and lost.

January 13: *Resistance and Repose* — Janne Eller-Isaacs

Janne and worship associate Steve Harper will explore the dynamic between states of resistance and repose. Stillness and calm after struggling, resting muscles after exertion all are examples that translate to the active spiritual life and the times we truly come to rest. They will be joined by Derek Mitchell, the Director of the Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Program.

January 20: *Why We Can't Wait* — Rob Eller-Isaacs

Taking their title from Dr. King's book about the Birmingham bus boycott Rob and worship associate Mary Margaret Zindren will take a long, hard look at white privilege and its implications. The service will include an update on our efforts to become a credible partner in moving beyond racism.

January 27: *Resistance to God* — Janne Eller-Isaacs

Many of us still cringe when the holy is referred to as God. Humanists and atheists resist the term and the concept. Janne and Ray Wiedmeyer will wrestle with the problem of God.



The elders group gathered for holiday cheer during December. Turn to page 7 for information about the January gathering.

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 6: ECSE—Birth To Three

Early Childhood Special Education Birth to Three is a program provided through the St. Paul Public Schools for infants and toddlers who have been determined eligible because of a delay in play and learning, communication, motor, sensory, or social skills or through another condition known to hinder school success. This offering will provide toys, equipment and supplies to use in delivery of services to low-income families. Unity Church member Donna Blaney Johnson works as a Birth to Three social worker.

January 13: UUHIP

The Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Program (UUHIP) works with organizations of India's most excluded and oppressed peoples: women; dalits, so-called "untouchables" who fall outside the caste system; and the adivasis or 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.

January 20: Unity Church Anti-Racism Effort

This offering will be set aside to fund educational and training opportunities to help the Unity Church congregation become a more effective partner in ending racism.

January 27: Will's Educational Opportunity Fund

WEOF, now in its second year, provides tuition grants to young offenders attending local community colleges to better prepare themselves for employment. In some cases WEOF satisfies outstanding educational debt so that individuals, upon returning to the community, can build on the educational progress they made while incarcerated. WEOF is an outgrowth of the weekly Monday evening Circle of Peace, spearheaded by Russel Balenger, Sr. Vice President of AMICUS and Summit University resident. Unity Church has provided the circle with a meeting place for over two years. Mary Anderson and Louise Wolfgramm, longtime Unity Church members, are two strong supporters and regular participants in the circle.

Board of Trustees

From Marg Walker, chair

“...So, maybe this is what is meant for us –
to be ready to be unsteady, unhinged,
beside ourselves ... to be
transposed, dislodged, ready for
realignment, reintegration...”

— Lucy Shaw

I'll be frank with you. When I first started thinking about chairing Unity's Board of Trustees, it was unnerving. It's not a role I had ever imagined taking on, and I wasn't at all sure I could do it. My first reaction was, no thank you.

My husband, Eric, challenged me to go a little deeper. What were the responsibilities? Who would share them? Where did I feel vulnerable? I tried to visualize myself in the role. And this led to an interesting progression.

My first concrete image was of the library, where board meetings are typically held. Could I be a reasonably competent chair of those proceedings? After a while, my image shifted to the reading desk in the sanctuary as I realized – oh, *of course*, the scope of the board's work encompasses the whole life of the church. Could I put my finger on the issues that are energizing us? Could I frame some leadership tasks for the coming year?

Later, in my mind's eye, as I stood at the reading desk looking out at all your faces, I glanced through the windows to our stunning new entry lobby and finally arrived at the heart of it: we're here to make a positive impact *in the world*. Could I make a deeper commitment to that?

I submit that these are vital questions for you, too. They lead us to extend our aspirations from “within” to “among” to “beyond.” And – this is so crucial – the best answers will be imagined and achieved collectively. I accepted the role of chair because I know the depth of the bench, both on the board and in this congregation.

So, to borrow the words of Lucy Shaw at the head of this column, what is meant for us now? Here we are in this magnificently redesigned and updated building, after being dislodged and unhinged for so many months. Are we ready for realignment and reintegration? What skills and gifts can each of us contribute? What new possibilities for welcoming and connection are offered by our gracious entryway and expanded gathering places? How can we increasingly use our beautiful building in the service of our public commitments, making a positive impact in our neighborhood and in the world? What responsibilities are we ready to shoulder? Where do we feel vulnerable, or unready – and what makes it possible to plunge in anyway?

I'm counting on us to figure it out together.

Carry It Forward

The 2013 Annual Pledge Drive

From Dan Huelster, Pledge Team member

We are in the midst—and always will be—of **carrying it forward** here at Unity Church. There is a vibrancy to this institution, evidenced by those who are here on a Sunday: old timers, newcomers, those in between. It is evidenced during the week, as our building hosts a myriad of activities. It is evidenced by the work we do *within, among, and beyond* our church walls.

Our new entrance beckons and welcomes us; our new spaces are being inhabited while those that remain the same have been refreshed, given a spark of the new. During worship we can now look outward, as well as focus inward, with transparent windows opening our view to the world.

It is within this context that we run our annual operating pledge drive. We have high expectations of what we will experience at and through Unity Church. Our programs flourish. Our staff is par excellence. And yes, there are nuts and bolts that need attending to: heat, lights, water (although with updated infrastructure, we can breathe easier!).

The budget for this year, 2013, was made with a goal of \$1,205,000 from pledge income. As of this writing, we have pledges amounting to \$1,065,146.61. To those who have made pledges, sustaining or annual, *thanks*. To those considering still, your support is vital to the ongoing health of our beloved institution. To those able to increase your pledge, the need is, as usual, there. We will work to reach our goal throughout this year.

This is my last article for the pledge team, as my three-year stint draws to a close. These have been interesting and at times challenging years on which to serve as we had to ask members to increase pledges during difficult economic times, run a pledge drive that coincided with a capital campaign, and broaden our budget base to include more households.

But the work of the Pledge Team is also, as Lia Rivamonte wrote, “joyful, interesting and truly enriching.” I've been honored to work with Lia as well as Chris Crosby-Schmidt, Kit Brady and Lee Carey (who also serve on the capital campaign team), and currently Mary Baremore and Jackie Smith. Barbara Hubbard, from the Executive Team, exudes a Buddha like calm, has an omniscience about who we are at Unity Church, and guides us through this process. Kudos to all.

As Mary Baremore writes “pledging is more than just committing financial resources. We covenant with one another to provide for our present life in the church, for our future and for the future of our children and grandchildren. Pledging is a promise. It is what binds us to each other. It builds our community. We commit this holy act together.”

The drives I've participated on have gone *From This House to the World*; we've seen *Unity Tomorrow*; and now a future yet unseen, but so full of promise: *Carry It Forward!* No stasis around this place of ours!

MINISTERIAL INTERNS

Mae Gibson Wall

2012-13 Hallman Ministerial Intern

Happiness and freedom begin with a clear understanding of one principle: some things are within our control, and some things are not. It is only after you have faced up to this fundamental rule and learn to distinguish between what you can and can't control that inner tranquility and outer effectiveness become possible. — Epictetus



Every Friday morning, my daughter and I spend two hours at the public school across the street from our home, enjoying Early Childhood Family Education. For the first hour, we play together with all the other parents and children, and then we part for the second hour – parents go off to discuss childrearing in one room while the kids play with teachers in another.

Last Friday, during the parents' time, I invited a discussion on how to respond appropriately to children's fear. Sometimes, Maisy tells me she feels scared, and I'm not sure how I should react. My initial response to her fear was, "there's nothing to be afraid of," but I quickly realized that wasn't true. For her, there was something to be afraid of, and by saying otherwise, I wasn't honoring her emotions.

A father in the room said that he tells his children that they are safe with him. That sounded sweet to me, but I struggled with it. It's not in my control to keep Maisy safe, even though I desperately want it to be. There are things I can do to try to keep her safe, certainly, but it's dishonest for me to tell her that it's within my power.

Just about the time we were having this conversation, children at an elementary school in Connecticut were being shot.

It's one thing to theorize about how anything could happen to my child and how I don't have the power to keep her safe. It's another thing entirely to have to look that excruciating reality in the face. Today, kids all around the country are realizing way too young that their parents aren't superheroes, and heartbroken parents are wondering how to respond to fear – both their children's and their own.

I wish I had answers for you, but right now, I only have overwhelming grief. Today, three days after the atrocity, all I can do is appreciate every single moment I have with my daughter. Maybe I can't always keep her from harm, but I can hug her and kiss her and laugh with her and dance with her. And if I lie awake in fear at night, I won't have the energy to do those things.

It is not in my control to ensure Maisy's safety; it is possible that someone or something will rob me of her life long before it is fair or just. But it *is* in my control to determine whether or not fear will rob me of even one moment of our precious time together. Today I cling to that as my most beloved right and my most sacred power.

Mae Gibson Wall can be reached by email at mae@unityunitarian.org and by phone at 651-228-1456 x129.

Jim Foti

2012-13 Ministerial Intern

Does anyone come to coffee hour to be alone?



This question occasionally pops into my head when I'm standing behind the Welcome Table or engaged in a conversation with congregants. I'll glance around and see someone I don't recognize sipping coffee and looking out the window, or someone who already has checked out the art and is now silently observing the lively conversations happening close by.

Visitors to Unity Church are a highly motivated bunch. Very few people just happen to wander in; church is a destination, and those who come are so committed to learning more that neither our construction chaos nor winter's obstacle course stopped the flow. Staff and official volunteers work very hard to meet and greet as many visitors as possible, but not every guest receives that after-worship "hello," a "hello" that might help determine whether there'll be a subsequent visit.

On a given Sunday, we come to church for any number of reasons — celebration, grief, the stimulation of new ideas, the comfort of familiar rituals and friends. Church visitors also have a variety of motivations and approaches — some, for example, want to check out the sanctuary service in anonymity. But those of our visitors who fill up a cup at coffee hour usually aren't there solely for the beverage. They're seeing how congregants interact, and they're discovering whether they themselves will be seen.

Hospitality is one of the bridges that brings people from "beyond" our walls to "among" our community. So if you're in the Parish Hall on one of those Sundays when you've got a bit of heart or energy to spare, perhaps you might recall those situations in your own life when you were the new person in the room, and you might remember what little or big thing happened to make you feel visible and welcomed. Then glance around. You might make all the difference.

Jim Foti can be reached by email at jim@unityunitarian.org and by phone at 651-228-1456 x109.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Welcome Words

The fresh days of a New Year bring new opportunities to find joy and meaning in our lives. We often make resolutions around our health, home, or work, but it can be rarer to set goals for our spiritual wellbeing. Have you been longing to cultivate a spiritual practice? To make deeper connections with others? To find clearer ways to bless the world? Unity Church can be a partner in helping you grow. Contact me if I can be of help in connecting you to the programming and support you need.

See you in church!

Lisa
lisa@unityunitarian.org



Lisa Friedman
Director of Congregational Life

Pathway to Membership

Unity Church offers three different classes for visitors who are exploring Unity as a spiritual home. Sign up at the Welcome Table on Sundays or by contacting Laney Ohmans at 651-228-1456 or laney@unityunitarian.org. Childcare is available by contacting Christy Randall at 651-228-1456 x127 or christy@unityunitarian.org at least one week in advance. Rev. Lisa Friedman, Director of Congregational Life, is also happy to meet with you to answer questions and to welcome you into the congregation. She can be reached at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107.

Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

Wednesday January 16: 7:15–8:30 p.m. ~ also offered ~
Sunday, January 27: 10:15–11:30 a.m. and 5:45–7:00 p.m.
If you have been visiting Unity 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

Tuesday, February 5, 12, 19: 6:30–8:30 p.m. ~ also offered ~
March 2: 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
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 23: 7:15–8:30 p.m.
This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world’s needs meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class will conclude with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church! There will be a special New Member recognition ceremony on Sunday, January 27.

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, or 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 10) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528.

Afterthoughts: Sundays after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528 for meeting locations.

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (January 17) 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 8) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (January 26) from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760 for more information.

Living With Grief Group: A group for people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (January 15) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org for more information.

Men’s Retirement Group: Monday, January 7 and 21, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578 for more information.

Unitots!: A playgroup for families (parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles) with kids through preschool age. Every Monday and Thursday, 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 (January 8) from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne at jack.hawthorne@comcast.net for more information. The book they will be discussing is *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini.

Unity Bridge Club: Friday, January 4, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209 for meeting location.

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.

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



Elders Group Gathering

Wednesday, January 23

1:00-2:30 p.m. • Center Room

Everyone is welcome at Unity's monthly Elders gatherings, which offer fellowship, fun, and learning. Details on this month's program will be included on the elders postcard, which is mailed out the week before. Contact Ministerial Intern Jim Foti at 651-228-1456 x109 or jim@unityunitarian.org.

New Class Offering!

Adult Religious Development: Spirit in Practice

Hallman Ministerial Intern Mae Gibson Wall will lead a five-week class for adults on developing spiritual practices. Together we will explore mind, body, soul, life, and justice practices, as well as spiritual partnerships. The class will be offered at two times: Tuesday evenings (February 5, 12, 19, 26, and March 5) from 7:00-9:00 p.m., and Thursday afternoons (February 7, 14, 21, 28, and March 7) from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Participants are asked to choose and commit to either Tuesday evenings or Thursday afternoons. If you would like to register, or if you have questions, email mae@unityunitarian.org or call 651-228-1456 x129.

Covenant Group Opportunity

We are a Women's Spirituality Covenant Group that intentionally comes together to share ourselves in community as a means of deepening our spiritual lives. Each month a facilitator chooses a topic and readings, and we each share our thoughts and practice deeper listening. We meet on the third Monday of each month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and are seeking several new members. Members are asked to commit to regular attendance. Contact Wanda Davies at davies767@gmail.com or at 612-750-8987 for more information and to get a copy of our covenant.

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For further information visit www.CampUniStar.org or contact Management Committee member Pam Johnson at 651-430-1738 or pam_doug.johnson@comcast.net.

Upcoming Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Course

Non-Believer Nation: The Rise of Secular America

Thursdays, February 14–28 • 10:00-11:30 a.m.

This is the name of the course text, written by David Niose, President of American Humanist Association, available from Amazon.com. Why are increasing numbers of Americans identifying themselves with no religion? Some call themselves "freethinkers," "agnostics," "atheists," "humanists," "unitarians," or "universalists." For the first of three sessions, participants are asked to read the first third of the book. This class will be held at Unity Church and church members are invited to take the class free of charge.

Wellspring Wednesday

RETURNS!

Join us on January 9 for the return of Wellspring Wednesday! Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun.

All are welcome. Watch for more information about programming in upcoming church communications.

Schedule for the Evening

6:00 p.m.: The evening begins with a hot, nutritious meal and a good conversation. Menus are posted both online and in *This Week at Unity* when available. The cost for dinner is: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$18/family, and can be paid by cash or check. (Children under the age of 24 months are free.) Reservations for dinner are not required. Financial assistance is available to cover the cost of dinners, contact Lisa Friedman by e-mail at lisa@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x107.

Dinner menu for January 9: herb roasted chicken, garlic mashed potatoes, mixed greens salad, and chocolate cake.

6:45 p.m.: Everyone is invited to a short worship service in the Ames Chapel.

7:10 p.m.: Classes and programs follow worship and begin at approximately 7:10 p.m. Childcare and children's programming is offered at no cost during this time. Families should check their children in on the evening's sign-in sheet in the Parish Hall before heading to their program.

If you are interested in offering a Wellspring Wednesday class, please fill out the online proposal form at: <http://www.unityunitarian.org/wellspring-wednesday.html>

Ministry On Wheels

From Jim Foti, Ministerial Intern

If you heard my November sermon or have seen my queries in the newsletter, you may be aware of my efforts to create a sustainable “rides ministry” for Unity congregants who cannot drive themselves to Sunday worship. And now that the church’s renovation and move-in are behind us, I’m hoping to use the final five-and-a-half months of my internship to, well, get things rolling. While you may not be in a position to need or offer rides at this time, I hope you’ll read on anyway – as I’ve seen during my time here at church, life situations can change very fast.

Here’s some of what I’ve found as I’ve explored this issue:

- People of all ages and abilities are in need of transportation to church.
- Numerous ride arrangements, formal and informal, exist among congregants.
- Unity has made previous attempts to set up a rides ministry.
- There is some cultural acceptance of the fact that older members may stop coming to church altogether once they give up their driver’s licenses.
- Because of infrequent weekend transit service, a Macalester student wanting to take the bus along Grand Avenue to attend our 4:30 p.m. worship would have to leave home nearly an hour before the service starts – to go two miles.
- For some people, there is shame and reluctance around the idea of accepting a ride. The idea that “old people/disabled people are a burden” is internalized.
- Many congregants who are not currently providing rides are interested in doing so, particularly if it is a flexible or not-every-week commitment.

Additional key points:

Unity is not the only Unitarian Universalist congregation to face challenges in this area.

Unlike the many Christian faiths that include the theological imperative to attend church each and every Sunday (and whose congregations often purchase vans to achieve that end), our tradition is more individualistic – on the part of both the people who drive themselves and those who need rides.

A van is not a simple solution in our case. There are the capital and operating expenses, of course. There is also the problem that, unlike our Catholic and Lutheran neighbors, we do not have a UU church every mile or so, and so our congregants are scattered over a wide area. For example, a van trying to pick up a Unity Church member at a retirement community in Arden Hills and another congregant in Inver Grove Heights would need more than an hour to complete just those two trips, and then would have to repeat them after the service. Perhaps most significantly, a van would make the provision of rides yet another responsibility of an already very busy staff.

So what are we going to try? I’m working on a system that utilizes the church’s front-desk volunteers and free online resources to connect interested riders with interested drivers. (It can’t be an online-only system, because some people who desire rides are not Internet users.) We’d have easy-to-update lists and maps of who lives where and who would like to attend which service. Drivers could volunteer for one-time rides, a regular gig, or even a one-way ride. Connecting riders and drivers would be done by the front desk, which is staffed five days and four evenings a week, instead of by one or two ride coordinators fielding calls and e-mails every week at home.



One of my seminary professors once described a task as “building an airplane while flying it,” and there will be some element of that to this work – we’ll experiment and adjust as needed (though we won’t need parachutes!). We’re going to start by focusing on Sunday rides and selected other church events. Rides to non-church appointments, such as the doctor, will continue to be handled individually through the Pastoral Care team.

What might we gain? We gain the chance to live out our aspiration “to be a church for all souls.” Not just souls that inhabit bodies that own cars – *all* souls who wish to worship as part of our covenanted community. We provide continued community to a broader range of people, with all the benefits that come from being together. We’d crack a problem that has vexed many congregations. And if this effort works, we also reduce some of the terror of permanent isolation that many people feel when the time comes to give up the keys. Wouldn’t it be nice if all of us could someday do so knowing that church, at least, has our back?

How can you get involved? You can volunteer to provide rides by sending me (jim@unityunitarian.org/651-228-1456 x109) your name, address, and the service you most regularly attend. If you are interested in receiving rides, please send me the same information. Also feel free to contact me if you know of someone other than yourself who might want rides. Many thanks to those of you who have already been in touch.

And thanks to all.

Congregants, start your engines....

January Parish Hall Artist

Judy Fawcett

Landscapes of Remembrance

My imagination has been shaped by memory and the process of creating work. Painting is my way of meditating as an adult. It's a spiritual act, opening my mind to what is possible. Creating an abstraction allows me to arrange shapes, color, value and line without external references. It is a glimpse into my interior world and my relationships.

When I paint abstractly I don't consider what my subject will be in advance. I may begin with an idea of "movement" or "solitude" or experimenting with texture. As I lay down color, define shapes, add line and perhaps texture something figurative or something landscape usually develops. Then I may build on what I see happening on the canvas or paper. My recent paintings have resembled landscapes or cityscapes.

I've always lived in a city. So, the "Urban Turf" series reflect that innate part of me that suggests architecture and passageways. They resemble physical structures, but can represent psychological states as well.

Other paintings are a result of my trip to Bhutan, the Buddhist country in the high Himalayan Mountains between Tibet and India. I was charmed by the beauty of its terraced rice paddies, temples, prayer wheels, prayer flags, and its people. The ever-present morning mists in the valleys covering then revealing the countryside were for me a metaphor for the mystery of this unfamiliar landscape and culture. They drew me and still hold me in a desire to know more fully by painting this unusual place.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to share my paintings with you.

www.mnartist.org

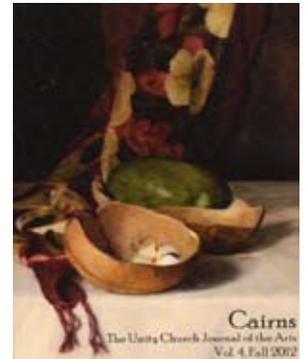


What's New in the Library and Bookstall?

From Shelley Butler, Library and Bookstall Team

Cairns Vol. 4 is here in The Bookstall right now! Here's how Literary Editor Louise Merriam described this issue in the foreword:

In the hands of Cairns artists and writers, the seasons, plants, rain, snow, birds, lakes and rivers serve as doorways to awareness. How we respond, how the world changes, and how we struggle to describe it tell us as much about ourselves as about the glory that surrounds us. We also find beauty in everyday things — a baseball game, a set of dishes, Minnesota weather, work, family interactions, a trip to the park, holiday gatherings, comic books, our teachers and our pets. We are invited to bless the world, and we often do. It is also clear from the work in Cairns that the world blesses us.



Indeed.

The literary and art editors hope an issue will reflect our time, also. In Vol. 4, Mike Huber writes about family, which was perhaps the most hotly debated topic throughout Minnesota in 2012. When we included this piece, we didn't know how the marriage amendment vote would turn out; Mike's words would serve either to remind us how far we have to go or reflect the joy of a just vote.

In the middle of the current construction, we got curious about Unity's first project on the corner of Portland and Grotto. Charles Ames' papers at the Minnesota Historical Society provided some familiar insight into the fundraising and planning process. In addition to looking back, we included a current photo of Unity Church under construction by Martha Tilton, who did a great job of documenting progress all year.

Looking back and forward while paying attention to right now — we are good at this, and *Cairns* Vol. 4 demonstrates this. Pick up your copy in The Bookstall on Sundays or by arrangement.

So many people asked for the recipe of this cookie served at the *Cairns* release party on December 9, 2012, so here it is:

Minnesota Squares

- 12 whole/double graham crackers
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 ½ cups pecans (you can substitute oats for nuts)

Lay crackers in cookie sheet so that the bottom of the pan is covered. Melt the butter and sugar together, bring to a boil, and cook for exactly 2 minutes. Pour syrup over crackers. Sprinkle with nuts. Bake at 350 degrees for 8 minutes. Cool some before cutting. Makes about 48 (or more if you cut into smaller pieces). From *The Wellesley Exchange Cookbook*.

Children's Library

The Children's Library has a new home in the beautiful lower level Religious Education Story room and is looking for volunteers to help staff it on after services on Sundays and Wellspring Wednesdays. If you love books and would like to help Unity families browse the rich collection and check out books, please email your interest to library@unityunitarian.org.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Guest at Your Table Ends January 6

The celebration of *Guest at Your Table* helps participants nurture a spirit of gratitude and "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations." *Guest at Your Table* fosters understanding and awareness of Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's human-rights work.

What do kids have to say about Philanthropy?

"That's a hard word, but I bet it's good."

"When you give to one another you can: #1 care for others and #2 make more friends that way."

Please return your GAYT boxes by January 6 to the UUSC table in Parish Hall on Sundays, or leave them at Pat Haff's office anytime.

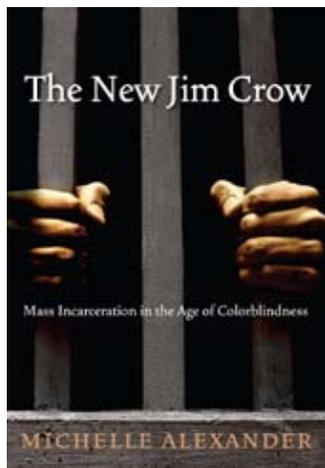


Black History Month: Congregation Read

The Anti-Racism Leadership Team, Racial Justice Team, Restorative Justice Team, and Library and Bookstall Team are joining together for the third annual Black History Month Congregation Read.

We invite the congregation to read and discuss *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander. This is an opportunity to build community and shape our desire for racial justice by giving our congregation a shared experience, shared language, and a basis for deep, meaningful conversations. This book has also been selected as the Common Read for the 2012-13 Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). The teams will lead discussion groups in February. Those dates will be shared in upcoming communications. Books will be available in the Bookstall.

About *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander. Alexander, an attorney and civil rights advocate and litigator, asserts that crime-fighting policies and systems in the U.S., such as the "war on drugs" and the incarceration system, disproportionately and intentionally affect Americans of color. She describes multifaceted, lifelong discrimination and disenfranchisement that affect people who are branded "felon." Alexander spoke to the General Assembly in 2012 her presentation and more about the book are available on line at <http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/ga/220062.shtml>.



From Laura Wood, Affordable Housing Ministry Team

Campaign to Pass the Homeless Youth Act

On any given night in Minnesota an estimated 2,500 unaccompanied youth will be homeless in Minnesota. Many of these young people are fleeing abuse, have been kicked out by their parents because they are LBGT, or they have "aged out" of the foster care system. Of the homeless youth surveyed in 2009 by the Wilder Foundation, 74% had been homeless before. More than one-quarter of homeless adults surveyed report that they were 17 or younger the first time they were homeless. Given the cyclical nature of homelessness, providing programs that address the root causes of homelessness is essential to achieving the goal to end homelessness.

Unity's Affordable Housing Ministry Team is partnering with PORTICO, an interfaith housing collaborative, to campaign to secure \$8 million for the Homeless Youth Act. Please join us on Sunday, January 6, or Sunday, January 13, from 10:00-11:00 a.m. We will be writing letters to state legislators asking them to fully fund the Homeless Youth Act so that all young people will have support, safety and shelter. For more information please contact Priscilla Morton at prismorton@comcast.net or Phil Morton at philmor@q.com.

Join PORTICO Interfaith Housing Collaborative for Acting on Faith: 2013 Campaign for Homeless Youth

Tuesday, January 15 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

House of Hope: 797 Summit Avenue, St. Paul

Tonight an estimated 2,500 youth will be homeless in Minnesota. Current funding for the Homeless Youth Act averages out to a mere 13 cents per unaccompanied youth per night. We cannot adequately help youth out of homelessness with such a small investment in them. We can do better.

PORTICO's "Acting on Faith: 2013 Campaign for Homeless Youth" will launch an interfaith effort to secure \$8 million for the Homeless Youth Act.

On Tuesday, January 15, we will:

- Gather together as many congregations to be inspired and informed.
- Introduce you to others who live in your home legislative district.
- Share and invite you into our advocacy campaign: monthly, pre-determined, collective actions that you will always know the impact of.
- DIRECT ACTION: With others from your district, you'll create a display that will be delivered by a delegation to the Capitol the very next day.

For more information about our advocacy program or the event, please contact Michael Dahl, Advocacy Coordinator, at 651-789-6260 x221 or mdahl@porticocollaborative.org.

Taking It to the Hill, Again

From Ray Wiedmeyer, Restorative Justice Ministry Team

Once more members of Unity Church–Unitarian will be taking it to the hill. The hill I am referring to is the Minnesota State Capitol. January 16 is the annual Second Chance Day on the Hill. Last year over 30 folks from Unity made that climb. We are hoping those 30 and more will once again make the climb and help us make a difference.

Now you may be asking what kind of second chance we are asking for or offering here. Second chances are what we all like to get in life... a second chance to correct a foolish mistake, a second chance to reconnect with a friend we have offended, a second chance to speak out about something we disagree with. The second chance we are talking about here is how we choose to treat those who have made mistakes in their lives—more serious than ours perhaps, but still just mistakes.

Second Chance Day on the Hill is sponsored by the Second Chance Coalition, an organization of over 65 groups around the state who come together to work for justice beyond the prison gates. They have asked themselves if it is justice to make someone struggle for the rest of their lives to find housing, jobs, education, the right to vote, a place in the beloved community. These folks have done their time so isn't it true justice to allow them back into the free world with all the rights and duties that we all cherish. Think about it and join us.

Contact Ray Wiedmeyer at 651-699-5590 or Pat Haff at pat@unityunitarian.org for more information or if transportation is needed.

Second Chance Day on the Hill
Wednesday, January 16 • 10:00 a.m. – Noon
Minnesota State Capitol Rotunda

A day to rally for justice and a chance to make your voice heard.

The Winter Warm-Up Drive

The Unity Church Restorative Justice Ministry Team is conducting a winter warm-up drive through February 2013 for its community partner, Amicus, an organization assisting ex-offenders in need. The items needed are:

- New gloves, hats, scarves, and socks
- Hand and foot warmers
- Shampoo, soap, toothbrushes, deodorant and toothpaste
- Bus passes or the cash to buy them

These donations mean a lot to men and women released from prison who face huge challenges in applying for jobs or an apartment without transportation or basic personal grooming articles. You can bring items on Sundays to the Restorative Justice Parish Hall table or to Pat Haff's office during the week.



¡Baile!

Winter blahs got you down?

Want to escape to a tropical place and mambo, tango and cha-cha the night away?

Join us for a night of Latin dancing!

Saturday, February 2

7:00–10:00 p.m.

Unity Church Parish Hall

Free instruction during the first hour and a half.
No pressure, no expectations, no partner required!

Free, but donations gratefully accepted.

This event is sponsored by Unity's Mano a Mano Community Outreach Ministry Team.

Cook at the Jeremiah Program!

Help cook a meal for moms and kids at the Jeremiah Program on Thursday, January 10, or Tuesday, February 19, from 4:45–7:00 p.m.

The Jeremiah Program assists single mothers and their children in breaking the cycle of poverty by providing a community where they can prosper. Contact Karen Buggs at 651-297-0111 or buggs745@hotmail.com.

WOMEN'S RETREAT / MORGAN FORUM

The Gathering

A Women's Retreat

Saturday, January 26

Unity Church

The Gathering is a one-day women's spiritual retreat held at Unity Church. This year's theme is "Whole Hearted Connection," and how we can courageously answer life's many invitations to tell the story of who we are and who we long to become. The Rev. Karen Hering will guide us through our morning session as we explore what is required of us in walking toward whole-hearted connection — with ourselves, with the sacred and with each other. Workshop sessions will provide opportunities to make connections with ourselves and others through singing, movement, drumming, reflection, conversation and journaling.

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. Gift certificates and financial aid are available.



The Gathering
January 26, 2013

Samuel Morgan Community Forum Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Program

Saturday, January 12 • 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Unity Church–Unitarian



Students at the Vidhayak Sansad school for girls in Usgaon.



Derek Mitchell
Director, UUHIP

The Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Program (UUHIP) works with organizations representing India's most vulnerable people as they seek to advance empowerment and promote equity. The Program is committed to enabling these groups to transform their social and economic conditions in directions of their own choosing. Rather than provide grants for sectoral, discrete, or time-based projects, UUHIP supports long-term organizational partnerships in a spirit of solidarity.

Derek Mitchell, Director of the UUHIP, will offer this Samuel Morgan Community Forum with a focus on UUHIP's partner Vidhayak Sansad, a program whose vision is "A just and equitable society where every individual lives in dignity."

Vidhayak Sansad was established in 1979 to support the development of marginalized communities in rural Maharashtra. Its programs emphasize universal education, organizing the rural poor for their rights, women's empowerment, training in human rights activism, and economic development.

Vidhayak Sansad works in coordination with its allied trade union, Shramjeevi Sanghatana, to reach the most neglected and abused sections of society, including tribals, dalits, impoverished women, and children.

The morning will include the viewing of a film that was made by one of the students who attends a school for tribal girls run by Vidhayak Sansad. Unity Church members who have visited and volunteered at Vidhayak Sansad will also be present to offer their reflections. Refreshments will be served!

SOURCES SUPPER / ONE VOICE ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

Attend a Sources Supper in February

In a Home or at Church

Saturday, February 9 and 16

This year we are continuing the Sources Supper tradition where we come together to tell the story of Unitarian Universalism and apply it to our lives today. It's an opportunity for community building and spiritual deepening. It's also a way the church acts on its "end" statement of deepening our sense of UU heritage and history. This year there will be two options: in one another's homes on February 9 and 16, and at the church on February 9. The in-church version will involve small group breakouts after the opening part of the ritual.

Few of us, even those raised Unitarian Universalists, can describe our history fluently and connect it with our current challenges and opportunities as a religious people. But this is changing here at Unity as we address questions in the Sources Supper such as these: How did we begin as a religious movement? What are the key turning points and breakthroughs in our tradition? Who are the martyrs and heroes in our progressive religious journey? How did we come to be a non-creedal faith that nevertheless stands passionately for something in the world? And most important of all: what does this story have to do with how we practice our faith and live our lives today?

The Sources Supper ritual aims to create a deep connection with our Unitarian Universalist heritage via story telling and conversation around a common meal. The stories are about four founding events in UU history plus two key turning points in later history. The conversations are based on questions following each story. An informal meal takes place in the middle. The whole event, including gathering, ritual, and dinner takes about 3.5 hours. The time goes fast.

As mentioned, the Sources Supper is intended to be done year after year until it becomes part of the religious identity and collective memories of those who participate in it. The ritual, which follows an easy-to-use script, works with adults and youth of 12 years and older. **A children's version is in the pilot stage and will be ready for a congregational roll out in the near future.**

Now the logistics: There will be sign up opportunities beginning in mid-January to host and participate in a Sources Supper. The Saturday, February 11, ritual at church will begin at 5 p.m. and end by 8:30 p.m., with child care provided. The in-home rituals on Sunday, February 12, and Saturday, February 18, will be from 6:00-9:30 p.m. Hosting is not burdensome: you just need a table that seats 8-12 people. Everyone shares the reading of the stories. The church provides the scripts and guidelines for the ritual. Simple is the rule of the land for the potluck meal—generally a soup, salad, appetizers, desserts and drinks. We can even provide a recipe for a soup that's been popular at Sources Suppers.

There is a big, bold vision behind the Sources Supper: let this be the last generation of Unitarian Universalists who don't know where they came from. Let the next generation stand inside a tradition they know and love—and then take it to new places.

Not everyone knows that the Sources Supper originated here in the Twin Cities, at First Universalist and Unity Church. To read about the origins of the Sources Supper and the key events covered, go to www.SourcesSupper.org. You can look at a copy of the script on this website.

*This year
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on February 9.*

One Voice Mixed Chorus 25th Anniversary Concert

Saturday, January 26

3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

The Cowles Center

528 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis

One Voice's 25th Anniversary Concert includes music that was especially popular in the early days of the chorus: musicals with lyrics tweaked to switch genders, songs of struggle for belonging, traditional choral music, and large doses of humor!

One Voice Mixed Chorus unites gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people and straight allies to build community and create social change by raising our voices in song. As the largest GLBT chorus in North America, One Voice is known for its musical excellence, diverse programming, and deep commitment to community outreach.

An office on the second floor of the Eliot Wing at Unity Church is home One Voice Mixed Chorus staff offices.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Interested in Enrolling in Sunday School?

New Family Orientation, January 9

If you've been visiting Unity Church and are ready to enroll your child or youth in Religious Education classes, please join us at our next New Family Orientation on Wednesday, January 9, at 7:10 p.m. At this session, you'll learn all about the philosophies and practices that make our shared ministry to children and youth such a blessing to our family of families. The Director of Religious Education will help find a spot for your child in a class and for a parent in one of our volunteer roles. Childcare is provided. Join us for dinner at 6:00 p.m.!

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 20 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 kerri@unityunitarian.org.

Junior High Second Semester Classes Begin January 20!

Families of registered Junior High youth will receive a confirmation email about their child's enrollment. If you don't receive this email, contact Kerri at your earliest convenience to resolve any enrollment issues. Please consider ways to express your family's gratitude to the adult volunteers who have led your child's classes for the first semester. Contact Kerri if you need teachers' names.



Now Accepting Book Sale Donations!

You've been sitting on that pile of already-read books since last April! Bring 'em on in to church to donate them to this year's High School Youth Book Sale (April 13 and 14). Drop books (in boxes or sturdy bags, please) in the R.E. office.

For Parents!

Sharing and Consultation Group

Saturday, January 12

10:00 a.m.-noon • Unity Church

Parents are invited to a "Sharing and Consultation" session hosted by Unity's Unitarian Universalist Families group. These sessions include conversations where we share our challenges, struggles, and wisdom about raising our children religiously in the Unitarian Universalist tradition. The structure allows parents to raise questions and parenting dilemmas concerning values, spirituality or religion, and to learn from the experiences of other parents. Childcare will be provided. Please contact Pamela Johnson at pamelajohnson@onebeacon.com if you are planning to attend.

January 2013

Notes for your family's calendar:

Sunday, January 6: Regular R.E., New Workshop Cycle: Divine Within; **Return Guest at Your Table boxes!**

Wednesday, January 9: WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY STARTS! New Family Orientation, 7:10 p.m.

Sunday, January 13: Story Sunday Grades 1-6 (MLK); regular R.E.

Saturday, January 19: Parents' Night Out! 6:00-8:30 p.m. (RSVP required)

Sunday, January 20: Regular R.E., Journey Guide – Passing of the Torch; Junior High Winter Semester classes begin!

Friday, January 25: Teachers' Night Out (RSVP required, must be a current R.E. teacher)

Sunday, January 27: Regular R.E.

The Children's Musical

Are you in 5th or 6th grade? Interested in a fun, creative experience with lots of fabulous people? Then the Unity Musical might be right for you! Come to auditions on Sunday January 6, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. A parent meeting for families of youth auditioning for this year's musical will take place at the same time. Performance dates will be February 28, and March 1 and 2.

Interested? For more information contact Teresa Connor at lillipad@comcast.net or Julie Rice at jandj50@msn.com.

Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministry

I am writing this in the mix of boxes yet unpacked, new music arriving for the 2013 program year, old ideas bubbling back up for consideration and totally new and exciting thoughts working to break into my consciousness. Frankly, this has been a challenge to continue the intensity of December programming in the midst of the huge move back into the church. It has, however, brought into sharp contrast all the many gifts made possible by the challenges to our integrity and creativity that Unity Church presents to us. What an active and vital life we have here! With that in mind, I have chosen to share again—and in a renewed spirit—some thoughts that you may have seen on this page in previous years. The intertwining of old in new, experience in adventure, and thoughts that help us past resistance of all that is to be done while grasping the richness of possibility in every moment.

"The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves." — Carl Jung

Happy New Year! Or is it "oh good grief, here I am at the same place that I said I wouldn't be last year," or "what happened to all those goals I set a year ago?" or "I really did intend to do all those creative things that were nagging at me and suddenly it is a year later." Well, so it is... and so I find myself saying these things. However, I am curiously aroused by this urge to accomplish, to create, to explore, to express that "play instinct acting from inner necessity." Actually, I believe, a much more beneficial tack than wasting all that energy chastising myself. At least it is the opportunity to touch base, catch up with "self," slow down or speed up the slide of intention into this new and pristine space of my life which I am about to enter. I think it is called "being alive"... and so we continue to seek, to create. The arts are a prime playground for this journey.

As I begin to step towards that "bewitched emptiness haunted by excitement and risks" (Agnes de Mille), I am keenly aware of the affect of every subtle turn in my intention: of that still excited realization of something new; of the questions of how, what method; of getting past personal traps and obstacles; of garnering the courage to "jump." And so, I join you in the quest though I leave the advice to the masters quoted below. *Corragio!*

Brenda Ueland (from *If You Want To Write: A book about Art, Independence and Spirit*):

It is when you are really living in the present that you are living spiritually, with the imagination. Perhaps I can describe "living in the present" in this way. In music, in playing the piano, sometimes you are playing at a thing and sometimes you are playing in it. When you are playing at it you crescendo and diminish, following all the signs. "Now it is time to get louder," you read on the score. And so you make it louder and louder. "Look out! Here is a pianissimo!" So you dutifully do that. But this is intellectual and external.

Only when you are playing in a thing do people listen and hear you and are moved. It is because you are moved, because a queer and wonderful experience has taken place and the music — Mozart or Bach or whatever it is — suddenly is yourself, your voice and your eloquence. The passionate and wonderful questions in the music are your questions.

Rainer Maria Rilke (from *Letters To A Young Poet*):

Works of art are of an infinite solitude, and no means of approach is so useless as criticism. Only love can touch and hold them and be fair to them. Always trust yourself and your own feeling, as opposed to argumentations, discussions, or introductions of that sort; it if turns out that you are wrong, then the natural growth of your inner

life will eventually guide you to other insights. Allow your judgments their own silent, undisturbed development, which, like all progress, must come from deep within and cannot be forced or hastened. Everything is gestation and then birthing. To let each impression and each embryo of a feeling come to completion, entirely in itself, in the dark, in the unsayable, the unconscious, beyond the reach of one's own understanding, and with deep humility and patience to wait for the hour when a new clarity is born: this alone is what it means to live as an artist: in understanding as in creating.

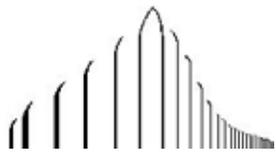
Stephen Nachmanovitch (from *Free Play: The Power of Improvisation in Life and the Arts*):

The formula for creation is simple. Just identify our impedimenta, and set them down, like setting down an overburdened suitcase that we have been carrying for far too long. If we are free and unperturbable, like the clouds, then whatever creation is in us will flow out, naturally and simply. It's as easy as saying, "Let there be light." But the easiest thing to say can be the hardest to practice. We desperately cling to it, whatever it may be for us, cling to our thought of gaining it, avoiding it, or keeping it once we have it.

The secret is to drop it — whatever it may be. This is not deprivation but enrichment. It is dropping off hope and fear and letting our much vaster, simpler, true self show through, letting ourselves be ambushed by the great Tao that moves through this world.

Agnes de Mille (from *To A Young Dancer*):

The art experience is a state of grace. It implies total submission, total service. You become transparent, perfectly used, reorganized. You become all self and selfless, a conductor. It demands health, not serenity or even happiness, but inner conviction, nerve and vigor. You realize at last, if only partially but with humility and joy, the meaning of the great promise in revelation: "Behold, I make all things new."



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
Business Entrance: 722 Holly Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-228-1456 • fax: 651-228-0927 • www.unityunitarian.org • unity@unityunitarian.org

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**TIME SENSITIVE
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Pilgrimage to the Unitarian Homeland of Transylvania

Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs will lead a pilgrimage to our Partner Church village Homorodszentpeter, Transylvania, from July 31 through August 12, 2013. Travel includes a historical tour of Budapest and Transylvania before arriving for a one-week stay in Homorodszentpeter. Cost: \$1800 adults/ \$1600 children and youth. Scholarship support is available. The price does not include airfare.

An information session will be held following each service on January 20. To register send a deposit of \$200 per person to Unity Church to the attention of Song Thao. Further information email robei@unityunitarian.org.



Past Transylvania pilgrims gathered at the new entrance on Partner Church Sunday.

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