

Brokenness

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.

My friend Leena once brought me a gift from a trip to her family's homeland in Myanmar. The gift was a small seated figure carefully carved in rosewood with great attention to his hatted face, robe and bare feet. But when Leena retrieved the figure from her suitcase after the long flight home, she discovered the wood had split. A crack, starting between the figure's feet, extended up through his torso all the way to his left shoulder.

Leena was disappointed and apologetic. The crack was beyond repair. But I appreciated the carving even more with its cleft and have treasured it for decades since, even as the crack has deepened. An added line in the wooden figure, it reminds me of the broken openings that inevitably occur in the course of every life and the new contours created by time and travel.

Today, in our disrupted era of so much brokenness, writ large across the globe and also as personal as it comes, I am looking at this carved figure and asking, what could it mean to notice and accept the broken cracks within and around us all as the gift they might be? Not denying the pain and grief caused by brokenness, but accepting the fact that neither life nor love, relationship nor growth is possible without it. As philosopher Judith Butler has said, "Let's face it. We're undone by each other. And if we're not, we're missing something. If this seems so clearly the case with grief, it is only because it was already the case with desire. One does not always stay intact."

This is true not only of the human heart and in personal relationships, but also of the systems and covenants undergirding our communities and nations. What might we learn by being present to the brokenness so apparent all around us today? What might be possible if we accept the invitation brokenness issues

to bring our fractures together, side by side, discovering what might emerge from their reassembled pieces?

In the ancient story of the Israelites fleeing Egypt, when Moses received the ten commandments on Mount Sinai, it is said that the first pair of tablets was carved by God's own finger. These were the sacred tablets Moses broke in anger, dashing them to the ground when he returned and found the Israelites worshipping idols made in Moses' absence. The second set of tablets, created in Moses' next trip up Mount Sinai, was dictated by God and recorded by Moses' hand.

Jewish teachings on this story suggest that both sets of tablets — the broken and the whole — were kept in the holy ark as the Israelites traveled through the wilderness, prompting poet Rodger Kamenetz to muse of the fragments:

*how they must have rattled around
until the pieces
broke into pieces, the edges
softened
crumbling, dust collected at the
bottom of the ark
ghosts of old letters, old laws.¹*

Today, as the old year has ended and a new one begins, perhaps we are each asked to consider, what are we each carrying in our hearts, broken and unbroken? What ghosts of letters and trusted words are still whispering to us from the dust of shattered dreams, personal or shared — dreams of peace and well-being, of democracy and justice, of habitat and ecology? What old patterns of relationship remain present inside each of us, carved into our being despite the divisiveness and isolation of our times; what deeper patterns of interdependence are still shaping and supporting the tattered communities we tend today?

In this threshold month of review and resolutions, we might begin the new year by naming these patterns as covenants to be treasured, despite the cracks running through them. By noting that what is broken can be an invitation into relationship and sharing, into creativity and discovery. By asking, what will we do to carry our covenants forward, to remember the larger wholeness in which all brokenness is nested? What resolutions and realities might be born of a brokenness noted and tended like that?

*By Associate Minister Karen Hering
on behalf of this month's theme team:
Ahmed Anzaldúa, Drew Danielson,
Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs,
Lisa Friedman and KP Hong.*

¹"[The Broken Tablets](#)," Rodger Kamenetz

Brokenness Theme Resources

BOOKS

Broken Open: how difficult times can help us grow by Elizabeth Lesser

Horizon by Barry Lopez

How to Heal a Broken Wing, children's book, by Bob Graham

POETRY

An Atlas of the Difficult World by Adrienne Rich

"The Broken Tablets" by Rodger Kamenetz

MOVIES

Still Alice (2015 feature film starring Julianne Moore)

Broken Rainbow (1985 documentary about the relocation of Navajo peoples)

For more resources, visit the Chalice Circle packet on the theme, available online and in the brochure racks at Unity Church.

Just Words



As I write this reflection we are heading into the week leading up to the holidays. Rob and I are asked frequently if it is poignant for us to be heading into a series of lasts. The answer is, of course, yes. This will be our last five-event Christmas Eve. It will be our last Christmas services and winter solstice ritual. It is a last for all of us. I don't just mean that it is the last time you will hear Rob tell the shepherds to actually look startled during the pageant rehearsal, or the last time the pageant will be narrated by us and our particular way of telling the ancient story. It is the

last we will share together. It is a last for this partnership to live through the winter season together. Of course it will be poignant for us. We have been privileged to serve this remarkable community and it is a privilege we tried never to take for granted. We have been so blessed to work with such a talented and devoted staff. We are constantly challenged and enriched by the collaborative partnerships we share with so many of you. We will miss the energy in worship, the coming together when invited to show up with such capacity and commitment. And that's just the beginning of the list.

When we drove away from Oakland in our overloaded station wagon, I could literally feel my flesh tearing. I was leaving so much that I loved: the landscape, the people, the culture, our neighborhood and its surrounding natural beauty. And I know that leaving here will be the same tearing of flesh. There is so much that we will miss. And love doesn't ever stop. Even when you don't see people or hear from them, you don't stop loving them.

But this is not about me, or leaving, just yet! It is about "lasts." There is a far deeper spiritual truth at work here as we think of lasts. Every day, every minute, each one of us is experiencing a last. That day will never ever come again. As someone who worships with this community often three times each Sunday, I can tell you when a service has concluded it is the last time for that particular convergence of people, energy, focus, and song. It will never come again.

Recognizing that each moment is a last and now gone forever can inspire in us an open heart for the next moment and appreciation for what has been in equal measure. That is my goal in these days. To know that each day is a last. And when it is over to be grounded in gratitude and be ever more open to the possibility and hope for the impending future.

Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs

RISE UP

30th Annual MLK Holiday Breakfast

Monday, January 20

7:00–9:30 a.m. • Location TBD

Each year, the General Mills Foundation and UNCF present an annual MLK Holiday Breakfast at the Minneapolis Convention Center to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This year's keynote speaker is The Honorable Eric H. Holder Jr., Holder is the former Attorney General of the United States. With the help of countless volunteers, Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul hosts breakfasts at nine neighborhood locations, featuring a live broadcast of the General Mills event as well as a hot breakfast and local programming. Details and registration are online at <http://interfaithaction.org/mlk>.



The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Eva Cross

1939-2019

Betty Speaker

October 19, 1937 –

November 21, 2019

Rejoice at the River

*All Congregation Worship
Service and Retirement*

Celebration for Janne and Rob



Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 31, 2020, at Harriet Island. An all-congregation, outdoor worship service will be followed by lunch, program, and party!

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Unity Church–Unitarian
733 Portland Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-228-1456
www.unityunitarian.org

JANUARY SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday Worship

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

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: *Welcome It All*

Special Meeting of the Congregation • 12:30 p.m.

There is a richness in times of change. Memories are stirred. Doors that appeared to be shut tight loosen on their hinges. Joy peeks in as we see that some things did go as we had hoped. Join Rev. Jen Crow and worship associate Rebecca Flood for a Sunday where we will look together at the riches that come with change and consider how we might welcome it all.

Rev. Jen Crow will preach at Sunday services and also lead a special meeting of the congregation at 12:30 p.m., to help build our understanding of how the search for Unity's next called minister(s) will be conducted.

Rev. Jen Crow serves as Co-Senior Minister of The First Universalist Church of Minneapolis and as a Transitions Coach for the Unitarian Universalist Association. She is an author, a large church consultant, and founder of Wellspring: a Unitarian Universalist program of spiritual deepening. Jen was the first Hallman ministerial intern at Unity Church in 2002, and she brings her love for the church into her work as a Transitions Coach and Consultant during this time of ministerial change.



January 19: *Breakthrough*

On April 3, 1968, the night before the day he was shot down, Dr. King preached a sermon called "I've Been to the Mountaintop." That night he made it plain to the sanitation workers who were on strike that it was not his Movement; it belonged to them. It was a breakthrough, a sea change that would only be confirmed by his death the next day. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Bailey Webster will echo King's farewell as a reminder and a charge.

January 26: *Beauty and Brokenness*

In our perfection driven culture, it can be difficult to remember to notice the beauty that is often present in the brokenness. Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Lia Rivamonte will lift up the importance of reclaiming the beauty that resides within each of us and in the larger world in all of its complex brokenness.

Offering Recipients

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

January 5: *Como Park/Falcon Heights Living at Home Block Nurse Program*

The block nurse program is rooted in dignity and respect for older adults. It helps older adults stay in their homes longer and more safely by providing transportation to medical appointments, shopping, food shelves, etc. Mobility and balance evaluations are followed by tailored in-home exercise sessions provided by trained volunteers. Health professionals also offer foot care to hundreds of local residents. This collection will underwrite training for the home exercise program. Several Unity Church members work as volunteer homemakers and service providers.

January 12: *I AM Resources*

I AM Resources, founded by longtime Unity Church member Iris Cornelius, teaches young students life skills needed to self-regulate emotions and behavior so that they are equipped, focused, and confident when meeting academic hurdles. I AM Resources provides a cost-effective model involving early intervention, psychological counseling, and cognitive strategies addressing the mental health needs of minority and economically disadvantaged elementary students with the goal of reducing special education referrals. This collection will go toward engaging an additional psychologist to coach students and parents.

January 19: *Planting People, Growing Justice Initiative*

Planting People, Growing Justice Initiative (PPGJI) aims to plant the seeds of social change through a variety of programs that inspire everyday people to seek out the leader within and become social engineers creating inroads to a more just and inclusive world. Today's collection will go toward its youth education programming which provides learning labs at local schools. Unity Church members Nila Gouldin, Russel Balenger, and Ray Wiedmeyer have traveled to Selma and Ghana with PPGJI's director, Dr. Artika Tyner, a passionate educator and advocate for social justice.

January 26: *Days for Girls*

Days for Girls creates washable feminine hygiene kits for girls in developing countries in order to help keep them in school, avoid early marriages, and break the cycle of poverty. Sewing days take place throughout the Twin Cities, and finished kits will last three to five years. This collection will support the purchase of sewing supplies and shipping the kits internationally. Unity's Denise Dejarlais is a member of the Days for Girls Arden Hills team.



Taking Time to Connect

Jackie Smith, Board Chair

I'll start with the painfully, beautifully obvious. Winter has set in. We arrive to church chilled, and as we take off the full layer of protections, hats, mitts, scarves, we chat with others doing the same. We learn names, we connect with children. When we leave, the whole event reverses itself, and sometimes I, or someone in my family, will get caught in conversation, unexpectedly extending our time at the Holly Street entrance.

Whatever I was before I walked through the doors of church, after these moments, I approach my fullest self. Connections with friends, new faces, and mentors of all type leave me hopeful, recharged, and a bit closer to wholeness. This is the wholeness that lets me go into the world and do my best, or at least have no excuse not to try.

As our community approaches transitions, I lean on these connections in my interactions at board meetings, in committee meetings, and as I walk through my day. Fears, anxiety, and unknown can loom great, but the connections and wholeness that we create amongst ourselves will carry us through.

I invite you to engage with us in the coming months as we lay the foundation as a community ready for change. Watch for opportunities as they emerge, and please join us on January 12th at 12:30 p.m. for a special meeting of the congregation with Rev. Jen Crow from the UUA, as she outlines our transition process for the months to come. Saying goodbye to Rob and Janne, finding an interim minister, and developing a search team for a settled minister will all be a part of our community's task in the next six months. That is a lot of work, but it is the work of our church.

As we embark on this next leg of our journey, it is all the more important to take time as you enter church. Take off your coat a bit more slowly. Turn to one another. Introduce yourself. Find a connection. The world has led you to this doorway, you have something to share already.

Everybody In!

2020 Pledge Drive Update

Thank you to all who have made 2020 pledges! 652 households have pledged \$1,288,037 to our approved 2020 operating budget goal of \$1,350,000, which puts us \$62,000 from our goal. If we don't come within \$25,000 of our goal by February 1, 2020, we will need to adjust the budget. Please make your pledge today!

You can pledge online at www.unityunitarian.org/annual-pledge.html or call the church office. A pledge of any amount is gratefully accepted!

Ministerial Transition Update

Board's Transition Subteam: Clover Earl, Jill van Koolwijk, and Jackie Smith

CELEBRATION

We will celebrate the ministry of Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs on Sunday, May 31, 2020. For anyone interested in being involved with the celebration planning, watch for opportunities that the co-chairs (Pat Fontaine and Lia Rivamonte) will be sharing.

RECRUITING AN INTERIM

This spring the board will work through the UUA to identify an interim minister to join us for a year, from July 2020 through to June 2021. The interim minister will join our strong executive team that includes Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director; Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement; and Rev. KP Hong, Director of Religious Education. Along with keeping Unity Church humming and leading worship, our interim minister will help guide the congregation through this transition.

CALLING A SENIOR MINISTER

Calling a senior minister or co-ministers is the responsibility of the congregation. A search committee will conduct the process and make a recommendation. Search committee members devote considerable time to this work as they weigh what is in the best interests of the whole church. Search committee members keep in mind where we've been as a church, and with our new Ends statements, where we're heading.

We'll take a big step in forming the search committee and thinking through this process on Sunday, January 12, when Rev. Jen Crow, a trained UUA transition coach, former Unity intern minister, and senior co-minister at First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, will preach at Sunday services, and also lead a special meeting of the congregation at 12:30 p.m., to help build our understanding of how the search will be conducted. Jen has already been working with the board on the transition effort, and once the search committee is named, Jen will be an ongoing resource.

Forming the search committee starts with the development of a list of candidates. The board creates the list of 15 to 20 candidates for the search committee after reaching out to the whole congregation asking for recommendations. Starting in January, this outreach will include phone calls, small group discussions, and an online submission form.

The members of the search committee will be named by the board from among those on the candidate list. This will happen following the April 26 congregational meeting, where information will be shared about the candidates and votes cast. Voting at the meeting will determine the majority of the search committee members, with the remainder selected by the board with diversity and equitable representation in mind.

Know that we will continue to share more information in the months ahead. And you can always reach out to board members with any questions.



Brokenness

Rebekah Crisanta de Ybarra
Unity Church Artist in Residence

When I contemplate on brokenness I think about how inextricably connected it is to transformation and forgiveness. I think about broken relationships, broken spirits and communities, broken systems and nations, legacies, and our suffering beloved Mother Earth. I come from a family who have experienced deep trauma, torture, and abuse. Epigenetics has finally discovered what many Indigenous people around the world have already known, that trauma lives in the body and can be passed on in utero. In fact, PTSD, of which most communities of color experience because of chronic stress/fear/anger/despair and oppressive societal structures, lives in the body for at least two generations. IF for two generations, you can raise safe, happy, healthy, liberated, prosperous, creative, and hopeful children while the older generations heal, then maybe the chains will be broken. But that's a big IF because we live in a world that thrives on the suffering of many for the riches of the few; that profits on pollution, incarceration, and underground markets like human trafficking; that keep some people up and others down. Those structures which make up our society, rooted in white supremacy, keep the few rich and ensure some people are more likely to experience financial stress and even desperation, inequitable education, lack of access to fresh life-giving food or pure water, lack of access to Nature, hostile interactions with public servants, and witness abuse of power, microaggressions, chronic physical or mental health issues, substance abuse, neglect, and physical or sexual violence. Try as one might, sometimes it's just not possible to protect our babies or even ourselves from the outside world. And so the cycles continue, and we are often told and then begin to believe, we are fundamentally broken, beyond repair. Those of you who have experienced trauma or are survivors may relate.

This then is why brokenness is so fundamentally connected to transformation, hope, and forgiveness. And it is why dismantling white supremacy and addressing it head on collectively and in deeply unique and personal ways has come to the forefront so much in recent years. Because sometimes things must be destroyed to be born again. Because the way we live currently is not sustainable. Our broken two party political system and the melting of the ice caps reflects that back to us like a broken mirror. In many creation myths, the forces of creation are the same forces of destruction. In Maya stories of the Popol Vuh, creator among whose names are Heart of Sky and Hurricane, destroyed the world four times until we, perfect as we are with human flaws and all, were birthed. Face the fear and have hope that a better world is possible.

THE BUZZ

Unity Church Spring Fundraiser

Unity's annual fundraiser will be on Saturday, March 21, 2020 (the first day of spring!). Save the date and start planning your donations! Activities that build and sustain connection and fellowship are encouraged — times at vacation homes, tours, theme parties, dinners, tickets to concerts, theater and sporting events. We will be accepting donations from January 1 through February 15 (watch for the donation form) and the catalogue will go live on March 1!

Our goal is \$30,000 which will support the mission and programs of the church.

If you'd like to join the planning team, please contact Barbara Hubbard at barbara@unityunitarian.org. We need folks with a variety of skills — creative, detail-oriented, artistic, techy, and visionary.

Unity Church Emergency Action Plan

This is the fourth in a series of articles to present Unity's Emergency Action Plan (one section each month). Read the entire plan at <https://www.unityunitarian.org/ept.html>.

IV. Weather Emergency

In the case of a storm emergency such as tornado, the person monitoring the situation will direct appropriate staff to **inform all persons currently in the building to seek shelter in the lower level of the building.**

The two sets of fire doors on the lower level will be closed and all persons will seek shelter in

- the hallway to the elevator,
- the hallway outside of the shop and dry storage rooms,
- the men's restroom,
- the hallway to the mechanical room,
- the shower bathroom,
- the nursery bathroom,
- the northeast junior high room.

The goal is for all persons to be in rooms with NO windows and NO exterior walls. If the numbers of people exceed what is deemed to be safe, the staff in charge will unlock other rooms in the area such as the mechanical room and other storage rooms. The end of the emergency will be determined by the staff.

- a. What prompts a weather emergency? Sirens or weather alerts on radios and phones.
- b. Who calls it? The Lead Staff.
- c. Everyone needs to get inside and downstairs.

V. Loss of Power

If in the elevator during a loss of power, call 911 from cell phone or elevator phone. Decisions will be made based on the estimated length of outage, the time of day regarding sunlight and what is happening in the building at the time.

WELCOME WORDS

Welcome Words



Rev. Lisa Friedman
Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement

Happy New Year! There is something exciting about turning a new page in the book of life, and beginning a fresh chapter in an ever-evolving story. Whether or not you make resolutions in this season, I hope this turning of the year brings fresh energy and courageous creativity to your days. The journey of life is not about perfection, but rather the depth and breadth of our living and the opportunity to grow our souls. As we begin 2020 together as a congregation, I encourage you to explore your place in this shared ministry. Join in worship and spiritual practices that help us find and keep our balance in these troubling times. Come out of the isolation of winter — share a delicious Wednesday night meal, or join a weekly group or choir, and help build the warmth of community. Talk to our Community Outreach Ministry Teams during coffee hour and learn how to bring your voice to the important issues coming before this year's state legislative session. And if you feel you have found a home here at Unity Church, but have not yet joined, I invite you to consider making your membership official. This year is an important threshold time at Unity and your vote as a member will shape this congregation's future. The winter is not a sleepy time here at Unity Church — our doors are open and the ministry we share is hardy and bold enough for all seasons! See you in church!

Pathway to Membership Classes

Sign up for Pathway to Membership classes at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement, at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x 107. Lisa is also happy to meet with you personally to answer questions and to welcome you into the congregation.

Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Inquiry

Finding Yourself at Unity is offered on a regular basis on Sundays from 10:20-11:15 a.m. in the Ames Chapel. Attend sessions in the order that works for you! In these classes, participants will share parts of their religious journey, take a more in depth look at the history of Unity Church, discuss the expectations and benefits of membership, and get to know the programs and ministries of the congregation. Childcare is available in the nursery.

January 5: UU History

January 12: Social Justice & Community Outreach

January 19: Pastoral Care (Rev. Janne)

January 26: Worship & the Liturgical Year (Rev. Rob)

Finding Yourself at Unity: All-Inclusive Session

Saturday, January 11 • 9:00 a.m.-noon

Have you been interested in Finding Yourself at Unity, but unable to attend on Sunday mornings? This half-day is designed to share information about Unitarian Universalism and Unity Church in a one session format. Childcare will be provided and families with young children are especially invited to attend.

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

Wednesday, January 29 • 7:15-9:00 p.m.

Have you been considering membership at Unity? 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 concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church!

Mentoring at Unity

Unity Church has a mentor program available to all visitors and new members. A mentor serves as a guide and a resource in the congregation. They pledge to meet at least once a month face to face, and be available for ongoing questions and advice for at least six months. Each mentor/mentee team can decide what is most helpful — to have a buddy with whom to attend services and events, or a partner with whom to discuss Unitarian Universalism and each other's spiritual journeys, and more.

If you have questions, or would like to request a mentor, please stop by the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall on Sunday or email Rev. Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org.

Winter Parking

Unity Church has a commitment to accessibility which includes parking near the church for members and friends who have mobility issues. Therefore, each Sunday, the entire parking lot located directly east of the church is now reserved for handicapped parking, assisted parking, and electric vehicle charging.

Parking for everyone else is available in Unity's lot on the corner of Portland and St. Albans, on the street, and on Sundays in the Obama Elementary parking lot.

While the entire lot is restricted parking on Sundays only, please continue to observe and respect posted parking signs during the week.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Two Amazing Books

Two Book Reads and One Author Visit

From the Library and Bookstall Team

The 2020 Unity Congregation Book Read

***The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead**

Based on the true story of the hellish Dozier reform school that operated from 1900-2011, *The Nickel Boys* chronicles the experience of two black boys sentenced there (one mistakenly) in the 1960s. The tension between one boy's ideals, adopted from Martin Luther King, and the other's skepticism leads to a decision that will echo down the decades. A story of the past that is still making news and has parallels to events today. Written by "America's Storyteller," as named by *Time Magazine*. One of *Time Magazine's* 10 Best Fiction Books of the Decade, winner of the Kirkus Prize, and longlisted for the 2019 National Book Award.



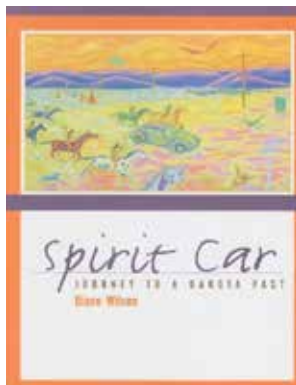
Read in January.

Discuss in February: Sunday, February 23, at 12:30 p.m., and Wednesday, February 26, at 7:15 p.m.

The Gathering Retreat Read & Author Visit

***Spirit Car: Journey to a Dakota Past* by Diane Wilson**

We're very honored that the author herself, Diane Wilson, will lead the book read session at The Gathering retreat on Saturday, January 25. A meticulously researched work of creative nonfiction about the author's personal story and how she discovered that she was part of something much larger than she knew growing up — the Dakota Native American history.



Diane said, "It's also a story of rediscovering cultural identity, and how this search changed my family." A great fit for the theme of the retreat, "Keeping the Faith: Stories of Resilience and Struggle." A Minnesota Book Award winner!

Both titles are available in the Unity Bookstall (Sunday morning, Parish Hall) and in the Anderson Library (second floor, Eliot wing).

Fellowship Groups

These 12-step groups meet at Unity Church: Al Anon meets Wednesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Science Room; Fresh Air AA meets Thursdays, 8:00-9:30 p.m., Anderson Library; Debtors Anonymous meets Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Drama Room

Afterthoughts offers time to discuss the service. This group meets after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact Paul Gade, 651-253-1493

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month, noon–2:00 p.m. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Evergreen Quilters: The group meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. (at Unity Church), and fourth Saturday of the month, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (offsite). Contact Peggy Wright, 651-698-2760

Families Living with Mental Health Challenges: A support group for families living with mental health challenges. Meets the first Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Living With Grief Group: For people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Men's Conversation Group meets the second and fourth Monday of each month, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., in the Gannett Room, to discuss a wide range of topics. Contact Terry McDanel, tmcdanel@gmail.com

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, January 13 and 27, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Tom Zell, tomzell@me.com

National Alliance on Mental Illness support group for young adults with a mental illness meets the first, third, and fifth Sunday of each month, 6:30-8:00 p.m., COA/OWL room.

New Look at the Bible: Meets the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade, 651-253-1493

Recovery from White Conditioning: Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m., Gannett Room. Contact Dayna Kennedy, daynamelissa@icloud.com

Textile Arts Group meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 7:15-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc. Contact Linda Mandeville, lindamandeville41@gmail.com.

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne, jack.hawthorne@comcast.net. January 14: *This Tender Land* by William Kent Krueger (Author William Kent Krueger will lead this discussion.)

February 11: *The Wright Brothers* by David McCullough

Women In Retirement: Meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Friedman, lisa@unityunitarian.org

Young Adult Group (ages 18-35) meets two Sundays per month, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact KP Hong, kp@unityunitarian.org

Zen Meditation: Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Ames Chapel. Instruction offered January 7 at 4:30 p.m. Contact KP Hong, kp@unityunitarian.org.

Parish Hall Artist

Barb Parisien

I love to create!

Although I have done art since childhood, watercolor has been my medium of choice for the last 20 years. I have studied with several nationally known watercolor artists, have a studio in my home, and spend time with art almost every day.

My passion for art connects me to my other passions: the natural world, gardens, markets, food, and travel. My subject matter is mainly inspired by photos I have taken, whether strolling the Saint Paul Farmers Markets or traveling abroad. I recently worked on a series of paintings based on a volunteer experience in a hill tribes village in northern Thailand.

I am a signature member of NorthStar Watermedia and have served on the board as communications director for several years. I am also a member of Minnesota Watercolor Society.

Continuing to learn and grow, I take workshops and enjoy connecting with other artists. Although I enter shows, have won awards, and sell some paintings, I paint simply because I love it.

Spotlight YOUR Art

Choose your favorite piece of art — anything from your personal creation, your child's creation, or art that's been on a wall in your home for a long time. Your piece, along with a statement of why it's a favorite, and a photo of you, will be displayed for two Sundays in the **Art Share** space in the Parish Hall. Sign up on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall. You'll be contacted by a member of the Art Team with details. Questions? Email Marty Rossmann at rossm001@umn.edu.

Art Share encourages members of the congregation to know each other better and enriches the focus on art at Unity Church.

Chalice Circles

and other programs reflecting on monthly worship themes

If you missed the registration for Chalice Circles last fall and would like to join a circle now, contact Karen Hering at karen@unityunitarian.org for available days and times. Chalice Circles are groups of 8-10 participants who meet monthly with a trained leader to consider the month's worship theme through personal reflection, deep listening, and open-hearted sharing. For more information about the Chalice Circle practice, visit www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html.

For those who want to engage the worship themes through the arts and creative activities, a monthly Wednesday evening program led by Heather Benedict is open to all. Check the Wellspring Wednesday schedule on page 10 for details.

Biweekly Tai Ji and Qigong Continues

The Tai Ji and Qigong class led by Lisa Schlingerman continues in the new year, meeting Thursdays, 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., January 2, 16, and 30, and February 6. Classes are open to newcomers and people of all ages and include Tai Ji, Qigong, sitting meditation and poetry based on the teachings of Taoism. Wear comfortable shoes and loose clothing. Please email lisaschlingerman@gmail.com if you plan to participate. A free will offering will be taken.

Kung Fu

Explore the rich Five Animal Kung Fu (Leopard, Snake, Tiger, Crane, and Dragon) to develop a personalized style that suits your temperament and body type. Beginners and experienced martial artists welcome! Classes are held Saturdays, from 11:00 a.m.-noon, in the Body Room, and on Wednesdays during Wellspring Wednesday (see pages 10-11). Questions? Contact Bryan Kujawski at barney.kujawski@gmail.com.

Men's Breakfast

On Saturday, January 4, the men of Unity Church will gather for good food, friendship, and conversation. The breakfast will run from 8:30 until 10:00 a.m. All men are welcome!

Unity Book Club

Welcomes Author William Kent Krueger

On Tuesday, January 14, at 7:00 p.m., in the Robbins Parlor, Unity's Book Club will discuss *The Tinder Land* by William Kent Krueger. William Kent Krueger will be in attendance to present and discuss his book. Please send a note to Jack Hawthorne at jack.hawthorne@comcast.net if you plan to attend.

Open Page Writing Session

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering and held at Unity Church, Open Page writing session participants use stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, and provided prompts, to reflect on the monthly theme. No writing experience is necessary. Bring something to write with and on; the rest will be provided!

Wednesday, January 15 • 7:15-8:30 p.m. • Anderson Library

Brokenness: where the light gets in

Free; RSVP requested to karen@unityunitarian.org

"There is a crack in everything," observed Leonard Cohen. "That's how the light gets in." We'll explore the places where we experience the world or ourselves as broken, and consider how we can find our way to wholeness. And how does brokenness sometimes open our lives and our world to the truth and the light we are seeking?

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Stories of Resilience and Struggle

Keeping the Faith

THE GATHERING

Saturday
January 25
2020

+

Unity
Church

A Retreat for Women, Trans-Inclusive
Keynote: Rev Meg Riley and Namoli Brennet

Not your ordinary retreat, The Gathering offers time to connect to each other and oneself on a deeper level through workshops and the opportunity to reflect on the stories that have brought us here and give us inspiration to keep on keeping on.

The dynamic Rev. Meg Riley is the Senior Minister of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, a UU congregation online with no geographical boundary and thousands of members all over the world. Joining Meg is singer-songwriter Namoli Brennet, a four-time Outmusic award nominee and considered “among the best folk-rock artists in the U.S.,” according to *Tucson Weekly*.



Workshop offerings include something for everyone:

- Author Diane Wilson on her book *Spirit Car*
- Nia — sensory-based movement
- Gender as culture
- Indigenous food traditions
- Drumming
- Writing with Karen Hering
- Emotional intelligence
- The true story of the women’s suffrage movement
- Cooking
- And more!

Extras include spiritual guidance, massage, acupuncture, and creative spiritual practice with art.

Won’t you join us for a special day of conversation, good food (breakfast, lunch, happy hour), fellowship, and spiritual deepening?

Registration begins January 5, 2020. Watch for details to sign up online, by mail, or in the Parish Hall.

Save the Date

Unity Men's Retreat

The 2020 Unity Men’s Retreat will happen on Saturday, March 28. This year’s theme will be stewardship, in the context of “within, among and beyond.” Morning activities will include breakfast, an opening worship, a plenary session, a set of workshops, and small group reflection. The afternoon will include lunch, another set of workshops, and small group reflection, after which we’ll all come back together for a closing plenary, a closing worship, and a happy hour. Details and registration to come! Attendees will reap good rewards for the investment of this late winter Saturday.

Queer Retreat

Saturday, April 4, 2020

Unity Church is hosting a retreat for all those who identify under the queer and/or trans umbrella, and especially for people who don’t fit into the gender binary. For more information visit www.unityunitarian.org/lgbtq.html or contact Ray Hommeyer at ray@unityunitarian.org.

Save the Dates

2020 Thresholds Group

The annual Thresholds series, a facilitated small group for reflecting on “threshold” changes in our lives, will be offered in April and May this year. Whether your threshold is chosen or not, this series of four meetings with others living on the brink of significant change, offers a rich invitation to participate in the dynamic possibilities present in threshold times. Registration will open in March. Save these Saturdays and watch for details in the March newsletter.

April 25, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

May 9, 16, 30, 9:00 a.m.-noon

For more information, contact Karen Hering at karen@unityunitarian.org.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday

Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun.

Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m., followed by worship in the Ames Chapel at 6:45 p.m., and an evening of rich programming beginning at 7:15 p.m. All are welcome. Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance.

The cost for dinner is: \$8/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family. (Children under the age two are free.) All meals will offer vegetarian, vegan, and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies should email madeline@unityunitarian.org to arrange to have a special preparation. Email Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org for financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner.

January 8

Dinner: TBD

Climate Reality, Solutions, Actions

A "Climate Reality" presentation and discussion will explore the why, what, and how of our current climate reality and the challenge of transitioning to a balanced ecosystem that supports all life, including our own. How does our shared value of "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part" call to us in these times? This program will be led by Priscilla Morton and Unity's Sustainable Living Team.

Creativity as a Spiritual Practice: Brokenness + Luminaries

Led by Heather Benedict, this group will explore the January theme of brokenness and create luminaries inspired by the Leonard Cohen quote, "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in." Learn different techniques in making and leave with an invitation to engage with the worship theme in your daily life. These sessions are open to all interested in exploring the monthly theme beyond words.

Religious Education New Family Orientation

This session is for families new to Unity Church who would like to learn more about religious education.

Beginning Violin

Did you ever want to try the violin? Come join Mayra Mendoza for a beginning violin class — all ages are welcome! Mayra is a violinist and teacher who volunteers frequently with the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony, McPhail Center for Music and the Minneapolis Public Schools. She has also played with the Wayzata Orchestra and Northeast Symphony. Questions? Email mayraquitzia@hotmail.com.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Yoga

Pamela Scott will guide participants to use their breath to develop mindfulness and promote a union of mind, body, and spirit. All levels of yoga practitioners are welcome. Dress comfortably, bring a mat and a small blanket if you have one.

Kung Fu

This holistic self-defense practice invigorates the body, rejuvenates the spirit, and clears the mind. Explore our rich Five Animal Kung Fu to develop a personalized style that suits your temperament and body type. Beginners and experienced martial artist welcome! Questions? Email Bryan Kujawski at barney.kujawski@gmail.com.

Religious Education Teacher Orientation (Second Semester)

January 15

Dinner: Roasted chicken, glazed carrots, quinoa and beet salad, dessert

Meeting the Challenge of Minnesota's Solos

It is estimated that 20%-30% of those age 50+ can be considered "solos." These are individuals who by choice or circumstance cannot rely on family to help navigate life events, make health decisions, and/or serve as health decision surrogates. Is Minnesota prepared to meet this challenge? Come learn from Linda Camp about the emerging issues and how organizations, such as Unity Church, can be part of the solution.

Open Page Writing Session

Brokenness: where the light gets in

RSVP to karen@unityunitarian.org

"There is a crack in everything," observed Leonard Cohen. "That's how the light gets in." We'll explore the places where we experience the world or ourselves as broken, and consider how we can find our way to wholeness. And how does brokenness sometimes open our lives and our world to the truth and the light we are seeking?

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering and held at Unity Church, Open Page writing session participants use stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, and provided prompts, to reflect on the monthly theme. No writing experience is necessary. Bring something to write with and on.

Textile Arts

This group meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 7:15-8:30 p.m. and is open to textile creatives of all ages. Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc. Questions? Contact Linda Mandeville at lindamandeville41@gmail.com.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Yoga

Kung Fu

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

January 22

Dinner: Pot roast, potatoes and onion, oatmeal stuffing, salad

A Peace of My Mind

John Noltner is an American photographer and peace activist. His work and subject matter is varied, ranging from small town America to projects overseas. His photographs have been published in national magazines, including *National Geographic Traveler*, *AARP*, *Smithsonian*, and *Business Week*. Since 2009, Noltner has been asking people the simple (or not so simple) question, "What does peace mean to you?" for his multimedia art project, A Peace of My Mind. The project combines photographs of diverse subjects and their personal stories exploring the meaning of peace. He has included the voices of Holocaust survivors, homeless individuals, political refugees, and other. The project has been presented at the Nobel Peace Prize Forum, the National Civil Rights Museum and the Sojourners Summit for Change. A Peace of My Mind represents John's belief that art and storytelling have the power to transform our hearts as well as our communities and that we each have the power to create positive change in the world.



Mindful Relating

Everyone wants to have meaningful relationships, but often, we're not taught how to do that. This session presents fun and easy-to-learn mindfulness techniques to bring home and incorporate into your life. Through simple, heart-centered, interactive practices, Thomas Stout will guide you to be more present in each moment, build authentic connections, and improve the quality of relationships. Thomas is a certified Intimacy Educator and has been facilitating groups and offering private coaching for many years and studying the art of relationship his entire life.

Onward Educators • Topic: Be Here Now

Using the work of education, coaching, and resilience researcher Elena Aguilar, we will strengthen and support one another in monthly meetings. Grounded in neuroscience, social science, and psychology, this workshop will change the way we think about emotions, stress, and our purpose as educators. We will focus on the 12 habits that cultivate resilience, and their correlating dispositions, and provide a roadmap for how to feel more effective, more fulfilled, and happier at work. Facilitators Jackie Smith and Julianne Malcom will guide the group through a year of resilience-building exercises and reflections, and participants will collaborate to build their capacity for resilience throughout the school year. The sessions follow an arc throughout the year, but participants are welcome to come to some or all sessions. All educators are welcome.

Tween Group

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Yoga

Beginning Violin

(No Kung Fu)

January 29

Dinner: TBD

The Mapping Prejudice Project: Confronting Structural Racism in the Twin Cities

The Mapping Prejudice Project has been leading community members in Hennepin County through the process of building the first comprehensive map of racial covenants for an American city and they are beginning work in Ramsey County. Racial covenants are clauses that were embedded into property deeds to bar people who were not white from buying or even occupying the parcels of land to which they were attached.

Covenants were made illegal by the 1968 Fair Housing Act. But their legacy continues today in the Twin Cities, which have some of the largest racial disparities in the country. The Mapping Prejudice Project is designed to make visible what is invisible to many white people today. The project works in community to reveal for participants how structural racism shaped the urban landscape, blocking African Americans from critical avenues for wealth accumulation. Delegard will reveal the "hidden" histories uncovered by her team, describe the unconventional methodologies that undergird this work and suggest how everyone can translate a heightened awareness of this history into meaningful action.

Kirsten Delegard is the Director and one of the co-founders of the Mapping Prejudice Project, located in the Borchert Map Library at the University of Minnesota. She is affiliated with the Department of Geography, Environment and Society and the Heritage Studies and Public History Program at the University of Minnesota.



Getting Scrappy: Veggie Leftovers

Participants will play with all the ways to use ends and scraps from vegetables to get scrappy. Bring a to-go container to take home some of your goodies!

Committing to Unity

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 concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church! RSVP by filling out an Intent to Join card at the welcome table in the Parish Hall of by emailing Rev. Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Yoga Kung Fu

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Gun Sense Ministry Team

A Conversation with
Dr. Cathy Crosby-Schmidt

What is the nature of your medical practice?

I am a general pediatrician, and have been practicing for 20 years at Central Pediatrics in St. Paul and Woodbury. I see patients from birth through young adulthood for everything from well and preventive care to acute illnesses and injuries, supporting them through chronic medical conditions such as asthma, cancer, diabetes, autoimmune disease, and a wide variety of mental health, developmental, and behavioral concerns. I see mainly suburban and rural families; only occasionally do I see someone from the inner city.

Many say that the degree of gun violence in our country is a public health problem. What are your thoughts about that issue? How has the increase in gun violence over the past 15 years impacted your practice?

Gun violence is unequivocally a public health problem, and in multiple ways. Most obvious is the staggering number of gun-related deaths in youth and young adults in the United States. Firearm-related deaths are one of the top three causes of death in American youth, whether from suicide, homicide, or unintentional injury, and young black men and boys are disproportionately affected. The United States has by far the highest rates of firearm-related deaths among high-income countries. See [The American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\) Policy Statement on Firearm-Related Injuries Affecting the Pediatric Population](#) for more specifics on the numbers, but suffice it to say that the rate of these deaths is shocking and easily qualifies as a public health problem.

Less obvious and more difficult to quantify, however, is how this epidemic of violence affects mental health. I have seen many more children and teens with fears in the past several years than I did previously. These fears manifest in

many ways — difficulty falling asleep, concern about separating from a parent for fear that something will happen to the parent while they are at school, thoughts of hurting themselves, and general worry. Rates of anxiety and depression among young people have skyrocketed. Twenty years ago I referred a patient who needed medication management for mental health to a child psychiatrist (in addition to therapy, of course) perhaps once or twice a month. Now, about one in four or five patients on my schedule are seeing me for a medication check for mental health management. We have a collaborative relationship with a local psychology group and have psychologists available in our clinic most days a week, and they are always full. As a group of pediatricians, we have all had to learn basic psychiatric management, with only the most complicated cases being referred to psychiatry. I do not think this dramatic increase in psychiatric issues is all due to gun violence, but it does reflect the general increased stress in our society at large, and it is a definite change from 20 years ago.

The effect of the shocking number of mass shootings in this country deserves particular mention. Our schools have significantly tightened security with check in and out through main entrances. Our children undergo lockdown drills and active shooter drills in schools on a regular basis. There are occasional drills which include our local police department. This is the new “normal.” But what a toll this repeated envisioning of worst-case situations has on all of us. I have had patients describe to me the terror of sitting in the dark in a classroom making no noise and being unaware of whether it was a drill or a real event. I had a teacher in tears describe what it is like to try to get 20 kindergarteners to be quiet and hold still without truly having them understand what they were practicing. Teens discuss awareness of how to walk through halls or where to sit in a classroom to be safer. A patient’s parent posted a heart-wrenching description of how he would have to explain active shooter drills to his

three-year-old as she started preschool. This baseline level of stress and recurring trauma from imagined situations takes a huge toll.

Are there any other thoughts or observations that you want to share?

I want to emphasize two other thoughts on the subject: first, that digital media plays a role in how we view violence in our society; and second, that we can mitigate some of these violence-related stressors by nurturing resilience.

I am concerned about the normalization of violence through digital media of all sorts. Extremely violent video games desensitize users to violence, as does frequent exposure to violence in news media. I do not claim that video games are the sole cause of increased violence, but excessive and inappropriate video game violence makes truly horrific acts seem somehow less shocking. And the constant, daily barrage of violent and stressful scenes through news outlets is not helpful.

Perhaps more insidious is how increased amounts of time spent immersed in digital make-believe environments may reduce individuals’ connection to real world support systems. There is increasing data about the negative effects of digital media on brain development in young children, and on mental health and social skills of youth. (See [AAP technical report Children and Adolescents and Digital Media, 2016](#).) In many patients, I see increased digital media use contribute to poor or insufficient sleep, which then correlates with increased stress and mental health problems. Young people who use digital media excessively have fewer social connections and impaired family relationships, and this exacerbates the issue.

Resilience needs to be nurtured. We all need real, face-to-face connections with peers, teachers, mentors, family members, and communities such as we have here at Unity. Activities like sports, games, arts, music, and even just being outdoors allow a true break in the constant barrage of stressors and allow positive connection with others.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Regift and Rejoice

Holiday Regifting Sale

Sunday, January 5 • Parish Hall

*Donate your unwanted treasures!
Shop for fabulous regifted bargains!
Regift...and rejoice!*



Bring your unused new (or indistinguishable from new) items to the "regifting tables" on Sunday, January 5, before any service that day. All items will be sold at a discount at the Regifting Sale. Unsold items will be given to charity.

All proceeds from the Regifting Sale benefit the work of the Community Outreach Ministry Team that supports Mano a Mano International Partners. Mano a Mano builds clinics, schools and infrastructure, and trains teachers, doctors and subsistence farmers in rural Bolivia.

Winter Warm-Up Drive

Thank you!

Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice Team is grateful for all of the generous donations received so far! Collection of the following items continues through January. All donations will be shared with clients of Amicus, an organization serving people as they re-enter society after incarceration.

- Washcloths, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand lotion, deodorant, dental floss, razors and shaving cream
- New winter coats, gloves, hats, scarves, boots (men's) and socks
- Hand and foot warmers
- Bus passes or the cash to buy bus passes

Bring donations to the Racial and Restorative Justice table in the Parish Hall on Sundays.

On Sundays, please bring donations to the Racial and Restorative Justice table in the Parish Hall. Donations delivered during the week should be brought to Lisa Friedman's office.

Faith Is Stronger than Fear

Overcoming gun violence through inspiration, education and action

Sunday, January 26 • 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Bet Shalom Synagogue • Minnetonka, MN

This free event will motivate, educate and activate people of faith to work together to pass sensible gun laws in Minnesota. It will include an interfaith service and activist training. Details and registration at <https://protectmn.org/event/faith-is-stronger-than-fear>.

Sustainable Living Team News

Invitation to Engage!

From Anna Newton and Michelle Mecey



Janus, the ancient Roman god of time, was depicted with two faces, looking to both past and future. He was a powerful ally whose aid was enlisted for transitions: births, deaths, marriages, and thresholds of all kinds from municipal bridges to common doorways. January, named for Janus, is a good month for us to reflect on past and future. In 2019:

- **SLT developed a solid partnership with Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (MNIPL)**, building a network for environmental justice with other denominations. We participated in MNIPL *Be the Spark* training and hosted an MNIPL Climate Conversation.
- **SLT hosted sustainability-themed films and Wellspring Wednesday programs** (pollinators, clean energy, sustainable practices, sustainable meals), and provided timely information via email and at our Parish Hall table on Sundays
- **SLT offered tangible ways to take action:** Climate Strike, composting, gardening with Unity kids, trail cleanups.

We now stand on a threshold: The Sustainable Living Team's charge is to empower this congregation to act for the environment. In 2020-21 we will lead the congregation through the UUA Green Sanctuary process. On **Saturday, February 29**, we invite you to **Gather for the Earth**, a joyful morning honoring our connection to the earth and each other, with opportunities to reflect on concerns, to share wishes and insight. Information gathered will form the basis for our Green Sanctuary Action Plan. Together we will celebrate and protect this interconnected web of existence we call "home." Our Earth. Stay tuned for more information!

Sustainable Living Team Calendar

January 5: Regular meeting canceled

January 8: Wellspring Wednesday: Climate Reality, Solutions, Actions

January 19: Team meeting, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

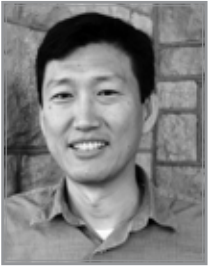
January 24: Sustainable Living Team Film *Living the Change* • 7:00 p.m. • Robbins Parlor

This inspiring New Zealand documentary follows people changing their lives and communities, from regenerative agriculture and forest gardens to composting toilets, to solve global crises. Rethink how you live!

Enjoy an evening with the Sustainable Living Team as we watch entertaining, hopeful, and provocative films that highlight environmental issues. An opportunity for discussion follows. Popcorn provided.

SAVE THE DATE! February 29: Gather for the Earth

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Pitter-pattering Questions

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

Rev. KP Hong, Director of Religious Education

We become persons only through our relations with others. Suspended materials in the flux of “you” and “I” settle and sediment into personhood in the gravitational workings of our significant relations. Is this not expressly so for our children and youth? I come to know myself only as I reveal myself to you, and you to me. In placing oneself more and more fully in the reality of another, we become “place-sharers” participating in the *who* and *where* of the other person, offering ourselves as companions who refuse to turn away in the face of certain anguish and brokenness (Dietrich Bonhoeffer). In a poignant scene from *Good Will Hunting* (1997), the emotional dialogue delves deep into brokenness:

Will Hunting is a troubled young genius, solving graduate-level math problems while working as a janitor at MIT and has a knack for pushing everyone away from him, especially court-mandated therapists. South Boston working-class neighborhoods, family abuse, outcast status, and distrust of authority have all shaped his relations to others. His strategy involves finding something personal and exploiting it to his advantage. He enters the office of his new therapist, Sean Maguire who is grieving the loss of his wife to cancer, and begins probing for vulnerabilities: “*Did you buy all these books retail, or do you send away for like a ‘shrink kit’ that comes with all these volumes included?*” Sean entertains Will’s musing, not threatened by his disdain. Will tries another angle. Turning to a watercolor perched on the windowsill — a scene of a man rowing a storm-tossed boat, painted by Sean — Will begins to psychoanalyze Sean: “*You ever heard the saying, ‘any port in a storm’? Well maybe that means you. Maybe you were in the middle of a storm, the waves were crashing over the bow, the mast was about to snap, and you were crying for harbor. So you did what you had to do to get out. Maybe you became a psychologist.*” And sensing that he is closer, he takes another shot: “*Maybe you married the wrong woman.*” Sean turns toward him with a warning, “*Watch your mouth.*” But Will knows he has him now, has found Sean’s vulnerability and goes for the kill: “*That’s it isn’t it? You married the wrong woman. She leave you? Was she bangin’ someone else?*” And in a flash, Sean shoots across the room and has Will by the throat: “*If you ever disrespect my wife again... I will end you.*” Sean establishes himself as a barrier, uncompromised, refusing to be handled by Will and pushed away like all the others.

Place-sharing asks us to enter deeply into each other’s lives, including brokenness, without losing oneself in the other’s reality nor swallowing the other’s distinctiveness into ours. For only the other in their *otherness* can serve as a source to know oneself as never before, and vice versa. But there is something more. The more I gaze at you in all your beauty and brokenness, you become too wondrous to be possessed, your being too deep for my mind to comprehend and my heart to capture. In place-sharing, I encounter your very transcendence, that no person can be reduced to their history or culture or class or race or gender or the innumerable ways brokenness seeks to assert a permanent claim upon our lives. For what determinative power is not finally overturned before an uncompromised transcendence revealed in love’s severe embrace?

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

R.E. Calendar

January 2020

Sunday, January 5: Regular Religious Education

Wednesday, January 8: Religious Education Teacher Orientation 7:15-8:30 p.m.; New Family Orientation 7:15 p.m.; OWL/Tweens/ WW programming resume

Saturday, January 11: Tower Club high school event (tentative)

Sunday, January 12: Second semester begins

Sunday, January 19: Story Sunday (grade school and junior high children in Sanctuary); Joint COA service with partner UU congregations

Sunday, January 26: Regular Religious Education



Board Game and Potluck Family Fun Night

Friday, January 10
5:30-8:30 p.m. • Parish Hall

All ages welcome! Bring a favorite dish and/or board game for any age. Please RSVP online so we can balance food choices: <http://bit.ly/ucugamenite>.

This event is hosted by Unity's Unitarian Universalist Families Initiative.

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries

My first instrument is the trumpet; it is the instrument I learned to play as a child and played through high school and into college. For me, the technique of playing the trumpet is all about perfecting a small number of very difficult tasks. Playing a note on the trumpet is hard! It takes quite a while before you can even play a note, let alone one that sounds pleasing. Practicing an instrument like the trumpet is about gradually,

repeatedly chipping away at the mythical “perfect tone” and articulation.

I started to play piano seriously as a teenager. At first, I tried to practice in the “trumpet way.” I made very quick progress initially but soon hit a dead end. Not only was this way of practicing not working, it was often making things worse. I eventually realized that this is because an instrument like the piano is completely the opposite of the trumpet. Unlike the trumpet, playing a note that sounds nice on the piano is the easiest thing in the world. If you close your eyes a single note on the piano sounds the same if it is played by you, a cat, a baby, an object you drop on the keyboard, or Beethoven himself resurrected from the dead. Playing piano is about coordinating hundreds of extremely simple tasks all happening both at the same time and one after the other. Playing trumpet meant coordinating at most three or four very difficult actions, but even the simplest piano pieces require juggling at least a dozen elements. Rather than perfecting that one ideal note, learning to play piano required a different approach: breaking every situation down into its simplest components and then gradually putting them back together. It’d be silly to learn to play the trumpet by vibrating one lip and then the other, but when you’re learning to play piano, there are pieces where you really do need to break down things into such absurdly tiny elements; first one finger, then the other, then you press the pedal while your arm moves up...

I came to singing and conducting professionally much later in life, in my late twenties, and was faced with a totally different challenge. Learning to play trumpet was a quest to learn a difficult task through training, repetition, and exercise. Learning to play piano involved intense analysis and organization, learning to coordinate many easy tasks as directly as possible. Singing and conducting, on the other hand, technically are skills that we are built to do naturally. There’s no instrument to learn how to operate; conducting is moving your body expressively and singing is essentially controlled yelling (when my child was three months old he would literally scream non-stop for hours at volumes and pitches that would rival any opera singer without ever hurting his vocal cords!) Unfortunately, the fact that we use our speech and bodies constantly in our daily life works against us; bad habits build up as we go through life, and learning to sing and conduct often meant remembering how my body is supposed to work versus how I was actually using it. Trying to learn to conduct or sing by relying on the “trumpet” approach just meant becoming exhausted, and the analytical “piano” approach would result in constant overthinking and becoming blocked from singing or conducting well. Learning to conduct and sing often meant having to reconsider patterns in my life and relationships that were manifesting in the ways I was speaking or using my body. It meant learning to work around problems rather than attempting to solve them every time. It meant learning to accept the bits of myself that were broken and figuring out how those contribute to making my conducting and singing unique.

Whenever I come up against circumstances that are causing me hardship, about something broken that needs repair, I ask myself: is this a trumpet situation, a piano situation, or a conducting-singing situation?

Children’s Musical Auditions and Parent Meeting



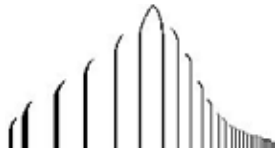
Calling all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders! Auditions for the 2020 Children’s Musical will be held Tuesday, January 7, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., in the Foote Room. Kids don’t need to prepare anything. They will sing and dance in group activities so they should wear comfortable clothes and bring a water bottle. Everyone who auditions will receive a part.

The first parent meeting will be held in the Robbins Parlor during auditions. This meeting will cover logistics, questions, and committee sign up. If you have a kid in the musical, you need to be at this meeting.

Performance dates are March 5, 6, and 7, 2020. Questions? Contact Dave Smith at david.smith52@yahoo.com.

Share your Musical Gifts!

If you play a musical instrument, compose, sing, teach music, or if music is a significant part of your life in other ways, contact Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries, at ahmed@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x118, to find ways to connect your musical gifts to the congregational life at Unity Church.



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
Business Entrance: 732 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
MATERIAL**

**Racial Justice
Film Series**

**JIM CROW
OF THE NORTH**

Friday, January 10
7:00 PM
Robbins Parlor

A TWIN CITIES PBS ORIGINAL

Jim Crow of the North explores how even in one of the country's most liberal centers, Jim Crow racism, in the form of real estate exclusion and bias, can hide in plain sight. Popcorn and discussion included.

Special Meeting of the Congregation and Sunday Services

with Rev. Jen Crow

Sunday, January 12
12:30 p.m. • Sanctuary

The Rev. Jen Crow, a trained UUA transition coach, former Unity intern minister, and senior co-minister at First Universalist Church of Minneapolis will preach at Sunday services and also lead a special meeting of the congregation to help build our understanding of how the search for our next called ministers will be conducted. Child care and children's activities will be provided, no RSVP required.

Food Shelf Donations

Thank you for supporting Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf! Donations of non-perishable food and toiletries can be placed in the trunks located at the Holly and Portland entrances.

**LIVING
THE
CHANGE**

INSPIRING STORIES FOR
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Join the Sustainable Living
Team for the Fourth Friday
Sustainability Film
January 24,
7:00 p.m.
Robbins Parlor