

Where's the fun in that? | Joy

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

Where's the fun in that? Religion takes up weighty questions. Our teenagers going through the Coming of Age program are asked to consider five theological questions that are at the heart of religious experience:

- What is the nature of God?
- What does it mean to be human and alive?
- How is the Sacred present in each of us and in our lives?
- What is the purpose of Beloved Community?
- How do we live in the face of death and loss?

Profound questions, but not ones that lend themselves, at first glance, to laughter. It is easy to get caught up in the hard questions of faith: what does it mean, each week, that we name losses suffered by people in our community in worship, during the embracing meditation? There is sorrow in the world, and Walter Brueggemann writes that the prophetic task of the church is to grieve in a society that practices denial. But Brueggemann goes on to write that the next duty of the church is to “express hope in a society that lives in despair.” To express hope, we must find joy.

The joy we find through faith is not despite or in opposition to sorrow and grief but joined with them. Joy is part of each Sunday's embracing meditation, and part of what we practice at Unity Church. Joy that the

Embodiment Institute talks about as the “sense of our greatest alive-ness,” a kind of opening up to experience that brings laughter and delight without ignoring hurt or brokenness.

In his book *Dancing in the Darkness: Spiritual Lessons for Thriving in Turbulent Times*, Rev. Otis Moss III tells a story of waking up in the middle of the night to an uncertain sound. It was 2008, and in the midst of a contentious general election campaign that the church he served had become inadvertently involved in, the church and Rev. Moss were getting death threats. Hearing a noise coming from somewhere in the house, he grabbed a baseball bat and stalked through the house, looking for an intruder. He eventually located the noise coming from his daughter's room. Bursting in, ready to fight anyone coming to harm his family, he instead found his daughter, up far past her bedtime, dancing in the dark. He writes:

Unless we have better guidance, our eyes go to the shadows, and as we peer into darkness and worry what may jump out, the shadows can become all we see. The truth I had forgotten was that only a few people in this world harbored genuinely malevolent feelings toward me. Only a few wanted to do me harm, but because I focused more and more on the darkness, I felt as if I lived in a world where every shadow hid a threat.

What we forget, faithwise, in our fear—what I was forgetting that night in my daughter's room—is that even in the darkest night, when we see no light at all, the light is still there. The sun is still shining over Earth even when our side of Earth rotates away from it. The stars still shine above us, no matter where we are or how thick the clouds above our heads. What we need in the darkest nights is to keep walking along the path until we can glimpse the stars again.

This is the work of joy, in a church: to keep us walking along the path until we see the stars. In moments when despair grows all around us, how do we cultivate the joy that abides despite everything?

*Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair
with this month's Theme Team*

Theme Resources

For further reflection on the theme of Joy, see this month's spiritual practice packet, available online at unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.

JUST WORDS



Just Words

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister

June is General Assembly month. For Unitarian Universalist religious professionals, the third week of June is a landmark in the rhythm of the year. Every summer, several thousand clergy, staff, and laypeople join in person and online to do the business of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), as well as getting to know each other and attending to communities of identity and interest that gather once a year at the event.

The first purpose of General Assembly is pragmatic. Unity Church in Saint Paul is part of the Unitarian Universalist Association, a community of almost 1000 congregations, churches, fellowships and communities, joined together by a shared covenant to center love and practice liberal religion in the world. Just as our individual congregations are governed by the democratic process (for instance, each December Unity Church members vote on the congregational budget for the upcoming year), our national organization is democratically governed. General Assembly fills the role of "annual meeting" for the denomination, where the business of the Unitarian Universalist Association is conducted. Delegates debate and vote on areas of study and concern, elect officers for the national association, and hear reports from our staff and volunteer offices.

Over the last few years, even as we have occasionally held general assembly online because of the COVID-19 pandemic, General Assembly has engaged with a rewrite of Unitarian Universalism's core values, elected a new UUA president, and responded in the moment to the needs of the world around us. This year, the General Assembly will elect a new UUA moderator, the rough equivalent of a president of the UUA board.

The second purpose of General Assembly is to provide space for identity groups to meet. Many smaller UU organizations hold their annual meetings during General Assembly. Each year I attend Ministry Days, the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association. Other groups hold gatherings at the same time, from Diverse Revolutionary UU Ministries (DRUUM) to UUs for Justice in the Middle East (UUJME) to informal lunches of the UU Hysterical Society.

The last purpose of GA is harder to describe, but probably the most important. We are lucky, here in the Twin Cities, to be in community with other Unitarian Universalists. In most other parts of the country, UUs might go all year without meeting another one of us outside their congregation. For a person coming from a small fellowship in central Kansas, where 20 Unitarian Universalists demonstrate for Trans rights in Topeka, the experience of coming to General Assembly and singing with three thousand gathered religious liberals can be a profound experience.

This year the assembly is in Baltimore, the city where I joined Unitarian Universalism as an adult. I can't wait to be back for a week, to see some of my old haunts, take my colleagues to an Orioles game, and catch up with family and friends. Most of all, I look forward to the question that we ask, each time we gather together: who are we in this moment? And what are we called to be in the world?



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
BALTIMORE • JUNE 18 - 22, 2025

The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Judith Mitchell

February 13, 1942 – April 25, 2025

In Celebration

Esker Nichols Landgraf born one more redeemer on April 23, 2025, to parents Katrina Nichols and Jess Landgraf and sweet sibling Eira.

Celebration of Rev. Lara and her Ministry of Care

Service and Reception

Sunday, June 8 | 10:00 a.m.
Sanctuary and Parish Hall

Collage of Voices

Share appreciations

of Rev. Lara's ministry to be included in a collage of voices on Sunday, June 8, Lara's last Sunday at Unity Church. Submissions should be sent to martha@unityunitarian.org. Cards of appreciation can be delivered to the Congregational Care table in Parish Hall on Sundays.



commUNITY is the monthly newsletter of Unity Church. Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Mailed subscriptions are available by contacting Martha Tilton at the church office: martha@unityunitarian.org, 651-228-1456 x105.

SUNDAY SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Summer Sunday Services

[Summer Sunday services](#), from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, are held at 10:00 a.m., both in the Sanctuary and via livestream. Sundays in the Garden for children and youth is held during the 10:00 a.m. service.

June 1: Improv as Spiritual Practice

Rev. Meg Riley | Dick Buggs, worship associate

Meg Riley serves as co-moderator of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Chief Governance Officer of the Association. Come hear how the practice of improv has shaped her service, and become a spiritual practice.

June 8: This Joy That I Have

Rev. Lara Cowtan | Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair

At Rev. Lara Cowtan's final worship service as Unity Church's Minister of Congregational Care, we gather to reflect on her ministry in Saint Paul, to celebrate community and care, and to practice opening to what comes next.

June 15: Meditations on Joy

Ari Giles | Veronica Nordeng DeVillez, worship associate

"I can alter my life by altering my attitude. He who would have nothing to do with thorns must never attempt to gather flowers." — Henry David Thoreau

June 22: We Lead by Following

Rev. George Anastos | Chris Russert, worship associate

It is no secret that mainline churches are rapidly losing members. In fact, research shows that, religiously speaking, the only category where there is growth is among the "Nones" — those who have no church affiliation and don't want one. Yet Unity Church—Unitarian is growing. What are we doing that is different? What are we offering that people want to join with us?

June 29: Pride in Passing

Isaac Fried | Meg Arnosti, worship associate

Watch for details!

Mark Your Calendars

Unity Pick-up Choir gathers Sundays in August!

This is a wonderful way to help decide if joining a choir is right for you (read Ahmed's article on page 11)! Anyone can show up and the music is rehearsed and learned the same morning of the worship service. Meet in the Foote Room at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday in August, learn some music for the morning's service, and then head to the Sanctuary to sing! Email ahmed@unityunitarian.org with questions or interest in joining a choir.

Offering Recipients

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

June 1: Freedom School

[Freedom School](#), held each summer in the Rondo Education complex, is a free program for students in grades K-8. Freedom School provides nutritious meals, helps scholars get grade level ready in reading and math, and connects learning through lessons in community and personal responsibility, music, field trips, and fun. This collection will buy books for scholars to use during the program and to keep after the program ends.

June 8: Rabata Cultural Center

[Rabata Cultural Center](#) envisions a rising tide of Muslim women teachers, faith leaders, and community stewards in every digital and local neighborhood. Rabata works to build a better society through the educational and spiritual development of women by women, amplifying their voices in service to their communities. This collection will support day to day services for participants and ongoing programs.

June 15: MN Interfaith Coalition on Immigration

The mission of [Minnesota Interfaith Coalition on Immigration](#) (ICOM) is to engage in courageous spiritual, multicultural action in solidarity with immigrants and refugees to achieve justice and stand up to systems of oppression. ICOM works to ensure that accompanied clients (people detained or seeking asylum) have the resources and support they need and works to advocate for changes in laws and policies. This collection will support ICOM's team of workers who accompany asylum-seeking families.

June 22: Somali American Youth Enrichment Club

[Somali American Youth Enrichment Club](#) (SAYEC) was founded by immigrant fathers with the mission to provide opportunities for immigrant youth. Programs including sports, tutoring, and cultural enrichment activities, are aimed at fostering confidence, resilience, and growth, while helping children from low-income families succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. This collection will help offer programs to families regardless of their ability to pay.

June 29: Unity's Gun Violence Prevention Community Outreach Ministry Team

Gun violence affects all Minnesotans regardless of age, gender identity, race, ability, or locale. Unity's [Gun Violence Prevention Team](#) partners with Protect Minnesota, a coalition of 16 statewide groups committed to working together to prevent gun violence. This collection will support efforts to defeat House File 13, a "Shoot First" bill which removes Minnesotans' duty to retreat and allows Minnesotans to shoot first when they feel threatened.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



A Shorter Letter

Richard Lau, Trustee

Unity's new Ends Statements are:

- the result of hundreds, if not

thousands, of hours of collective, collaborative work by, between, and among the Board, the Executive Team (ET), volunteers, and our outside consultant;

- the product of 18 Ends listening sessions, concurrent virtual submissions to the Board, and engaging conversations with other moral owners of the church;
- the distillation of 700 wishes from 264 congregants, along with comments from church staff and Unity's high school youth;
- short;
- Uh oh, really short;
- complex and difficult;
- genuine and sincere aspirational goals and directives of our church.

To be honest, going into this, I had no understanding of the amount of work that crafting our new Ends Statements would require. The Ends committee met weekly for months, planning and refining the process, long before I joined the Board. They, the whole Board, and then together with the ET worked with an outside Ends process guide. The path forward also involved dozens of volunteers to facilitate a total of 18 separate listening sessions with congregants, provide an alternative means to provide input to the Board through an online process, and allow reflective conversations with other moral owners of Unity Church–Unitarian. These listening sessions, along with more abridged sessions with the church's youth, resulted in 700 "wishes" centered around our values of wonder, open-hearted engagement, and courageous action. The Board entered all 700 wishes into the spreadsheet and all

members read each earnest hope from the congregation. Words like music, community, justice, act, and transformation demanded our awareness and care.

The Board individually and collectively reflected, meditated upon, and discerned the voices and words of the congregation. Consultant D Ohlandt then guided the Board and ET through a retreat weekend. We discussed, deliberated, and discerned some more. Then we wrote. More discussion, some of it very passionate. More discernment. Then more writing. Followed by a breath, a break, and a few nights sleep. Then back at it, for further dialogue and compromise. More distance. A little more wordsmithing. And ultimately, you have a distillation of hard work, dreams, zeal, and deliberation into a mere (approximately) 88 words.

My first thought was, "Oooo, that is nice and short" followed by my second thought of, "Wow, that is really short." The brevity of the new Ends Statements begs the questions "Are the Ends too short and have we missed something?" Of course, that leads to anxiety and doubt. In many respects, it seems a sea change, a likely paradigm shift, to go from eight Ends Statements to three, from 145 words to approximately 88 words. Based on numbers alone, it would seem radically different. But as my teenage daughters would say, "Is it though?"

The new Ends Statements are powerful. They are complex and beautiful. They are difficult and challenging. Consider the words and phrases that might command your attention: **interconnected roots of oppression, joy, care, and belonging.** They are not merely simple words. They are words that ask, no demand, due consideration and weight. Then, there are words that remind me of the great big heart of our religious faith: **the deep and abiding hunger**

in all of us, and faith formation that breaks us open and allows us to be transformed. These are words that draw us to be together, to remind us that we are not alone in our struggle. Then, there are words that are a clarion call to tell me again that we are not a faith of creed alone. We are a faith based in both covenant and action: **yoke ourselves to the demands, sacrifices, and hard work.** And, of course, there is my favorite admonition and demand: **Evangelize Love.** They are deceptively simple words that, for me, encapsulate what it means to be UU.

I don't think that the new Ends Statements represent some radical departure from the Ends Statements of the last 20 years. Specifically, I see each of our eight previous Ends Statements in the new Ends. Moreover, I think the Board and ET captured the spirit, if not the exact words, of the 700 wishes from stakeholders. I am awed by the simplicity, beauty, and complexity of the new Ends Statements. With apologies to Mark Twain, the Board took the time to write a shorter letter. I know that our ministers are excited about the juicy and rich themes inherent in our new Ends Statements and I look forward to seeing how they will be interwoven through sermons, programming, expenditures, and church statements. Most of all, I have faith that the new Ends Statements will hold and inform who we are as members of Unity Church–Unitarian in these difficult times to be a religious liberal. It is a journey that I look forward to going on with all of you.

To read Unity's new Ends Statements in their entirety, please turn to the back cover.

BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

Making Change Through Awareness: Workshop with Jodi Pfarr

Lia Rivamonte, Beloved Community Staff Team

*All you Black folks, you must go
All you Mexicans, you must go
And all you poor folks, you must go
Muslims and gay boys,
we hate your ways
So all you bad folks, you must go*

— "We the People"
by A Tribe Called Quest,
from the album,
We got it from Here...
Thank You 4 Your Service (2016)

I confess, I have to make an effort these days, not to give in to a sense of hopelessness — a sin, according to the nuns who taught me. The all too prescient lyrics above by the hip hop band A Tribe Called Quest, written prior to 2016, now seems to serve as an anthem by the current Administration. All that I value is being challenged, tossed into the wind like fragile tissue. I am heartened that Jodi Pfarr, author of *The Urgency of Awareness*, came to Unity Church to help us figure out a way to make sense of our world and its cruel inequities; determined to change the status quo workshop by workshop.

Working through the various lenses of individuals, institutions, communities, and, ultimately, policymaking, Pfarr has built an accessible framework through which we can better understand ourselves and others outside of our own narrow cultural and societal groups. Facilitating with humor and blunt vulnerability, she provides tools to help us visualize how our identities have been informed by our experiences and situations beyond our control.

We live in a society that normalizes certain things or groups. Normalization means not having to think about how we are perceived, or worry about how we navigate the institutions

and systems in our daily lives, or be misinterpreted or merely dismissed.

Pfarr imagines groups as triangles that either point up or down according to their having been "normalized." Left-handedness is considered a down-pointing triangle; right-handedness is a triangle that points up. A person with three or more up or down triangles is typically generalized by individuals, institutions, and communities in the dominant norm. As a consequence, individuals lose their personhood, and their needs are dismissed. The alternative is to become aware of our biases and assumptions, own and process them, acknowledge our emotions, and hit the "pause" button when we experience an emotion such as anger or shame in the process.

It is becoming apparent to some of us that the dominant norm is moving us further away from a just world at an alarming rate. We need to start listening to those in non-dominant spaces who appear to be better positioned to tell us what is needed for true justice.

In reflecting on Pfarr's engaging workshop, I am struck by the trajectory of Unity's antiracism efforts, and sometimes wonder how much the needle has moved — if it has moved at all. For 25 years now, we have participated in workshops, read and discussed judiciously, listened to sermons, taken pilgrimages, educated our children and youth, taken cultural audits, and formed partnerships with moral owners. Our Ends Statements embed antiracism into every aspect of church community life. And yet, I know there are some who struggle with this work, even question its relevance, and/or effectiveness.



I can recall a time, years ago, when an antiracism workshop experience would inevitably end in tears and even shame for some. Pfarr's *Urgency of Awareness* takes a different approach, one that is relatively gentle. It is no longer a needle, tortuously sharp, that needs to move, rather, it is a noodle — a soft, slippery one that slides along a continuum. I am getting anxious. If we are to move that noodle, more of us need to share our stories of growth, discovery, and failure.

Please do read, and share your stories (written or on video) with the [All Our Fullness](#) project. This is an ongoing communal spiritual practice, all of it in service of the antiracist, multicultural world we profess to long for.

For more tools to help you understand your inherent biases in the ways that you perceive others and how you can build the capacity to truly see others, visit [Jodi Pfarr's website](#), listen to her [podcasts](#), and/or read her book, *The Urgency of Awareness*.

Thanks to Ray Wiedmeyer for our conversation that helped to inform this article.



WELCOME NEWCOMERS | FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Finding Yourself at Unity

Sundays 11:15 a.m. | Center Room | Childcare available

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

Watch our weekly email for class topics or contact Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant, philippa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110.

Volunteer to Give Rides

We're looking for volunteers to give fellow community members rides to church. Your kindness and support will help others connect and participate. If you're able to assist, please consider volunteering! For more information, contact Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant, philippa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110.

New Groups Now Forming

Parents of Teens

Many of the support structures that surround us when we have small children fade away as our children get older. If this isolation frustrates you, and you want to spend time with a group of parents sharing in the joy and struggle of raising teenagers, reach out to Gail Mulcahey at gtbmulcahey@gmail.com. We are still determining the best format and meeting time for this group!

Mid-adults Group

Middle adulthood brings a host of changes and challenges in all facets of life. How do we live our values as we navigate those changes? If you have been searching for a group that lies between the Young Adults Group and the retirement groups here at Unity Church, contact Tom Coffee at tomcoff@pm.me.

Request Congregational Care

Do you have a concern or celebration you wish to have shared in the Embracing Meditation during Sunday worship? Would you like to request a call from the Minister or a helping hand or listening ear of a Care Team member? Use the form on this page or send an email to pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org. If you are experiencing an urgent need for pastoral support please call 651-300-9123.

Merging of Waters: Sunday, September 7

Collect water this summer for our annual Merging of Waters reunion ritual in September.

6

Integrity, service, and joy.

Fellowship Groups

Email Philippa Anastos at philippa@unityunitarian.org to get connected or visit unityunitarian.org/fellowship-groups.html.

Afterthoughts: Sundays, 10:15 a.m., Middle School Room 021, to discuss the service

Caregivers Support Group: third Thursday of the month at noon, Zoom

Evergreen Quilters: second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Anderson Library, and fourth Saturday of the month, 10:00 a.m.-noon, off-site.

Families Living with Mental Health Challenges: third Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Zoom

Living With Grief Group: third Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Zoom

LGBTQ+ Group: This group coordinates some of the LGBTQ+ programming with the congregation.

Men's Coffee Group: Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m., Center Room, for light-hearted conversation

Men's Conversation Group: Monday, June 2 and 16, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Zoom. Discuss a range of topics, offer support, and connect.

Men's Retirement Circle: Monday, June 2, 16, and 30, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Robbins Parlor

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

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

Textile Arts Group: first and third Friday of the month, 9:30-11:00 a.m., Crothers Room, bring your knitting, stitching, etc.

Unity Book Club: second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Zoom.

On June 10 the group will discuss *The Women* by Hannah Kristin.

On July 8 the group will discuss *John & Paul: A Love Story in Songs* by Ian Leslie.

Unity Gardeners: Join other Unity Gardeners and sign on for a few hours of weeding/watering during the summer. No experience necessary!

Women in Retirement: second and fourth Thursday of each month, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Center Room

Young Adult Group (ages 18-35): every other Wednesday at 7:10 p.m., Center Room

Wonder, open-hearted engagement, courageous action



From the Archives: General Assembly Delegation

Unity's Archives Team | archives@unityunitarian.org



The Unity delegation to the 2001 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in Cleveland, Ohio, is a mix of congregants, staff, trustees and ministers. From left to right: Sherm Eagles, Sue Conner, Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs, Louise Wolfgramm, Lisa Doege, LauraSue Schlatter, Barbara Hubbard, Ellen Green, Gretchen Dorn, Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs, Hannah Eller-Isaacs, Jennifer Ringold, and Arlene West.

UUA General Assembly

Baltimore, MD | June 18-22, 2025 | [UUA.ORG/GA](https://uua.org/ga)

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), where participants gather (in-person and virtually) to worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy decisions for the Association through a democratic process.

Red Cross Blood Drive at House of Hope

Wednesday, June 4 | House of Hope Rooms A & B | 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Schedule your donation: rcblood.org/3Fewww4.

Lectio Divina, Summer 2025

Is it poetry? Is it meditation? It's a bit of both — Lectio Divina! Come experience the alchemy that occurs through focused reflection on an inspirational text. Many people find Lectio Divina sessions to be a time of rejuvenation and insight. Led by Shelley Butler and Lisa Wersal; facilitated by your own heart. June through August, second Wednesdays, 7:10 p.m., via Zoom. Register once and attend as often as you are able: bit.ly/UnityLectio24-25.

Beer Tasting Party

This event is part of Unity's Fulfilling Our Promise fundraiser.

Saturday, June 14 | 7:00 p.m. | \$50 per person | Tickets at bit.ly/ucubtaste

A certified Cicerone will guide tasters through variety of beer styles, with non-alcoholic options available. Enjoy beer-friendly snacks, great company, and a fun evening at the home of Lee Carey and Terry Linskey.

Summer Brunch

Stay for food and fellowship after the service on Sunday, June 22, July 13, and August 10. Donations gratefully accepted to cover the costs of the meal. Want to have some fun and help prepare and/or serve these brunches? Sign up online at bit.ly/sundayeats.

Unity Church Summer Sale

Upcycle - Reuse - Treasures
July 31 | August 1 and 2

Take this opportunity to clean out your spare bedroom, closet, cupboards and garage!

In an effort to curate just the right items to make our sale destination worthy, we will practice "selective acceptance" of donations. As you go through your treasures, please make sure your possible donations are clean, lightly used, in good working order, and appealing.

Next month, we'll publish the dates and times for item drop-off and selective acceptance. A few things we will *not* accept: books, CDs, clothing, full sets of dishes (with the exception of collectibles), and obsolete technology. Email questions to Heidi Birkholz at heidi@unityunitarian.org.

Thanks in advance for offering Unity Church your treasures!



Wellspring Wednesday

Summer Vacation

Wellspring Wednesday is on summer vacation! Dinner, chapel service, and programming return in September.

Submit a Proposal

Is there a program or class you would like to see offered — or that you would like to offer — at a Wellspring Wednesday this fall?

Complete and submit our online Wellspring Wednesday class proposal form: unityunitarian.org/wellspring-wednesday.html.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Sacred Sites Tour

Saturday, June 28 | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Registration: bit.ly/sacredsitesjune



Unity's Indigenous Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team is hosting a Sacred Sites Tour on Saturday, June 28, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., led by Jim Bear Jacobs (Mohican). Learn about Minnesota history from a Native perspective through storytelling and experiencing sacred places in silence/meditation/reflection.

Unity Church participation in these tours several years ago led to the establishment of the Indigenous Justice Team. We strongly encourage members and friends of the community to take advantage of this opportunity. The tours have been offered as part of the Minnesota Council of Churches Healing Minnesota Stories effort to create dialogue, understanding and healing between Native and non-Native peoples. These tours aim to promote greater awareness and understanding of the Dakota people, the original people of this area, who too often are invisible in their homeland. The tour includes information on Dakota history, culture and sacred sites, as well as the oppression and genocide they faced, and ultimately their exile. Sites to be visited include Bdote and the Dakota Internment Camp at Fort Snelling State Park and Pilot Knob Hill. As the topics are quite serious the tours are considered age appropriate for high school age or older.

Registration is required at a cost of \$50 per person. Space is limited so we encourage you to register early. Some funds are available from the Indigenous Justice Team for scholarships to cover all or part of this cost. Please indicate your need on the registration form.

Carpooling from Unity Church will be arranged.

We will try to accommodate the physical abilities of all attendees. Wheelchairs are welcome as the sites visited are on or very near trails. Questions? Contact Helen Pohlig at hmpohlig@msn.com.

Dress for the weather with sturdy footwear. People who may have difficulty standing for storytelling may want to bring lawn chairs. Those walking should expect to be on some uneven surfaces and dirt/gravel paths.

We will contact you if weather conditions require us to reschedule. Watch for email on the day of the event.

The Szekely Gate Has Arrived

Christoph Meyer-Grimberg, Partner Church Team

After extensive back and forth and hard work by the villagers, church staff and the Partner Church Team and with financial and logistical help from the Minnesota Hungarians, the Szekely Gate, gifted by Homoródszentpéter to Unity Church in 2019, finally arrived in St. Paul on May 2. We picked up the 670 lb. crate with gate parts at Delta Cargo at the MSP airport and brought it to Unity Church with the help of Ray Wiedmeyer and Segundo Velásquez from Mano a Mano. It was unloaded and stored it at the church with the help of Unity staff Reed Richards (on his day off!) and Marcos Del Angel.



Reed Richards and Marcos Del Angel help unload the gate.



The gate (see image at left) will be put up in the green space next to church. For additional info on Szekely gates visit bit.ly/szekelygate.

Mark your calendars for the dedication ceremony on Saturday, September 6, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Kinga-Reka Szekely, the minister of our partner church in Homoródszentpéter in Romania, plans to come to St. Paul from August 17-September 10. She will be joined by her family (husband Csaba and youth from 17-23 years of age), as well as Gyöngyike (school teacher) and Zsolt Szekely (factory owner) with their son Zsoltika (age 13) — subject to approval of their visas. Please email unitypartnerchurch@gmail.com if you are interested in hosting any of the Transylvanian visitors in your home or participating in any of the programming once they are here. Stay tuned for updates!

Children's Book Swap

Sunday, June 29 | After the 10:00 service | Parish Hall

Bring your gently used children's books (ages infant to young adult) and pick up new gently used ones to take home and love. Sponsored by Unity's Act for the Earth Team, this is a great way to reuse and avoid these items going into the landfill. If you must drop off early please contact Kathy at doegern85@gmail.com.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Another Wonderful School Year

Nancy Heege, JJ Hill/Obama School Team



As we approach the end of the school year, we'd like you to know:

- Eighteen Unity Church members and friends volunteered their time at JJ Hill Montessori Magnet School this year.
- They served as reading tutors, math mentors, library book shelvees, food providers for special staff occasions, a knitting teacher, and more.
- They showed up consistently, week after week, and were counted on by the teachers and other staff to provide welcome support for staff and students.
- In the next few weeks, they'll help pack up the school for the big move to the newly renovated Obama building across the street from the church.

As we look forward to the next school year, we'd like you to know:

- More volunteers will be needed as the PreK – fifth grade population grows and the school expands to include the first-ever class of sixth graders, who will be the first class of the new middle school in the west tower.
- The principals are excited to build on the relationship that has developed over the past two years. The middle school principal is wondering whether some of her students' service learning programming might fit with some of our community outreach ministries.
- We are excited as we look to the future. Please consider how you might be involved with this important part of church life — building and maintaining a great relationship with our newest neighbors across the street — and to grow spiritually as you go "within, among, and beyond" with us.

Housing Justice Team

Dayna Kennedy, Housing Justice Team

Help Unity Build with Habitat for Humanity

Unity's Housing Justice Team is co-sponsoring our annual home construction work week, June 2-6 in Roseville. This year, we'll work on a "deep remodel" of an existing home. This strategy adds to the general inventory of affordable homes in the area for Habitat clients. All skill levels are needed! If you've helped before, we hope you will again. If you're new, we welcome you. You'll also learn about home building and how Habitat contributes to stable housing in our community. You can volunteer for one day or multiple days. Look for sign-up tables in Parish Hall. Please sign up early as it helps us in planning the work days. We hope you will join us! Questions? Contact Unity Church member Chuck Griggs at griggscb@msn.com.

Be a Weekend Warrior

We're looking for groups of 3-6 adults to participate in weekend meal teams at Provincial House in Saint Paul. Volunteers help serve meals, visit with guests, and clean up. For details and to sign up visit bit.ly/ucuph. Questions? Email Donna Franklin at dfranklin@interfaithaction.org.

News from Evergreen Quilters

Hallie Q. Brown: Summer Food Shelf

Hunger isn't taking a vacation just because the kids will be out of school. Please consider bringing a can of food every time you visit church. Non-perishable food is always needed and greatly appreciated.



In April, Unity Church collected 137 pounds of food!

For June the food shelf needs sunscreen, toilet paper, paper towels, aluminum foil, window cleaner, oven cleaner, and disinfectant spray. Food shelf financial contributions are accepted at hallieqbrown.charityproud.org/donate.

STAR House Crisis Nursery

Evergreen Quilters new community partner, STAR House Crisis Nursery in St. Paul, opened in early November 2024 and is currently operating as the only crisis nursery in Ramsey County. STAR House is a no-cost children's crisis shelter that prioritizes the safety and well-being of children up to age six. They offer a safe place for a child to stay under the supervision of trained employees and volunteers. They are only open Friday through Sunday at this time, but hope to expand those hours. To learn more about the amazing work they do, and to get information about volunteer opportunities, please visit their website at starhousemn.org.

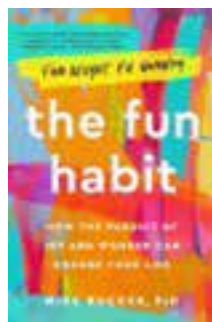


“Where’s the Fun in That?” You Ask?

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

Did you know that the average four-year-old laughs around 300 times per day? Guess how often the average 40-year-old laughs?* It’s not enough! The worship theme this June invites us to boost our physical, emotional, and spiritual health. How, you ask? By finding the fun in that! Here’s a few books on the subject:

In *The Fun Habit: How the Pursuit of Joy and Wonder Can Change Your Life* (Atria, 2024), author Mike Ruckus says that fun needs a do-over because it has been marginalized, vilified, and ignored; and treated as escapism, self-indulgence, or mere whimsy. “Happiness is a state of mind, but fun is something you can do.” And the author tells you why fun is important and how to develop more fun in your life. In the Anderson Library and the Bookstall.



The Book of More Delights (Little, Brown; 2023) is the second Ross Gay foray into encouraging us to take up the practice of noticing, paying attention to, and thinking about what we love, or what he calls “delights.” You can do this on your own, but you can do this in a variety of ways in community, too. These delights are things that connect us and give life meaning and joy. In the Bookstall (plus more Ross Gay books) and Anderson Library.

Find many more “fun” books in the Bookstall, including:

- *The Buddha’s Way of Happiness* by Thomas Bien
- *Daily Joy: A Devotional for Women*
- *The Enchanted Life* by Sharon Blackie
- *Enchantment* by Katherine May
- *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* by Elizabeth Tova Bailey

*The average 40-year old laughs four times per day, according to [Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com).

In The Justice Database

American Friends Service Committee | bit.ly/JusticeData

“We bring together people of all faiths and backgrounds to challenge injustice and build peace around the globe.” Find toolkits for activism and protest, and many ideas for how to get involved in social justice issues.

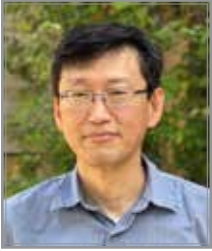


Beyond the Brush: A Kaleidoscope of Creativity

Unity’s Art Team offers a spring exhibition featuring work by local artist Bob Nonnemacher and local artist collective Midwest Marbling. These creators employ innovative approaches in their work with paint and canvas. Our exhibit “Beyond the Brush: A Kaleidoscope of Creativity” transforms the Parish Hall into a cacophony of vibrant color, captivating geometries, fascinating patterns and lively energy. On May 7, our artists demonstrated their unique and innovative processes; the photos here are from that event.

Examine the art closely, consider the undulating patterns of the marbling, the multitude of shapes within shapes in Nonnemacher’s creations. Let your imagination journey through this kaleidoscope. We hope this exhibit sparks many conversations about creativity. The exhibition will run through June 30. Be sure to view the pieces in the Eliot Wing West Hallway.





Pitter-Pattering Questions

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

Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation

Perhaps you have paused and wondered about these idiomatic throwaways in our everyday exchange of pleasantries —

"Have a good day" or "It's all good" or

"Things good with your kids?" But what exactly makes for a *good* day? Is there a *good* way for our kids to be? Such familiar expressions convey meaning without explicit explanation because they draw upon shared assumptions about qualities that make for a good day or the good and well-being of our kids. Maybe a clean bill of health? Or a fair chance at college admissions? Or emotional safety and happiness? Whatever it may be — health, achievement, stability, fulfillment — the "good" serves as shorthand and signal for a moral ground we presume, that we are moral creatures feeling our way through the world for the good and well-lived life. A moral constitution of life, with a moral imaginary and narrative about what is valuable and worth pursuing, embedded in the sociocultural structures we have built.

But is the good in "Things good with your kids?" the same as the good in Cicero's "*summum bonum*" of ethical life, or the good in the Genesis account "And God saw that it was good," or the response from Jesus to a wealthy young up-and-comer "Why do you call me good?" Moral imaginations shift, and so too does our understanding of the good amid the proliferation of goods branded and marketed today for our children's good. But if pursuing the good is central to our ministry with children and youth, what are the consequences of confusing goods with the Good?

Perhaps the risk of forfeiting joy, deeper and stronger than sentiment as fragile as garden-variety happiness. The risk of chasing after counterfeits rather than true joy, often paradoxically present in the midst of struggle, conflict, and suffering. For joy is found in attending to the broad moral horizon of the Good, something greater than personal well-being, an excess beyond the self that envisions a broader human flourishing. The narrative of happiness mistakes goods for the Good, and its lack of deep narrative reveals its inability to bear the Good. Without a stronger grounding narrative, happiness too easily succumbs to being co-opted and twisted into tales of grievance and resentment. To be clear, happiness is not to be scorned or refused; we should welcome it. But when it becomes our moral horizon, it promises far more than it can actually deliver.

More than mood or sentiment or emotion, joy is born of a wider moral horizon beyond self-referential satisfaction, and grounded in a narrative of meaning and purpose wrought from attending to the Good. At its distinctive core, joy is a responsive state of exaltation and gratitude for what is beyond the self but alive to the soul. Joy traffics in transcendence, surprising us into a sacred story far beyond our imagining.

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



Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa

Director of Music Ministries

Unity's choirs pause their regular rehearsals during the summer months when we go from two worship services to a single one on Sunday morning.

However, the summer months are when most of the work is done to run the Music Ministry through the year. During these months, I work to plan out the music for the church year, order music scores, and learn most of the music. Music Ministry volunteers work to file away music scores, update choir lists, and prepare the music for the upcoming year. You will typically find me practicing late in the building, taking advantage of the cool summer nights to work at the keyboard or at my desk on the music featured throughout the year. Performing music requires hours of practice, getting a choir to sing a program requires rehearsal, and those rehearsals require hours of rehearsal planning... for me, most of this happens in the months of June, July, and August.

There's one more thing that is important for the music ministry during the summer: recruitment. It's tricky to jump into a choir in the middle of the church year, when they've already been rehearsing the music for a while. Many of the participants in Unity's music ministry sang at the church for the first time during a summer service, and enjoyed it so much that they continued to do it. It is an ideal time to dip your toes into the music ministry, and see if it's for you. That's why every worship service in August this year will feature a pick-up choir, where anyone can just show up and the music is rehearsed and learned the same morning of the worship service. We will meet in the Foote Room at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday in August, learn some music for the morning's service, and then head to the Sanctuary to sing.

Additionally, summer services are a great time to share your musical talents with the congregation. Do you play an instrument? Do you have a band or ensemble? Talk to me, and we'll find a way for the church community support and enjoy your musical talent!

A Musical Hangout with the Unity Band

An All Ages Music Concert & Sing-along Fundraiser

Sunday, June 1, 2025 at noon / \$10 at the door

At: Unity Church-Unitarian

The Unity Band is excited to play and sing for and WITH YOU, including favorites from our individual repertoires, and original songs.

Sing along lyrics provided.

Refreshments available.





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

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister
Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation
Laura Park, Executive Director
Mary Baremore, Chair, Board of Trustees

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Unity Church Ends Statements

We the people of Unity Church-Unitarian, grounded in a joyous vision of beloved community, within, among, and beyond ourselves,

- understand the interconnected roots of oppression and yoke ourselves to the demands, sacrifices, and hard work of antiracism, multiculturalism, and climate and economic justice;
- cultivate a multigenerational community of joy, care, and belonging, and evangelize love to meet the deep and abiding hunger in all of us;
- practice lifelong faith formation, grounded in Unitarian Universalist theology, that breaks us open and allows us to be transformed.

Chalice Camp

Camper openings available!

Week 1: July 7-11

Week 2: July 14-18

Chalice Camp is offered Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., for children and youth ages 5-13.

Campers going into 7th or 8th grade will be part of our senior camper program. If your child would like to serve as a camp counselor, please email nelson@unityunitarian.org.

Campers will explore Unitarian Universalism through varied and engaging activities, everything from puppet shows to field games. Campers will get to participate in traditional camp activities, arts and crafts and lots of outdoor play time.

Details and registration are online at unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp.



All Our Fullness

All Our Fullness (AOF) is an initiative to connect all of us at Unity Church more deeply by sharing our stories with each other. Find reflections from the congregation on the new AOF blog page at unityunitarian.org/all-our-fullness.

Please submit your thoughts and experiences about cultural identity, differences, and your dreams for beloved community using the online form at bit.ly/AllOurFullness.

