

## Transformation

*Congregations create sanctuaries where people can nurture and inspire each other — with results no one can predict. The stability of a religious institution is necessary for the instability that religious transformation brings. The need to balance both sides of this paradox — the transforming power of religion and the stabilizing power of organization — makes leading congregations a unique challenge.*

— Dan Hotchkiss

*... practice lifelong faith formation, grounded in Unitarian Universalist theology, that breaks us open and allows us to be transformed.*

— Unity Church Ends Statement

The purpose of Unitarian Universalism is transformation: transformation of ourselves, our communities, and our world. This is the literal last word of our end statements at Unity Church, but it is also an understanding embedded in Unitarian Universalist history and theology. A century ago, when Unitarian minister Lewis Fisher was asked what his faith stands for, he replied, “We do not stand at all, we move.” Our faith is constantly evolving, constantly pushing us to consider the next, deeper question, moving us closer toward a more just and peaceful world — the joyful vision of beloved community that opens our ends statements at Unity Church.

Transformation does not come without cost. Transformation requires change, and any meaningful change is a departure from what is. And if we are honest, many of us are attached to what is! I am comfortable with what is familiar. Knowing the ground I stand on is solid gives me the capacity and traction to be creative in other places. I (Oscar) wake up in the morning and go through mostly the same routine each day. I would be loath to transform that routine of working out, spiritual practice, time with my family, and caffeine, and I notice on days when it is different. Most of us live lives like this: we develop routines and practices that help us to move through our days with as little friction as possible, and we resist anything that disrupts those routines. The routines

are, in the irony that Dan Hotchkiss identifies, often what enables the work of transformation: I am a less effective change agent in the world when I have not been caffeinated in the way and at the time I expect.

But our attachment to the status quo, and our resistance to change, is deeper than simple familiarity. Often, for Unitarian Universalists in 2026, we have an at-best-complicated relationship with the systems we participate in. Twentieth century philosopher John Rawls created a thought experiment in 1971 that goes like this: imagine you were creating a society from scratch. But critically, you do not know what position in that society you will hold, in what Rawls called a “veil of ignorance.” What systems of justice, equity, and economic fairness do you put in place? How would it look different than the society we live in today?

Many of us exist in this world with unearned privilege that has shaped our lives. That can mean economic stability, choice of where to live or what work to do, how we interact with the people around us and what we do for fun. We do not live in a system created by a Rawls's thought experiment, but one that has often privileged opportunities for people that look and sound like us. The transformational imperative is uncomfortable: we can see both that the system is unfair and transformation is necessary, and that

we are embedded in the system and our comforts might (will) change in that necessary transformation. Holding both those truths requires a kind of “double consciousness” of the privileged. I want a more just economic system, and I regularly contribute to a 401(k). Unity Church is exploring both our embeddedness in the system of racial capitalism and the need to grow our endowment to ensure the long-term financial well-being of the congregation.

The linchpin of this seeming contradiction is there in our ends statements. The thing that allows both transformation and stability is lifelong faith formation; spiritual practices, done over time, that grow our capacity for complexity, help us to let go of our unhealthy attachments, and learn through practice and repetition that the easy answers are often the wrong answers. The practice of church, an institution that has endured over generations and is embedded in our lives, is what gives us the capacity and traction for transforming ourselves, our community, and the world.

*Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair  
on behalf of this month's theme team*

### Theme Resources

Further reflection on the theme:  
[unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles](https://unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles).

# JUST WORDS



## Just Words

**Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister**

Every June, delegates from across the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) gather at our annual General Assembly, to vote on the business of the denomination, and consider who we are and where we are going, together. Just as our congregations are democratically governed, so is our national organization, and the debates, while sometimes heated, are a chance to practice congregational polity — listening for the voice of the divine that emerges from a group of people discerning together.

This year will be a different kind of General Assembly for me. Last October, I was appointed to serve the remainder of Bill Young's term on the UUA's Board of Trustees, which means two things this June: first, I am polishing up my understanding of parliamentary procedure, as a back up board member available to moderate business debates. Second, I am on the ballot for election to a full three-year term on the UUA Board.

Unity Church has a long history of ministers serving the denomination: Rob Eller-Issacs served on the UUA Board, Arthur Foote edited the 1964 hymnal, Frederick May Eliot chaired the Commission on Appraisal before becoming president of the American Unitarian Association in 1937. Their service is a reminder for me that we are not isolated, here in Saint Paul, but that we are a part of a larger movement.

General Assembly this year will follow a different format than in previous years. Rather than a single, continuous in-person gathering, there are [two blocks of programming](#). From Sunday, June 14 to Tuesday, June 16, we will gather online for a business meeting, including budget hearings, discussions of business resolutions and bylaw amendments, and our congregational study/action issue of abolition. Following that, we will gather for the worship and programming pieces of General Assembly from Friday, June 19, through Sunday, June 21. This piece will also be primarily online, though I will be in Louisville, where we are recording and broadcasting from a central location. At Unity Church, our congregation will be gathering with Unitarian Universalists from across the Twin Cities for a joint viewing of General Assembly worship on Sunday, June 21, at the Riverview Theater in Minneapolis.

I love serving Unity Church — wrapping up my second year here I see the Unitarian Universalism that I've long wanted to be a part of, where we talk about spiritual practices and ground our social action in our theology, expressed in our work together in Saint Paul. It is work that I am glad to be a part of, and glad to bring to the broader UUA conversation through board service.

## Stay Connected

**commUNITY** is the monthly newsletter of Unity Church. Deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to the month of publication. Subscriptions to this monthly newsletter and our weekly e-news are available by contacting Martha at [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org).

Access all the hyperlinks in the newsletter with this QR code.



## Planned Giving + Matching Fund

Planned gifts help ensure that Unity Church is thriving long into the future, sustained by the generosity of those who came before. These legacy gifts — of all sizes — reflect a deep commitment to our culture of generosity and help ensure that Unity's mission continues for generations to come.

There's a special reason to establish a planned gift now: Two generous church members have created a matching fund specifically to inspire others to make a planned gift — to take that step of naming Unity Church in their will, estate plan, or beneficiary designations. The spirit behind it is simple: When we live from a place of abundance and trust in what lies ahead, our generosity has a way of multiplying.

Planned giving is open to everyone. If you're considering a legacy gift or want to know more about the matching grant, email Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).



**UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JUNE 14 - 21, 2026**

**MEET THE MOMENT: TOGETHER EVERYWHERE**

## General Assembly Sunday Service

On Sunday, June 21, the congregation of Unity Church will join Unitarian Universalists from across the metro at the Riverview Theater for General Assembly's Sunday worship service at 10:00 a.m. (singing begins at 9:30!).

# SUNDAY SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

## 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 7: *The Transformed, Transforming Church***  
**Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair | Betsy Hearn, Worship Associate**

Dan Hotchkiss reminds us that churches are transformational institutions. As we reflect on the church year in Saint Paul, what are the ways participation in Unity Church has changed us, and how has the church itself been transformed?

**June 14: *Real Transformation***  
**Sarah Cledwyn | Veronica Nordeng DeVillez**

What does it mean to transform ourselves or our ways of being? What factors support such complete change from one thing to another? These are questions that have fueled spiritual seeking, activism, institutions and our own personal lives. Everyone who has tried to change a deeply held habit will know there's more to changemaking and transformation than making a simple decision. Come explore the ways of change, the realities of life and our practice of evolution and growth.

**June 21: *General Assembly Worship***  
**Rev. Jen Youngsun Ryu, Worship Leader**  
**Broadcast from the Riverview Theater | 10:00 a.m. CDT**

Join Unitarian Universalists from across the Twin Cities metro area for a joint General Assembly worship service, broadcast from Louisville, KY, at 10:00 a.m. CDT, at the Riverview Theater in Minneapolis (singing begins at 9:30!). Sunday morning worship is the heart of General Assembly, drawing our entire national community together in shared spirit. Through music, preaching, and ritual, we will ground ourselves in our Unitarian Universalist faith and be renewed for the work of justice, compassion, and community in the world. There will be no Sunday service at Unity Church on June 21.

**June 28: *Type II Fun***  
**Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair**

Athletes and adventurers sometimes talk about "type II fun:" activities that are challenging or unpleasant in the moment, but that we remember fondly and seek out. What is the relationship between challenge and enjoyment in how we grow?

## Merging of Waters Sunday, September 13

Reminder to collect water this summer for our annual Merging of Waters ritual of reunion in September.

## 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](http://bit.ly/sundayoffering).

**June 7**  
[Freedom School](#), held each summer in the Rondo Education complex in St. Paul, is a free, six-week program for students in grades K-8. Freedom School provides nutritious meals, addresses learning gaps in reading and math, and deepens connection through lessons in community and personal responsibility, music, field trips, and fun. This collection will buy books given to the scholars to use at Freedom School and keep after school ends.

**June 14**  
For more than 15 years, Unity Church members have volunteered a week or two of home construction with [Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity](#). The congregation has done this in cooperation with other local churches under the name of Faith Builders. Last year, 21 people from Unity Church provided 32 labor days for this project. Habitat asks each volunteer team for a financial contribution to help pay for supplies and professional labor, beyond what is already donated. Faith Builders has provided \$5,000 to \$10,000 per work week and this collection will be part of this donation.

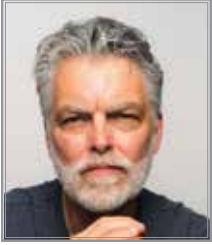
**June 21**  
[General Assembly worship service](#) offering recipient.

**June 28**  
[Unity's Gun Violence Prevention Community Outreach Ministry Team](#) partners with Protect Minnesota, a coalition of 16 statewide groups committed to working together to prevent gun violence that affects all Minnesotans regardless of age, gender identity, race, ability, or locale. In addition to education efforts, this collection will support the work of advocating for responsible gun control legislation, including the ban on assault weapons and large capacity magazines.

## Join the Welcome Team

The Welcome Team is expanding! Every Sunday, we greet new visitors and old friends, help individuals navigate the building, usher, collect the offering, and more. As our weekly numbers grow, more team members will help us greet at additional entrances and provide more guidance to newcomers. If you are interested in joining the Welcome Team, or in trying a shadowing shift, email Philippa at [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) or simply find her 20-30 minutes before a Sunday service!

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES



## Transformation, Being Broken Open, and Beloved Community

Taylor Burr, Trustee

When the topic of transformation came up for the board newsletter this month,

I immediately felt drawn to it.

Transformation is such a large idea, and at Unity Church it seems to be happening everywhere all at once.

For me personally, putting myself forward as a candidate for the board was part of a larger transformation in my own life. There was vulnerability in it. One of the surprising things for me has been just how transformational serving on the board has already been in such a short period of time. I have found myself deeply grateful for the opportunity to work alongside fellow trustees, our Executive Team, and our congregation more broadly. The care, thoughtfulness, honesty, and commitment people bring to this work have already changed me in meaningful ways.

Serving on the board, I have spent more time reflecting on Unity's Ends Statements and one line in particular continues to stay with me:

*We practice lifelong faith formation, grounded in Unitarian Universalist theology, that breaks us open and allows us to be transformed.*

"Breaks us open" is profound language. It implies humility, growth, spiritual expansion, and the recognition that transformation is not always something we neatly choose or control. When life breaks us open, it can allow for transformation to follow.

In a recent conversation with fellow board member Jane Prince, we reflected on how transformational the last several years have been for our community, our city, and our congregation. We talked about the aftermath of George Floyd's murder and the ways our communities responded during COVID and the ICE surge when mutual aid, compassion,

care and resourcefulness often rose above all else as people showed up for one another.

Jane also shared how deeply moved she was by our music ministry's recent performance of *Considering Matthew Shepard*. Listening to her reflect on that experience stayed with me. The beauty, grief, heartbreak, and humanity present in that space were impossible to ignore. It felt like a reminder that clarity often happens through relationship, listening, storytelling, and being willing to truly see one another.

Our ends statements speak of moving from isolation to belonging, from fragmentation to connection, and from passive concern to active responsibility. They challenge us to "yoke ourselves" to the work of antiracism, multiculturalism, climate justice, and economic justice. That language implies shared accountability, relationship, commitment and burden.

At the same time, Unity balances this "beyond" work with deep attention to spiritual practice and formation. Over the years, many ministers, teachers, mentors, and members of this congregation have encouraged us not only to grow personally and collectively, but to carry those practices into the world together.

I have experienced that impact from our community within my own family. All of us have grown tremendously. Last week, my oldest son, Caswell, graduated with his Master of Divinity degree from United Theological Seminary. His journey began early within this congregation and was shaped by the guidance, mentorship, love and care of many people at Unity including Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs, Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs, Drew Danielson, Rev. KP Hong, Rev. Danny Givens, Rev. Shay MacKay, Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Nelson Moroukian, and many others within and beyond the congregation.

This church has been a place of refuge, growth, questioning, care, challenge, and transformation for us through joyful moments and painful ones alike. I know many others in this community would say the same.

One of the things I continue to appreciate at Unity is that we are willing to ask difficult questions together:

- Does this ministry support our Ends?
- Do our actions reflect our values?
- Do our structures help transformation occur?
- How do we move closer to beloved community within, among, and beyond ourselves?

Transformation is not static. It happens in worship, music, service, justice work, conversations, grief, friendship, mutual aid, and community. Spiritual practice supports it. It happens when we allow ourselves to remain open — to one another, to the world around us, and to the possibility that together we are still becoming.

And for that, I am deeply grateful.

### State of the Church Congregational Gathering

Saturday, June 6 | 10:00 a.m.

Sanctuary

We've had a full programmatic year to explore our new ends together, to deepen our understanding of the transformation they are calling for: within us as individuals, among us in congregational community, and beyond the church walls in the world. Join the Executive Team for a presentation and conversation about the year-end state of the church that will inform our approach to the next program year.

# WELCOME NEWCOMERS



## Welcome Words

**Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant**

Many of our usual programs take a break over the summer, allowing us to evaluate how things went and what we might change for the next program year. This year, what is at the front

of my mind for this process is how the *community* has transformed in the past year. We have all watched one another grow in courage and conviction, as well as in our ties to the broader Twin Cities and national communities. Our programs for next year must rise to meet that new standard, and that is the best kind of challenge.

## Finding Yourself at Unity

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

**Summer Sundays | 11:15 a.m. | Center Room**

**Drop-ins welcome | Childcare available in the nursery**

Join the repeating five-session cycle at any time. Attend the sessions in any order, which include Faith Formation for Children, Youth, and Adults; Congregational and Pastoral Care; Q&A with a Minister; Social Justice and Community Outreach; and Membership 101 and Congregational Life. Weekly church emails include the session topic or find the session schedule at the Welcome Table in the main lobby or in Parish Hall, or email [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) to receive Saturday morning email reminders.

June 7: Q&A with the Minister

June 14: Pastoral Care

June 21: No session (General Assembly service at the Riverview Theater)

June 28: Social Justice & Community Outreach

## Summer Lectio Divina

**Wednesdays | June 10, July 8, August 12**

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.

## Join us for a St. Paul Saints Game

A baseball game makes the perfect summer outing — so save the date and join us on Friday, August 28, as we cheer on the St. Paul Saints! Tickets are \$22 each. Contact Philippa Anastos at [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) to reserve tickets.



## Fellowship Groups

Email Philippa at [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) to learn more and get connected.

**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

**Food Ministry:** Help prepare a meal, set-up and serve coffee on a Sunday morning, or share in one of the many kitchen tasks that contribute to our community connection. Contact Heidi Birkholz at [heidi@unityunitarian.org](mailto:heidi@unityunitarian.org).

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

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

**Men's Conversation Group:** Monday, June 8 and 22, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Zoom. Discuss a range of topics.

**Men's Retirement Circle:** Monday, June 1, 15, and 29, 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

**Sangha Practice:** Tuesdays, 4:30-6:00 p.m., Ames Chapel. This group is open to anyone interested, no experience is necessary, instructions provided. Email [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org) to join the practice.

**The Singing Resistance:** Thursdays, June 4, 6:30-7:15 p.m., Parish Hall. Learn songs of hope and resilience to sing with the larger Singing Resistance of the Twin Cities. After June 4 this group will take a break until September.

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

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

June 9: *The Secret Life of Sunflowers* by Marta Molnar.

July 14: *An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s* by Doris Kearns Goodwin

**Women's Coffee Circle:** first and third Saturday of each month (June 6 and 20), 10:00-11:30 a.m., Center Room

**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. Email Rev. KP at [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org) to be added to the email list.

# BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

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## Interconnected Roots of Oppression: Deepening Understanding, Broadening Solutions

LauraSue Schlatter, Beloved Community Communications Team

Over six weeks this winter, Unity's Executive Team and Beloved Community Staff Team, with assistance from the Racial Justice Team, hosted a series of evenings during which the congregation was invited to learn more about the meanings of Foundations of Racial Capitalism; Land, Ownership, and Housing Justice; Borders, Policing, and the Politics of Belonging; Finance, Debt, and the Cost of Inequality; Universal Care and the Struggle for Collective Well Being; and Fossil Capitalism and Imagining New Futures. All of this was set in the context of racial capitalism, illustrated with real-life stories presented by members of our extended community. Attendees were asked to reflect on their own experiences or their observations of these relationships in the community, to more clearly understand how oppression is interconnected and deeply rooted in our society. The series was very well and consistently attended. People saw the necessity for action beyond discussion. The context of the winter ICE surge more dramatically highlighted the urgency.

Meanwhile, the Indigenous Justice Community Outreach Team, along with the Act for the Earth and Racial Justice Community Outreach Teams, were moving along a different, but interconnected path, exploring the possibility of bringing Indigenous scholar and speaker Mark Charles to present for a day at Unity Church. Writing in his blog on Memorial Day 2019, Charles named Memorial Day as the most difficult National Holiday for him as a Native person. According to the U.S. Army Center of Military History website<sup>1</sup>, he pointed out, "[o]ver 12% of the total 3,515 Medals of Honor awarded were given to soldiers who fought against the indigenous peoples of this land!"<sup>2</sup>

Charles continues, "George Erasmus, a wise leader from the Dene Nation, in a press release titled 'From Truth to Reconciliation Transforming the Legacy of Residential Schools' wrote 'Where common memory is lacking, where people do not share in the same past, there can be no real community. Where community is to be formed, common memory must be created.'"

Mark Charles concludes that, because white people and people of color, including but not limited to Indigenous people and African Americans, do not share a common memory, this country has a very limited sense of community. That is why it is so urgent that we learn, we understand, where our Indigenous neighbors come from, so we can begin to have a glimpse of their common memories. The memories of our African American neighbors, the descendants of people who were enslaved, are different from those who are Indigenous and whose forbears were here before white people arrived.

The Indigenous Justice Team has walked a different path to bring teachings to us because they have different, but equally important lessons for us. The image I see is the trails leading to the convergence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers, the B'dote, the sacred place from which all life springs, according to many of the Indigenous people who made this place their home long before colonization. The strands of stories come together at that point, and the interconnection of histories, of oppressions, of memories, helps to build a larger, Beloved Community. We hope to see you at the Mark Charles event on June 27.

<sup>1</sup><https://history.army.mil/About-CMH/>

<sup>2</sup><https://wirelesshogan.blogspot.com/>



Mark R. Charles at Unity Church

Saturday, June 27

9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Parish Hall and Zoom

[Please register by June 20.](#)



Scan to register!



# MARK R. CHARLES AT UNITY CHURCH

## Unity Church to Host Mark R. Charles: Dine/Navajo Scholar, Author, and Activist

Rebecca Gonzalez Campoy and Teresa Connor, Indigenous Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team

Unity's Indigenous Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team joins with the Act for the Earth and the Racial Justice Community Outreach Ministry Teams, and the Board of Trustees Subcommittee for Reparations to host an interactive conversation with Mark Charles on the Doctrine of Discovery, decolonizing faith, and decolonizing health and food systems. This event is made possible with sponsorship from members of Minnesota Repair Communities for Makoce Ikkicupi and generous contributions from members of Unity Church and funds provided by the Community Outreach Project Fund that encourages cross-team initiatives and shared projects among the church's community outreach ministry teams.

[Mark Charles](#) is a Native American activist, public speaker, author, and former independent U.S. presidential candidate known for confronting systemic racism and the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery. A dual citizen of the U.S. and Navajo Nation, he has served as a journalist, pastor, and consultant, advocating for truth-telling, and reconciliation. Charles co-authored *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery* with Soong-Chan Rah. The book is available for purchase at the [Unity Bookstall](#).

Mark Charles offers a thoughtful and timely response to our current environment of political chaos and social exhaustion. As the grandson of boarding school survivors, Mark invites participants to look past binary partisan blame toward the deeper challenges embedded within our nation's political and religious foundations. His presentations begin with the "unsettling truths" of our history and move toward "interrogating faith" and "decolonizing health." By utilizing the Doctrine of Discovery as a historical lens, he explores how this framework has shaped our chaotic political environment, divisive

religious narratives, and the colonized, processed food systems of today. Drawing upon these common threads, Mark seeks to create a "common memory" and call our nation to Truth and Conciliation as we learn (from our Indigenous hosts) how to *Walk in Beauty* together.

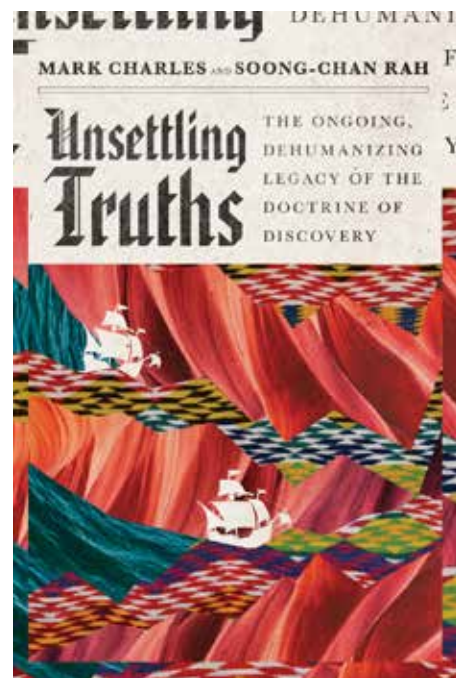
This event builds upon Unity's [first Ends Statement](#): "understand the interconnected roots of oppression and yoke ourselves to the demands, sacrifices, and hard work of antiracism, multiculturalism, and climate and economic justice." The working group hosting this event intends for Mark Charles's presentation to build upon ongoing reparative and social justice ministry work at Unity Church and support the work of the community outreach ministry teams and their community partners.

- The [Indigenous Justice Team](#)'s vision is to "advance the efforts of Minnesota Indigenous tribal nations to preserve their language, culture, and spiritual life and to restore broken treaties."
- The [Act for the Earth Team](#) works to "stop climate change, species extinction, and environmental injustice by practical and systemic solutions while grounding this work in our own spiritual and antiracist/justice stance."
- The [Racial Justice Team](#) seeks to "dismantle white dominant culture by expanding our individual and congregational capacity to center relationship and love as foundational to our work in the world."
- The [Board of Trustees](#) Reparations Subcommittee expands the role of our church in repairing our broken world through reparations.

**The event will be held on Saturday, June 27, from 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., in Parish Hall and on Zoom. [Please register by June 20.](#)**

The day will begin at 9:30 a.m. with a welcome gathering. Mark will present on the Doctrine of Discovery and Decolonizing Faith in the morning. Lunch will be provided from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. The afternoon session will focus on Decolonizing Health and Food Systems. Question and answer sessions will follow each presentation, with an extended time following the afternoon session for questions on any of the talks, with the day concluding by 4:00 p.m.

This event will be held free of charge and lunch will be provided. A suggested financial contribution of \$15 towards the cost of lunch will be gratefully accepted. Everyone is welcome regardless of ability to pay. For more information, [see the registration form](#) or contact Teresa Connor at [termarjoan@gmail.com](mailto:termarjoan@gmail.com). Email Katrina Nichols at [katrina@unityunitarian.org](mailto:katrina@unityunitarian.org) to request childcare by June 20.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRIES

## Housing Justice Team

### *Rev. Rachel McIver Morey Shares Gratitude with Unity Church*

On Sunday, May 17, Rev. Rachel McIver Morey, Director of Community Interfaith Engagement for Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul, visited with church members during Sunday coffee hour to thank the congregation, including the Housing Justice Team and Evergreen Quilters, for their generous support of Project Home over the past year. Late last summer, Project Home families moved from Provincial House in St. Paul to a reopened space previously known as the Best Western Plus Como Park Hotel at 1010 Bandana Blvd West, St. Paul. When the new space is fully open, it will double the previous capacity for families needing emergency shelter and include greater privacy, a children's library, an indoor playground, family and permanent housing support, and more. More rooms will open after the new kitchen is installed in the fall and additional staff is hired.



Our congregation has generously supported Project Home this year in many ways. Our community stepped up and donated many carloads of household items that will be shared with families as they move to more permanent housing. Church members helped open a library filled with wonderful new children's books. Volunteers will continue to help drive lunches to the new location until the new kitchen is installed, and many others have been available to help at the front desk and with clothing drives and special events such as the upcoming end of the school year party for children. Watch for more volunteer opportunities each month and join the work — and joy — of serving families in our community.

**Habitat for Humanity: Volunteer this Summer!** Each summer, Unity's Housing Justice Team co-sponsors a Habitat for Humanity home construction work week. Join the remodel of an existing house this year, July 13-17, in Roseville. [Sign up today](#) or in Parish Hall after Sunday services in June. All skill levels are needed. You can volunteer for one day or multiple days. We hope you will join us! Questions? Email Chuck Griggs at [griggsccb@msn.com](mailto:griggsccb@msn.com).

**Check Out our Housing Justice Team!** Curious about what we do? Want to see evidence-based solutions to the housing crisis? Check out one of our meetings on the second Tuesday of each month from 4:30-5:30 p.m. Email [lauren.b.gunderson@gmail.com](mailto:lauren.b.gunderson@gmail.com) for the Zoom link.

## Obama School Team

As we near the end of the school year, we thank the 40-plus Unity Church members and friends who have volunteered at Obama Montessori Elementary and Middle Schools this year. Shelving books in the library, or listening to children read, or distributing food packs on Fridays — all has been appreciated. That number doesn't count the many people who supported the school in other ways — the corner monitors before and after school, the church staff, those who contributed to the Sunday collections, and more. Thanks to everyone for helping us build a strong relationship with the school community in their first year in the building across the street from the church.

We also recognize Diane Grasse, who has served on the Obama School Outreach Ministry Leadership Team since the fall of 2021 and prior to that, volunteered in the classroom. Diane took charge of our teacher appreciation events over several years, and her creativity in developing a theme for each event and carrying it through will be missed.

As we look ahead to next fall, we are welcoming some new members to our leadership team and thinking how we can deepen our service. Think about joining us! The school staff appreciate our help, and we enjoy seeing the children grow and learn.

## Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf and Clothing Closet

Thank you for your support! During the month of April the church donated 400 pounds of food — and hundreds of paper grocery bags — to Hallie Q. Brown. Clean and lightly used cloth grocery bags are also acceptable for donation. During June, the food shelf needs sunscreen, toilet paper, paper towels, aluminum foil, window cleaner, oven cleaner, disinfectant spray and nonperishable food. Please, no expired food. Financial contributions are gratefully accepted online at [hallieqbrown.charityproud.org/donate](http://hallieqbrown.charityproud.org/donate).

In addition to the food shelf, Hallie Q. Brown, has a clothing closet and seeks donations of new or gently used clothing and shoes (for people of all genders and ages) as well as new undergarments for children of all ages. All items must be clean and in good condition. Drop-off at Hallie Q. Brown (270 N. Kent Street, St. Paul), Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## In the Justice Database

[Indivisible Twin Cities](#) is grassroots group of volunteers dedicated to increasing civic engagement and education on progressive policies. Sign up for the Action Newsletter to stay informed on actions in the Twin Cities.





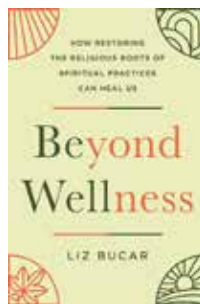
## The Lazy Days of Summer (But Not for the Bookstall or Library)

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

There is always something new and fascinating in the Bookstall, which will be open all summer after the morning service. Stop by for a look at these titles:

***Beyond Wellness: How Restoring the Religious Roots of Spiritual Practices Can Heal Us*** by Liz Bucar. Tarcher, April 2026.

Bucar embarks on a quest to get to the heart of “spiritual but not religious” activities to understand, experience, dig deeper, and simply get more out of our spiritual practices.



***The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to Dismantle Systems of Oppression to Protect People + Planet*** by Leah Thompson.

From the 2022 TIME100 Next honoree and activist, this book is simultaneously a call to action, a guide to instigating change for all, and a pledge to work towards the empowerment of all people and the betterment of the planet. Don’t let the long and scholarly title turn you away — if you care about the world, this book is for you.

Last month, Rev. Amy Brunell gave a sermon mentioning several titles on spiritual practice and nature. One title that we ordered for the Anderson Library specifically for this didn’t come in on time but is in the library now, and it is quite amazing! [Morning](#)



[Altars: A 7-Step Practice to Nourish Your Spirit through Nature, Art, and Ritual](#) by Day Schildkret. Full of photos of colorful mandalas that combine nature, art, and meditation, the author offers a peaceful and creative avenue to express gratitude for nature, practice mindfulness, encourage well-being, and add meaning to daily life through incorporating the natural world into the everyday.

And if, for some unavoidable or inextricable reason, you missed Café Unity in May, don’t despair! Thanks to our technically gifted and superb staff members Heidi Birkholz and Martha Tilton, [the recording is available on Unity’s YouTube Channel](#).

## Decoding the Dragon

Archives Team: Pauline Eichten, Aubrey Lodahl, Louise Merriam, Betsy Moore, Deb Woodburn

When the Unity Archives Team stumbled across some snapshots featuring children carrying the head and body of a Chinese dragon in the Sanctuary of Unity Church, we wanted to learn more.

It appears that the dragon resulted from the intersection of the Religious Education program with a visit to a local restaurant. Recent conversations with people who helped develop the program in the 1970s and 1980s revealed that the dragon was part of the World Religions segment of the curriculum. However, the initial idea for the dragon came from a visit by longtime Unity Church members Laurel and Eric Lein to a Chinese restaurant on Grand Avenue with a neon dragon sign.



Laurel was part of a parent group working on the curriculum. When she ate at the restaurant, that group was focused on the World Religions portion for first and second graders.

As they discussed incorporating Chinese religions, Laurel remembered the neon dragon on Grand Avenue and thought it could become the basis for an activity.

The result was a long cloth dragon with a papier mache head. The body of the beast was red and green cloth supported by hula hoops cut in half. Because the curriculum operated in two-year rotations, the dragon appeared every two years. During Chinese New Year, students supported the head and body from inside the dragon and carried it around the church. Otherwise, the dragon was stored in a lower-level closet in the Eliot Wing.



If you were involved with the dragon in some way as a child, parent or teacher, we would like to hear from you. Please send your thoughts to [archives@unityunitarian.org](mailto:archives@unityunitarian.org).

Thanks to Nancy Heege, Suzanne Kosanke, and Laurel Lein for sharing their memories of the dragon.



## Pitter-Pattering Questions

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

**Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation**

*Once Zhuangzi dreamt he was a butterfly, flitting and fluttering around happily with no awareness of being Zhuangzi. Suddenly he awoke and there he was, solid and unmistakably Zhuangzi. He wondered if he was Zhuangzi who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming it was Zhuangzi.*

— from Zhuangzi, 4th century BCE

The Daoist sage Zhuangzi and his butterfly dream continues to fascinate us, shimmering in that slippery place between waking and dreaming. Are we awake or only dreaming that we are awake? What is real and what is illusion? More than two decades ago, neuroscientists Rodolfo Llinás and Denis Paré proposed a model of human consciousness as actively engaged in constructing the world. When we are awake, this construction relies more on *external* sensory information. When we are asleep and dreaming, it relies more on *internal* sources like memories and expectations. The sources differ, but the fundamental dynamic is the same: *dreaming* is perception without external sensory input, and *perception* is dreaming with external sensory input. In both cases, the brain creates an image of what is real from the interplay of embodiment, sensation, and cognition.

More practically, consider the parents of a six-year-old boy who lost his stuffed dog at a picnic site. It was worrisome to see how anxious and preoccupied their son was at the thought of his dog “waiting” for their return. Having an empathetic child is one thing, but the extent of their child’s worry about his imaginary friend seemed excessive for a boy his age. Did their son understand the distinction between fantasy and reality? Are children’s relationships with their imaginary friends as innocent or healthy as we believe?

But in psychologist Marjorie Taylor’s seminal research into children’s imaginary companions, children as young as three and four years of age were remarkably sophisticated in

distinguishing “real” from “pretend.” When asked to sort objects into real and not-real boxes, these children were 75% correct, putting ghosts and monsters in the “make-believe” box and dogs and houses in the “real-life” box. By five and six years of age, children moved fluidly in and out of imaginary roles. One child corrected another — “No, you’re not doing the dragon right!” — then smiled at the researcher to clarify that it was, of course, only a pretend dragon. And yet these children ordinarily adept at distinguishing “butterfly” from “Zhuangzi” believed in Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy. From these apparent contradictions, Taylor theorized that there were different kinds of imaginary/real distinctions, requiring different insights and developmental tasks. Santa Claus was a different kind of imaginary from the princess who could fly. And what seemed to make the crucial difference was whether children had *creative control*. Cultural myths and stories of Santa Claus came ready-made — fixed, inherited, unquestionable. Imaginary companions, by contrast, only came alive through children’s creative participation. When children had creative control, they more often knew exactly what was real and what was not.

Beyond Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy, what creative control do, or will, our children have with social imaginaries like *The American Dream* or *The Free Market Economy* or *The Melting Pot*? Or what about *The Beloved Community* and *There Are No Other People’s Children*? Do we as adults know what is real and what is delusion? Are we awake or dreaming? And most importantly, how are we

equipping our children to stay awake, critique, reimagine, and transform the imaginary that is our collapsing world? What prophetic imagination, what creative control, will allow them to awaken inside empire’s dream and imagine revolution?

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



## Chalice Camp

**Week 1: July 6–10**

**Nature, Food, and Land**

Exploring our relationship with the natural world, where our food comes from, and how we care for the land around us.

**Week 2: July 13–17**

**Stories, Myths, and Music**

Diving into the power of storytelling, the wisdom in myths and traditions, and the way music connects us to stories told across cultures and communities.

Chalice Camp runs Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., providing a full day of activities for children and youth ages 5–13.

Details and registration, including opportunities for older youth to serve as senior campers and counselors are available online at [unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp](http://unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp).



## Music Notes

**Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries**

One of the things I value most about the Music Ministry at Unity Church is that it is not built around enforcing a particular musical taste or protecting a rigid idea of what church music is supposed to look or sound like. I think there is sometimes an assumption that the role of a music ministry is to act as a kind of cultural gatekeeper: to determine what styles are acceptable,

what kinds of musical participation are worthy, or who is qualified to contribute. And there is also the assumption that my role as the Director of Music Ministries is to run it all, to ensure excellence and to play the role of quality control.

This couldn't be further from the truth! My understanding of the Music Ministry at Unity Church is that it should function first and foremost as a creative home for the musical passions and gifts already present within this community. The goal is not simply to present polished performances on Sunday mornings, though that is certainly where my particular expertise lies and where I feel most comfortable. The real goal is to create conditions where people can imagine new possibilities together, bring their ideas into reality, and use music as a way of building connection, care, and belonging. In a congregation and a faith such as this one, music is foremost a spiritual practice. The practice of it is the whole point, it is not a product for consumption but an expression of our most vulnerable, authentic selves.

Over the last few years, we have seen remarkable examples of this happening organically within our congregation, wonderful musical offerings have emerged and continue to thrive with minimal direct input from me. Threshold Choir began as a suggestion from Janne Eller-Isaacs: What if we created a group that could bring singing to bedsides and hospices? That small idea has grown into the official Twin Cities Chapter of Threshold Choir, housed at Unity Church and now serving people throughout the community through compassionate bedside singing. The group is run entirely by Michelle Blaeser and Barbara Hubbard, and much of its membership now comes from outside the congregation. Unity's Band emerged like this as well. What began as occasionally adding a drums set to our Sunday mornings and collaborations with friends from the local band Barrel Flash slowly evolved into a regular ensemble that now plays monthly in worship services. The group explores an enormous variety of musical styles and is led almost entirely by Ross Johnson and Julia Brown, whose creativity and energy have helped shape it into something vibrant and joyful. Our Resistance Singers, now thriving and active in the community, began largely through the initiative and leadership of Unity Choir alto Meg Tietz. The Pavilion Singers started simply as a few women from the Unity Singers gathering to sing together at a local park. They now share music regularly in worship, offering songs like "The Parting Glass" and "We Shall Be Known" with warmth and beauty.

There are so many examples like this, and what connects them is that none of them originated as top-down institutional programs. They began because someone cared about something deeply enough to invite others into it. That kind of creative ownership is precious. It transforms music ministry from something people consume into something they actively shape together. It is also an enormously satisfying part of my job, to help folks bring their ideas to life, work with them for a while to get them going, and then step back and watching it thrive.

So if you have an idea, bring it forward. The summer months are the perfect times for this. Do you wish we had drumming circles at Unity Church? A barbershop quartet? A shape-note singing group? Make it happen. I want to help. The door is wide open.

## Planting Seeds of Justice

*Pink Haven Coalition*

**Krista Finstad Hanson**

**UUSC Partner Team**

The Unity Church UUSC Partner Team is working to deepen a connection between



Unity Church and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). Those wanting to support the work of the UUSC are welcome to donate and become members of the UUSC!

In fiscal year 2025, nearly 14,000 unique donors contributed to the UUSC to support their 119 grassroots partners. The UUSC shared \$3.2 million dollars in grant funding in fiscal year 2025.

According to the UUSC's website, this funding supports "growing movements and weaving networks of care, one partnership at a time. UUSC collaborates with changemakers worldwide, funding initiatives that make a true difference in the lives of people facing oppression."

In honor of LGBTQIA+ Pride month, this column focuses on the UUSC's work with Pink Haven Coalition.

The following comes from the UUSC's website:

"UUSC supports the [Pink Haven Coalition](#) — a collaborative, trans-led effort with kindred UU organizations and other people of conscience to advance trans liberation and oppose fascism now.

This Coalition works to create networks of care and safety for trans people and their families in the United States who need to flee to more welcoming locations to access healthcare and services or stay as safe as possible where they are."

[UUSC's website has two blog posts](#) for those wanting to learn more.



# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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

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## State of the Church Congregational Gathering

Saturday, June 6  
10:00 a.m.  
Sanctuary

We've had a full programmatic year to explore our new ends together and to deepen our understanding of the transformation they are calling for. What changes have we seen so far, in ourselves and in the church's ministry? What might we pursue next year to further advance the ends? Join the Executive Team for a presentation and conversation that will inform our approach to the next program year.



## *Singing with Love*

**Celebrating 20 Years of Music  
Ministry with Unity Singers**

**Sunday, June 7 | 7:00 PM**  
Sanctuary | [Livestream](#)

Unity Singers is offering this concert as a thank you to Unity Church for the honor and joy of participating in its music ministry.

The music will feature selections that have been significant in the Singers' history, and meaningful to the congregation. A free will offering will be collected to benefit Walker | West Music Academy.



## Red Cross Blood Drive

Monday, June 15  
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
Parish Hall

To schedule a donation appointment please visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

### *Volunteers Needed*

We are looking for three volunteers to check in donors and monitor the canteen during our blood drive on Monday, June 15. Available shifts are 8:30-11:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., and 1:00-3:00 p.m. If you want to volunteer, email Heidi Birkholz at [heidi@unityunitarian.org](mailto:heidi@unityunitarian.org).

