

Suffering

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

In the Cold War-era comedy “Romanoff & Juliet,” which was both a Broadway play and a movie, there’s a young Soviet naval officer who falls for an American woman and agonizes over the diplomatic predicament his heart has created. In a moment of particularly high angst, he declares to another character, “You have never suffered!” And the laid-back character responds: “No, and I don’t intend to.”

That brief bit of dialogue has stayed with me since I first heard it decades ago because it shows two very different approaches to personal suffering: suffering as core to identity, and suffering as something other people do.

Are we all born to suffer?

Buddhism would say yes. The Four Noble Truths affirm that suffering is a part of life, and that desire is the source of suffering. The Eightfold Path leads away from suffering, through methods such as Right Action and Right Mindfulness. Suffering is the organizing problem of Buddhism, much in the same way that sin and death are the organizing problems of Christianity.

And for many Christians, the solution to those problems is the suffering of Jesus Christ. Because suffering is seen to have redemptive properties in Christianity, “suffering is something that is both inevitable and welcome – something to be confronted rather than avoided,” Jack Bemporad writes in the Encyclopedia of Religion. Jesus’ suffering mirrors that of every person, and believers might see in Christ’s

suffering hope for their own salvation.

But Christianity is so broad that opinions have varied over time and continue to do so. Martin Luther was among those who focused on the resurrection, not the suffering on the cross, as the source of human atonement. And Bishop Yvette Flunder, a United Church of Christ minister who spoke in the Twin Cities last month, does not think that suffering imposed by some groups on others is redemptive. Rather, such avoidable suffering becomes “deified” as a virtue – often by those who “don’t intend to” suffer themselves.

Humanists tend to focus on alleviating suffering. Many theists have a theological imperative to do so as well, and many experience additional questions about God’s role. Can God’s power and love be reconciled with human suffering? Does God suffer? William Ellery Channing, an early Unitarian leader, argued that Christ was fully human in part because God could not and would not suffer as Jesus did.

Human suffering is sometimes seen as the result of human failure, of wrongdoing. But Judaism and Christianity point out that suffering also can be the result of living the right way. History contains countless stories of those who have suffered for their virtues.

Islam takes a different path. Bemporad writes: “In Islam, suffering is not a welcome way of proving one’s faith, as in Christianity; neither is it something that should be avoided wherever possible, as in Judaism. Rather, Islam

sees suffering as a necessary though unfortunate component of [human] life that should be alleviated where possible and endured otherwise.”

Suffering is thought of as inspiration for great art – Picasso’s “Guernica,” for example, with its images of agony from the Spanish Civil War, bears witness to the pain of both the artist and the people of Spain, and the Holocaust informs Elie Wiesel’s body of writing. But cannot other human experiences – love, for example – be equally intense muses?

The ability to deal with suffering can be seen as a dimension of spiritual maturity. The spiritual questions for us in our time might be: How do we stay awake and open in the face of so much suffering in our lives and in our world? How do we put our pain in context? Is suffering the response to pain, and how much agency do we have in how we respond? Is the suffering itself ever transformed, or is it the catalyst for other transformations?

In our post-modern world, where medicine and technology and prosperity have reduced many kinds of suffering, suffering still persists on a heartbreaking scale. And so, too, do our questions.

— Jim Foti, Ministerial Intern

For resources on the March theme of suffering, please turn to page 5.

JUST WORDS / WHEEL OF LIFE

Just Words

“We depend on our surroundings obliquely to embody the moods and ideas we respect and then to remind us of them. We look to our buildings to hold us, like a kind of psychological mould, to a helpful vision of ourselves. We arrange around us material forms which communicate to us what we need—but are at constant risk of forgetting we need—within.”

from *The Architecture of Happiness* —Alain de Botton

We humans depend on a sense of home to reinforce the best in us. We surround ourselves with books and beauty because we want to be reminded to learn about and love and change the world. Our homes reflect our values. Our church home enshrines and furthers our dearest hopes for ourselves and for the communities we foster.

The time, talent and treasure you are investing in your church home is not a distraction from more important aspects of your ministry. In the heat of the planning, in the churn and hassle of it all it's easy to forget how important it is for our buildings, especially the places we gather to nurture and sustain what matters most, to help provide us with “a helpful vision of ourselves.”

In the past few months we have integrated two years of congregational input into a design which we believe will inspire future generations. We have also received commitments amounting to more than 5.6 million dollars toward a goal of 8 million dollars. Five hundred twenty households have made commitments to the Unity Tomorrow campaign. Though we have not yet met the goal it is already by far the most successful capital campaign in the history of the church.

Construction drawings are in the works, the project goes to bid this month, McGough Construction will deliver a “guaranteed maximum price” on March 18. Groundbreaking is planned for May 20. All of this is predicated on raising the necessary funds. And that, my friends, is up to all of us. The Board of Trustees has called a Special Meeting of the Congregation for Saturday, April 7, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. At that meeting we will receive a detailed report on the campaign and how the Board suggests we address any challenges which may remain.

Let's get this done. If you've not yet made your commitment, please do. If you have already made your commitment please consider making an additional gift. A group of generous donors have offered a challenge gift of \$250,000 once the congregation's commitments reach at least 5.75 million dollars. Commitments can be made following services in the Parish Hall, on-line at www.unitytomorrow.org or by contacting Barbara Hubbard at the Church Office. Let's do this right and let's do it now.

For *Unity Tomorrow*,
Rob Eller-Isaacs

Janne and I are deeply grateful for the outpouring of love and support we've received since Janne's accident. Your cards and calls, the marvelous meals, the encouragement to slow way down and take whatever time it takes to heal, all of your good ministry is deeply appreciated. You are each and all a blessing in our lives.

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

William Michael Gray

and

Olive Walker Gray

born January 22, 2012

parents

Brenna and Eli Gray

Norah Maria Hillstrom

born November 7, 2011

parents

Mary Robison and Karl Hillstrom

Buyers' Club

Are you interested in eating organic foods? Do you have allergies or food sensitivities? If either of these might apply to you, you may be interested in joining a buyers' club. Through a buyers club you can get discounted prices on many of the staples (cereal, flours, frozen foods) that you purchase on a regular basis. If you are interested, you can call Arlene Seashore (651-489-0952) and visit the UNFI website at <https://www.unfi.com/Default.aspx> for more information.

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MARCH SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION

Sunday Worship Calendar

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

March 4

Brave Enough to Stay — Rob Eller-Isaacs

Human beings suffer. It's a fact. Some traditions teach that suffering is inherently redemptive. Ours does not. Jesus did not suffer and die to free us from our sin. That work is ours to do. The real question is; how do we remain present and compassionate in the face of suffering? Rob and worship associate Patricia Ohmans will offer the first in a series of services on suffering.

March 11

When Despair for the World Grows in Me

— Janne Eller-Isaacs

There are times when it all falls apart; times when a person can't stand to suffer anymore. We need to recognize how despair can sometimes rend the fabric of community. Janne and worship associate Jeanne Barker-Nunn will explore what can happen when people succumb to despair.

March 18

The Good But Not the True — Rob Eller-Isaacs

It's told that Samuel Taylor Coleridge once accused Emerson of believing in "the good but not the true." He was referring to liberalism's general discomfort with the existence of evil. So much of human suffering results from injustice and oppression. How can this be less evil hard at work? Rob and worship associate Carol LeBourveau will wrestle with this age-old dilemma.

March 25

Transforming Suffering — Janne Eller-Isaacs

One of the key attributes to spiritual maturity is the ability to transform suffering. Suffering is a fact there's no denying. But we can learn to use it well. It can open our hearts in compassion. It can inspire effective advocacy. It can even help to build community. Janne and worship associate Marg Walker share what they know of this essential spiritual practice.

Spiritual Practice for Adults at Unity Church

Our Whole Lives: Sexuality Education for Adults

Tuesday, March 20–June 5 • 7:00–9:00 p.m.

Coming Home to This Moment:

Meditation in the Zen Tradition

Saturday, March 24 • 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Details on page 10

Offering Recipients

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

March 4: Amicus

This week's offering goes to support armed services veterans who need a new start in our community. Amicus, the community partner of the Unity Restorative Justice Ministry team, has been working with offenders, ex-offenders and juveniles in the criminal justice system for over 45 years and recently began the Amicus Veterans Justice Program. Through Amicus, veterans can connect with the resources they need to rebuild their lives after a prison sentence and to avoid further incarceration. With community support, we can help those who served our country find a second chance to make a real change in their lives.

March 11: Habitat Project, Johnson High School

"Get ready to make a difference and be changed in the process" characterizes the goals of this St. Paul Johnson High School Habitat for Humanity trip to Honduras. This team of students, staff, and adult volunteers will be working with Honduran volunteers, as well as future homeowners themselves, to help families achieve their dream of having a simple, decent place to live. Beyond the important value of the work itself, there is equally tremendous potential for this trip to make a life-changing difference in the lives of the Johnson Students who participate. Each trip participant is responsible for making monthly payments toward the trip cost but given many of the students' financial situations, there is a gap, and this offering will go help bridge that gap.

March 18: Immigration Law Center of Minnesota

The Immigration Law Center was founded in 1976 as part of the Southern Minnesota Regional Services (SMRLS) and in 1996 established itself as a separate organization. It provides quality immigration and legal services to meet the increasing need of Minnesota's immigrant and refugee community. The center's goals are to remedy and prevent immigration legal problems and raise public awareness of immigrant issues. Unity Church works in partnership with many local agencies serving the growing immigrant community in the Summit/University neighborhood.

March 25: Dayton's Bluff Early Childhood and Family Education Advisory Council

Dayton's Bluff Early Childhood Family Education Advisory Council builds connections between families and Early Childhood Family Education (E.C.F.E.) programs. E.C.F.E. programs are a way to break cycles of violence by providing alternative strategies for raising children. The Council supports learning experiences for pre-school children and their caregivers/parents. The Council serves about 80-90 pre-school children and parents/caregivers primarily from St. Paul's East Side. Unity member Christi Saari serves on the board of Dayton's Bluff Early Childhood and Family Education Council.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / PRAIRIE STAR DISTRICT NEWS

Board of Trustees

From Marg Walker, trustee

When I joined the board of Unity Church last November, it was an act of faith, a leap of faith, even. Someone (I forget who) once wrote: "Life is either one big adventure or nothing at all." Yes, it is.

It takes both faith and an outlook of adventure to become immersed in the decision making for Unity Tomorrow. Naturally, I'd been aware of all the hubbub that started two years ago. Like the majority of you, I showed up for various planning sessions, read the monthly updates, attended forums, listened to divergent opinions, and peered at the drawings displayed in the Parish Hall. Then I went home, satisfied. It was as if each idea, drawing, or layer of detail was an individual ceramic tile that I'd held up to the light and considered for its unique shape and color. I could slip them all into my pocket and finger them absentmindedly when out for a walk, their pleasant clinking a reminder of my spiritual connection to this place. But oh my, was I was grateful that all the complexities of assembling the whole mosaic would be handled by someone else!

Then I joined the board, and suddenly that "someone else" was looking out at me from the mirror. Here's what it's like to be closely involved. We study financial projections, contracts and planning documents. We hear from planners, coordinators, and committee liaisons. We go home with notes scrawled on our briefing packets, much as the capital campaign drivers are scrawled on the inside of our foreheads: acute space and maintenance needs, growth, accessibility, green values, diversity, partnerships, outreach...

But unlike other boards on which I've served, this one doesn't begin and end with business items like these. In addition, we light a chalice, listen to readings, and hold each other accountable for questions like these: Are we as a congregation living out our values? Are we listening to one another authentically and patiently? Are the most important elements of our vision for the future reflected in our current planning? Are we taking the right kinds of risks to achieve that vision? Trustees have to suspend our individual perspectives, and work together to discern what is in the best interest of the church. That's what it takes to assemble the mosaic. A lot of brow-furrowing, but artistry, too.

So here we are, mid-stream – mid-dream, if you will. Within a few weeks the board and congregation will need to make further decisions. I don't know what those decisions will be, but I can tell you what I need to know to prepare for them. I need to know that all reasonable options have been considered, their possible outcomes and implications identified. I need evidence that we as a church are weighing those options with open minds, clear heads, and expert technical assistance. I need to have confidence that we are not so dazzled by the vision that we lose sight of current realities. And equally important, that we are not so unsettled by uncertainty that we fail to take the appropriate leap of faith.

Now that I'm immersed, I do know these things. Because the values of our faith tradition serve as our touchstones, I have confidence that we will struggle in good faith together. And we will find our way.



Call to Meeting

Saturday, April 7, 2012

10:00 a.m. until noon

Sanctuary

A special meeting of the congregation has been called by the Board of Trustees.

The meeting will include up-to-date information on the results of the capital campaign and a detailed proposal for how best to finance the project. All voting members of the congregation are strongly encouraged to attend. A final agenda for the meeting will be distributed following the Trustees meeting of March 10, 2012.

Camp UniStar Potluck and New Camper Information

Saturday, March 10 • 4:30-9:00 p.m.

First Unitarian Society

A sure cure for March cabin fever! Come meet old camper friends, enjoy a potluck dinner, meet program leaders, learn about new camper opportunities, and enjoy some music! Registration for Camp UniStar is now available online at <http://www.campunistar.org/registration/>.

Prairie Star District Annual Conference 2012

*Lessons from War and Peace:
Stories of Hope, Faith, and Courage*

Bloomington, Minnesota

April 13-15, 2012

The PSD Annual Conference is a weekend of lectures, workshops, worship, networking, and fellowship. Information on schedule, registration, workshops, and other details is available at www.psduua.org/AnnualConference2012.

MINISTERIAL INTERNS

Rachel Lonberg: 2011-12 Hallman Ministerial Intern



What was in the mind of medieval inquisitors? What did they believe about the suffering they caused? Last spring, I sought to answer these questions. The final paper I wrote in seminary was on theologies of suffering in late medieval Europe. I researched steep penances,

self-flagellating mystics, inquisitions, and grisly public executions. It was a grim way to pass the time.

The fruits of this research were surprising, however. Before delving into late medieval views of suffering, I had assumed that the inquisitions and public executions of the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries were a product of a cruel and unevolved time, that these events were motivated exclusively by vengeance and intolerance. Learning about the context in which they arose did not erase their brutality, but it gave me greater understanding. Torturers, executioners, and their supporters were not acting solely out of cruelty or bloodlust; they based their actions on their best understandings of how God and the universe operated. They were people seeking closeness to the divine, a goal not unfamiliar to us. They were following the teachings of the most educated and influential people of their era. Scholars, theologians, and mystics thought that pain and suffering could make a bad person good and a good person great. Pain was not to be avoided or alleviated, but sought out for its spiritual benefits. Mimicking the suffering of Jesus would make people closer to Jesus—more moral, more spiritual, and more truthful. Torture was, to their mind, a gift, a chance for the tortured to become more holy. Many torture techniques were intentionally—and horrifically—adapted from the church’s penance practices.

This new understanding does not make the inquisitions or executions acceptable, but it does place them in a fuller context. It also leads me to wonder which of our actions today will be considered brutal or unevolved in the centuries to come.

Rachel Lonberg can be reached at the Church Office by email at rachel@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x129.

Jim Foti: 2011-12 Ministerial Intern



I have come to love Wednesdays at Unity Church.

At more than 800 adult members and 400-plus kids, Unity is a big for a Unitarian Universalist congregation, with numerous benefits that only a big church can provide. But on Wednesday evenings, known as Wellspring Wednesdays, it’s as if a church one-tenth the size magically comes into existence at Unity, bringing the simpler joys of the small-church environment to our large congregation.

Those benefits begin at dinner, where the meals are lovingly cooked by volunteers in our kitchen, and people from a variety of backgrounds sit together at round tables for eight. It might feel for a moment like the middle school cafeteria – *where do I sit?* – but only for a moment, because no one ends up alone. The environment encourages relaxed conversation in a way that can be harder to come by during the Sunday coffee hours, and it’s a comfortable space for members, friends, and visitors.

Supper is followed by a short worship service in the beautiful Ames Chapel. This is church on an intimate scale, so we sing two or three familiar tunes, and everybody is a member of the “choir.” Using blue and yellow stones as symbols, we acknowledge the joys and sorrows in our lives, either aloud or silently, so that we may hold each other’s hearts. And we listen to a story that offers inspiration and enlightenment to worshippers of all ages.

After worship, it’s programming time. Drumming in the Parish Hall, “laughter” yoga, rich conversations about homelessness or racism or Shakespeare, tips for finding the right college – it’s a wide range, and it’s different every week. So, if you’re so inclined, please check out the schedule and c’mon down. As we say in the chapel service, whether your day has more joy or sorrow, church is just the place to be.

Jim Foti can be reached at the Church Office by email at jim@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x212.

Pathway to Membership: A Series of Three Classes

Contact Julie Handberg at the Church Office (julieh@unityunitarian.org) to sign up for these classes. Free childcare is provided with at least one week advance request to christy@unityunitarian.org.

Welcome to Unity is geared to newcomers and those seeking to learn more about Unitarian Universalists and Unity Church. Upcoming classes include Sunday, March 4, from 12:15-1:45 p.m. and Sunday, March 25, from 12:15-1:45 p.m.

Finding Yourself at Unity includes Unitarian Universalist and Unity Church history (including a tour of the church), opportunities to share parts of your religious journey, and discussion of the expectations and benefits of membership. The March class will be held on three consecutive Tuesdays, March 13, 20, and 27 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. A light supper will be included.

Committing to Unity is designed for those who are ready to make the membership commitment. This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. The next class will be held on Saturday, March 24, from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

UNITY LIBRARIES & BOOKSTALL

What's New in the Library and Bookstall

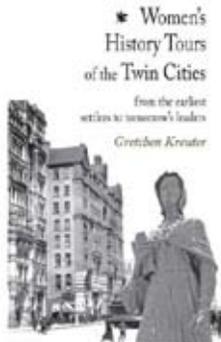
From Louise Merriam, Library Team



March is Women's History Month and a good time to take a look at the resources available in the Bookstall and in Unity's libraries that can help us celebrate the contributions of women to our faith.

Standing Before Us: Unitarian Universalist Women and Social Reform, 1776-1936, edited by Dorothy May Emerson, 2010. This collection includes letters, essays, stories, poems and speeches by Unitarian and Universalist women. The reformers and leaders represented here write and speak eloquently for social justice, equality in education, religious reform and an end to slavery and prejudice

The Women's History Tours of the Twin Cities Guide, by Unity member Gretchen Kreuter, is an invitation to explore the contributions made by women to the history of the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The tour reaches back to the earliest years of European settlement, exploring historic sites associated with the lives of Jane Gibbs, Harriet Bishop, Clara Ueland, and other pioneers of our civic life. It also describes many recent contributions made by women to our communities and institutions.



The Woman's Bible: A Classic Feminist Perspective by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 2003. This book-by-book examination of the Bible by 19th century feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other women was first published in 1895 to challenge religious orthodoxy that held that women should be subservient to men. Some feminists opposed the publication, fearing that the inevitable controversy would derail the infant women's rights movement.

A Mighty Social Force: Phebe Ann Coffin Hanaford 1829-1921, by Lorena Cody. This study details the life of this Universalist minister, advocate of woman's suffrage and abolitionist. The book contains significant contributions from Rev. Sarah Barber Braun, a member of Unity Church who has devoted many years of her life to researching the life and work of this fascinating and important woman.

Coming in April

Cafe Unity, an opportunity to hear the musical, literary and poetic talents of Unity members and staff. Sponsored by the Library and Bookstall Team. See announcement at right.



Café Unity

Poetry & Music Salon

Reading of original prose and poetry, music and singing, refreshment and fellowship. Childcare available.

Friday April 13, 2012

7:00 p.m.  free

Where? At Unity Church, of course.



Notice: Cairns Correction

The printing of the first order of *Cairns* Vol. 3 was defective but the problem has now been corrected. We apologize, especially to the artists whose work was not well represented due to the error. If you purchased a copy of *Cairns* Vol. 3 before February 10, 2012, then you are entitled to an exchange. Please bring your flawed copies to the Bookstall and exchange them for new and improved copies. See *Cairns* Vol. 3 as it was meant to be! Questions? Contact the editor: sjbutler2011@gmail.com.

Suffering Resources

BOOKS

Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy, by Donald Kraybill, Steven Nolt and David Weaver-Zercher, tells the story of a community in Pennsylvania that turned from suffering to forgiveness after five schoolgirls were killed in 2006.

Proverbs of Ashes, by Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Parker, questions how Christianity has viewed the suffering of Jesus and argues that traditional interpretations of the crucifixion sanction violence.

MOVIES

Triumph of the Spirit, a 1989 feature based on a true story, is about a boxer who was forced to entertain the Nazis at the Auschwitz death camp. Willem Dafoe stars.

Do the Right Thing, Spike Lee's 1989 comedy/drama, is a story of long-simmering racial tension and violence in Brooklyn.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Juice Box Bully, by Bob Sornson and Maria Dismundy, is about kids who take a stand against bullying.

The Lemonade Club, by Patricia Polacco, tells the story of a student and teacher who both have cancer.

Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry, is about a young Jewish girl in World War II who is taken in by her best friend's family in Denmark.

Esperanza Rising, by Pam Muñoz Ryan, looks at immigration and poverty during the Depression through the eyes of a 13-year-old girl.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAYS

A weeknight at church including dinner, worship, and learning. All are welcome.

6:00 p.m. Dinner: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family, and can be paid by cash or check.

6:45 p.m. Worship service in the Ames Chapel.

7:10 p.m. Programs follow worship. Childcare is available.

March 7 • Dinner: TBA

The Camino Documentary:

Walking Spain's Ancient Pilgrim Path

Get a sneak peak of the PBS film that follows strangers from all over the world on the adventure of their lives: walking Spain's ancient pilgrimage, the Camino de Santiago. In this exclusive preview, you'll embark on a life-changing journey across an entire country on foot with only a backpack, a pair of boots and an open heart. Join producer/director Lydia Smith, Ruth Markowitz and Spanish Steps at a Unity Church exclusive presentation.

March 14 • Dinner: Indian buffet!

Curry Chicken (or tofu), dal, cauliflower and chickpeas, raita, flat bread, and dessert

A New Way of Seeing the Cultural World—Part One: The Private Possibility

Opening oneself to the complexity of our world is overwhelming. How does one begin to grapple with the fearsome challenges of war, with anguish and revenge in the aftermath of terrorism and the steady flow of bitterness in the daily news? What are the spiritual tools that help us to find and keep our balance in the complicated world in which we live? Join a courageous team of Unity Church members including Steve Lewis, Angela Newhouse, Carol Bauer, Kevin Roberg-Perez and Leon Dunkley in an exploration of cultural war and peace.

Summit Hill Laughter Club!

Join Unity Member Katy Taylor to explore the art of laughter to invite more joy, play, and wellbeing into your life! Because of the deep pranayamic breathing exercises, this form of practice is also called Laughter Yoga, but it does not include any physical asanas and can be practiced by people of all ages who are willing to be a little bit silly. Children who come with their parents are welcome.

March 21 • Dinner: TBA

A New Way of Seeing the Cultural World—Part Two: Building the House of Peace

Are the spiritual tools that help us to find and keep our balance also the ones that enable us to build the house of peace? If so, what is the nature of this spiritual house of peace? How is this house an expression of our faith? If not, what are the dangers of spiritual homelessness? And what might be the down-home joys of grace. Join us once again in courage and gentle gratitude. New attendees are more than welcome!

The Great College Search

Anyone currently involved in the "college search" is invited to attend this meeting. Contact Craig Allen at library42@msn.com with questions.



The Gordon Parks

March 28 • Dinner: Family Friendly

Fish sticks, tater tots, salad, and dessert.

The Gordon Parks

Shaft and Super Fly: The Inner Meaning of Social Power in Blaxploitation Films

Super Fly is a 1972 film directed by Gordon Parks, Jr. Parks, Jr. was born in 1934 and died in a plane crash in Kenya seven years after his landmark film was released. He was survived by his father, Gordon Roger Alexander Buchanan Parks. Gordon Parks, Sr., who lived from 1912 until 2006, was a groundbreaking photographer, a musician, a poet, a novelist, a journalist, an activist and a film director. In 1971, a year before *Super Fly*, Parks Sr. directed *Shaft*. Another member of this esteemed family lives here in St. Paul and is a long-time friend to Unity Church. Come and join Russell Ballenger as he reflects on the legacy of these films in a special, behind-the-scenes look at one of the most fascinating and enduring moments in American filmmaking.

Russell Ballenger works at Amicus, a Minnesota not-for-profit organization (and community partner of Unity's Restorative Justice Ministry Team) with over 44 years of experience in improving public safety by helping inmates and ex-offenders through positive relationship-building, restorative justice practices and individualized transition services.

Wellspring Wednesday Ongoing Offerings

Yoga: Weekly, \$10 per class or \$50/6 classes

Tween Youth Group (grades 4-8): Weekly, all are welcome

Drumming: Second Wednesday of every month for kids and adults

Our Whole Lives: Weekly, registration required

UU Families Dinner Table Talk: Monthly, watch for details

Sharing Group for UU Parents: Monthly, watch for details.

Childcare/Children's Programming: Weekly, families should check their children in on the evening's sign-in sheet in the Parish Hall. Free.

UNITY TOMORROW

Unity Tomorrow: A Balanced Approach

From Lorelee Wederstrom, Unity's Owner Representative

The *Unity Tomorrow* project continues to be in the throes of the alignment process. For those unable to attend the February 12 Congregational Forum on project alignment, please visit the *Unity Tomorrow* website at www.unitytomorrow.org to read through the information presented by members of the Project Delivery Team. If you have any questions on these materials, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Alignment is a complex process; particularly so when the renovation/expansion project is a complex one like the *Unity Tomorrow* project. Over 65% of this \$8 million project is infrastructure, building enclosure systems (like stone, windows and roofs) and utility upgrades and improvements. Much of this is work that has been deferred for many, many years and we are still learning about deficiencies in our buildings. For example, a recent infrared survey revealed significant breaches of insulation and construction standards in the Eliot Wing. These breaches must be corrected.

The design of the *Unity Tomorrow* Project balances our commitment as a community to sustainable design using the most efficient technologies we can afford in air handling, distribution, heating and cooling with our needs to provide an open welcoming entrance to all and hospitable facilities throughout. The *Unity Tomorrow* Project design has delivered on these promises and these values thanks to the input of dozens of congregational representatives who served on our design teams under the very competent leadership of Miller Dunwiddie Architecture.

The November 9 congregational vote established a targeted fundraising goal of \$8 million with the key elements as defined above. Some might think that since we haven't reached our fundraising goal yet, that we should begin to diminish the scope we hope to achieve in this phase of construction.

Imagine what it might be like to only shell in the new bathrooms, or leave the kitchen in its current condition, or not upgrade the flooring and lighting in Parish Hall, or replace our mechanical system with a similar package system that does not meet our sustainability design standards. I, for one, cannot imagine this community doing only part of the job needed to be done. We need a more balanced approach... one that learns from our past and steps into our future.

Alignment is not only about matching scope to a targeted budget. It is also about raising the needed resources to achieve our dreams for this phase of the project. There are just as many hardworking people working on the fundraising side of the *Unity Tomorrow* project as there are on the design side... all committed to ALL of the goals of the *Unity Tomorrow* Project. Our Capital Campaign team has raised a significant commitment towards funding the whole of the *Unity Tomorrow* project...not just parts of it. Yet, we still have 200 families who have not contributed to the campaign. Even if it's 51 cents, like our youngest pledger... we would like to see full Community participation in realizing our *Unity Tomorrow* dreams since everyone will benefit from the results.

Perhaps a more balanced approach towards alignment is to think more creatively about how to bridge the gap in fundraising, allowing us to actually live the dream we have created. This is not my dream as the project's Owner Representative. We have listened to hundreds of voices throughout strategic planning, design meetings and in congregational forums. This is OUR dream. And while we may not have properly funded these facility needs in the past, we can turn that around now and give our church home the attention and improvements that it deserves and needs in order to do the work of Unity

Church. Let's put our heads, hands and hearts together to get it done.

Friends, it is time... right now... to invest in our beloved church home. It can't wait any longer. Ruth and I have already re-evaluated our initial pledge and will be digging into our coffers again. We hope you will do the same.

Unity Church does important work in the world. The *Unity Tomorrow* project makes it possible for this to continue into the future.

Milestone Authorization and Construction Readiness Schedule

March 11 • 12:30 p.m., Sanctuary
Congregational Forum on Financing Options for *Unity Tomorrow*

March 19
Guaranteed Maximum Price from McGough Construction

March 20
Special Meeting of Unity's Board of Trustees

April 7 • 10:00 a.m.-noon, Sanctuary
Special Congregational Meeting

April 8 • 12:30 p.m., Sanctuary
Congregational Forum on "Churn" Planning

April 30
Order long lead time items i.e. structural steel and mechanical systems

May 5
Owner Review/Approval of Construction Documents

May 10-30
Bid Construction Documents

May 15
Abatement starts on lower level

May 20
Unity Tomorrow Groundbreaking

June 1
Construction Starts!

UNITY TOMORROW

Capital Campaign Update

From Tom Merritt, Campaign Chair

Over and over, I've heard you say **the *Unity Tomorrow* project has captured your imagination and inspired your own enthusiastic support for the capital campaign.** We can be proud of the broad base of support for this project which will revamp our infrastructure, improve way finding, and make a significant upgrade to Religious Education spaces. It isn't just a few of us who have decided to make important financial commitments. An overwhelming majority of our membership have decided to "step up to Unity" and make an investment in its future.

Nearly 500 households have responded to the capital drive with commitments in excess of \$5,432,505 million. To reach our goal of \$8 million, \$2.6 million is needed to complete the proposed renovations.

We, the members, are the only source of financing the project. We have no fairy godmother. Now that the specifics of the project are known and the first round of commitments have been received, each of us has the opportunity to use that information to re-evaluate our initial commitment. Many of us will choose to dig a bit deeper now that we've seen that the campaign is short of its goal; some will conclude they have already done as much as they can. Each household must make their own evaluation.

A few members have volunteered to establish a challenge gift about which you will hear about very soon. Both first time commitments to the Capital Campaign and increased commitments will count toward the challenge gift up to its limit. Let's make the most of this generous challenge gift. The pride of having made a significant investment in the future, commensurate with our own circumstances, is an enormous personal reward. To me, living a life of integrity, service, and joy incorporates being a responsible steward of this glorious community which we call Unity Church.

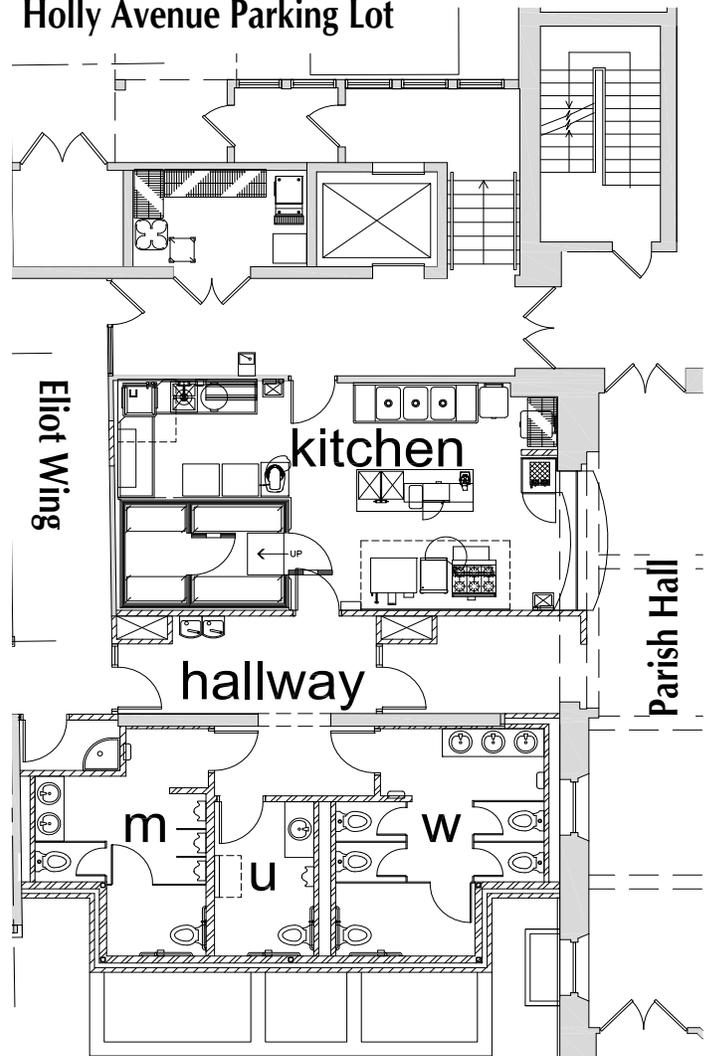
We need to complete our review of our personal or family commitment before April 1. We need to be mindful that the Board of Trustees must make a contracting decision in April.

We encourage you to make your own private analysis and to decide to what extent you can augment your initial commitment so that this important project may go forward as planned. It's a pivotal time requiring financial support from our committed members.

Together, we can make it happen!

www.unitytomorrow.org

Holly Avenue Parking Lot



Kitchen Renovation and Bathroom Addition



Bathroom Addition, Exterior from Grotto Street

ADULT LEARNING AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Spring Equinox Reflection

The Spring Equinox occurs midway between the longest night of the year, at Winter Solstice, and the longest day of the year, at Summer Solstice. It is called an Equinox from the Latin “equal” and “night” because (as on the Autumn Equinox) the night and day are the same length. In 2012, the Spring Equinox occurs at 12:14 a.m. on March 20.

Spring Equinox reminds us that spring is on the way. Emerging from wintertime, when we may have had a chance to regroup, to draw nourishment from our roots and rest, we are now being invited into new growth. But even in spring, it’s not always easy to break open the shell that’s holding us back, to stretch our wings and fly. As the air and soil warms, there is an upsurge of fresh energy and vitality. And yet, even as we breathe this spring nourishment into our being, it can challenge the comfort of our current way of living, our habits, our ways of knowing ourselves. Just as plants find their way through the soil, rocks, and detritus into the light of day, so must we, too, be willing to meet what is in our path, to experience whatever suffering is necessary to break open the shell and peek out into the light of day. In this way, we, like the earth, can become verdant and flow with new life again.

What obstacles are on your journey this spring? What ways of being are you being asked to reconsider? What suffering must you risk as you move into the fresh, new light? You may want to write in a journal, or try a short ritual alone or with friends that could include the following:

Light a candle, yellow or light green in color;

- Place an egg near the candle, sit in silence, and reflect on the journey from life inside this safe, contained, nourishing environment into the fresh, new, growing invitation of spring;
- Name or make a list of the things that are difficult or that stand in the way of this transition, that may bring suffering;
- Sit quietly and breathe into your roots, into your ground, knowing that they will be there to support you;
- Continuing to breathe into this support, also breathe in the possibility of new, vital, fresh life;
- When you are ready, say thank you and blow out the candle.

After the Spring Equinox, the days continue to grow longer, until at Summer Solstice, we’ll be back to the longest day. *Please plan to join us for a summer solstice ritual at Unity this year!* May you welcome and find grace in this changing of the seasons.

Spring Blessings,

Katy Taylor, Seasonal Coordinator Worship Associate, katy@thewingedheart.net

The Singing Body Workshop

Friday, March 23: 7:00-9:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 24: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Unity Church—Unitarian

Join Amy Fradon and Katy Taylor to rediscover the roots and soul of your voice. This workshop is mostly experiential including singing, sounding, mindfulness, other exercises, processing time, and ritual. Cost: \$150 (\$125/Unity Church members). For more information or to sign up contact Katy@thewingedheart.net or 651-291-8551.

Mirabilis in Concert

Sunday, March 25, 2:00 p.m.

Unity Church • Tickets at the door:

\$12/\$10 Unity Church members

Enjoy original and medieval chant and song that weaves Celtic ornamentation with haunting, mystical chant and prayer. Specializing in the music of Hildegard von Bingen, the purity of tone and musical depth of Mirabilis inspires and transports. www.thewingedheart.net

Our Whole Lives

Sexuality Education for Adults

Tuesday, March 20–June 5

7:00–9:00 p.m. • Unity Church

Our Whole Lives for Adults is coming to Unity Church! This is the grown-up version of the comprehensive sexuality education that we provide to our youth. We will explore sexuality and spirituality, sexual health, sexual diversity, relationships, sexuality and aging, and more in a fun and supportive environment. This program is for adults of any age, gender, sexual orientation, or relationship status.

Questions? Want to sign up? Please contact Hallman Intern Rachel Lonberg at rachel@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456x129. Childcare is available by request to christy@unityunitarian.org.

Coming Home to This Moment Meditation in the Zen Tradition

A Workshop at Unity Church

Saturday, March 24

9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Are you interested in exploring a contemplative spiritual practice or curious about meditation? Would you like to deepen a meditation practice with the help of the Zen meditation sangha here at Unity Church?

The Unity Sangha will offer a workshop on meditation under the leadership of Ken Ford, lay teacher at Clouds in Water Zen Center, who provides regular support for the Unity Sangha. The workshop will provide both an opportunity for exploration for those new to meditation and an opportunity for those more experienced to spend some extended time in silence. The morning will conclude with a simple lunch and opportunity for informal conversation.

A \$20 donation is suggested, but no one will be turned away. Please RSVP to Rachel Lonberg at rachel@unityunitarian.org, and contact Ken Ford with any questions 612-701-0841 or kford5@comcast.net.

ONGOING GROUPS / PARISH HALL ARTISTS

Ongoing groups at Unity Church

Please contact the person listed for more information or contact the Church Office by phone at 651-228-1456 or by email at unity@unityunitarian.org

A New Look at the Bible: Second Thursday of the month (March 13) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

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

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (March 15) from Noon-2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Evergreen Quilters: Second Tuesday of the month (March 13) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (March 24) from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760

Grandparent Unitots!: A playgroup for grandparents and their grandkids. Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Contact: Ona Lentz at 651-222-8117

Job Transition/Networking: Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Contact Linda LaBarre, Facilitator, at lindaleelabarre@gmail.com

Lectio Divina or Spiritual Reading: Sundays after the 9:00 a.m. service in the Ames Chapel.

Living With Grief Group: A group for people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (March 20) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, March 12 and 26, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

Unitots!: A playgroup for families with kids through preschool age. Fridays at 9:30 a.m.

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. On March 13 they will discuss *Out Stealing Horses* by Per Peterson.

Unity Bridge Club: First Friday of the month (March 2) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209

Unity Singles: Watch for announcements in *This Week at Unity*. Contact: Bonnie Reiland at bonniereiland@aol.com

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

Elders' Circle: Tuesday, March 20 • 1:00-2:30 p.m.

The Elders' Circle is a group of church elders (self-identified) who gather monthly for fellowship, learning, and fun. Refreshments will be served. For more info, or to inquire about a ride, contact Ministerial Intern Jim Foti by e-mail at jim@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x212.

March Parish Hall Artist

Anne B. Parker

We live in a world intensely dominated by language. For me there is great power, relief, and delight in that which is ineffable or cannot be articulated in words.

My work is at the intersection of abstraction and representation. How I begin each piece is important. I begin with a quick gesture or action painting with gesso. The gesture is derived from, and in response to, an object or image to which I am drawn. I find in these images or objects a unique presence or power. In a sense they are epiphanies as described by James Joyce; "Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object... seems to us radiant."

The painted gesture becomes the underlying structure of the work. I then develop and alter it by emphasizing line, value and texture through the *addition* of charcoal, graphite, and occasionally acrylic paint and through *subtraction* by wiping away and erasing. Through this process areas of concentrated energy, movement, shapes, and openings emerge. It is my hope that some of these pieces will be epiphanies to the viewer, as they are to me.

James Edward Scherbarth

www.jamesedwardscherbarth.com

James Edward Scherbarth (Jim) lives and creates in Minnesota. Largely self-taught, he works in photography, digital montage, painting and kumihimo art jewelry with themes about layers, patinas and the passage of time.

My art is about passion, process and patinas. Reclaiming my creativity after a corporate career, I am passionate about working with my hands, expressing my inner voice and creating artful objects and images. My process is an intuitive one of constructing and deconstructing, of collecting, blending, erasing, blurring, marking and clarifying. It is a kind of archeology, an excavation of the image from my creative subconscious and revealing the story within it; the emotion, the memory or history behind it. Finally my work is about patinas - acquired over time, the evidentiary marks of experience, the unspoken history of life and its accumulation of layers. Layers built over time and into timelessness: layers of color, the shadowy layers of memories, and reflections of nature. Each image - whether a painting, a digital montage or piece of art jewelry - is an emotional statement, a memory recalled, or a fleeting glimpse of nature's diverse beauty. For me this process becomes a conversation, creating a new language of markings and gestures. Your contemplation of my work makes you witness to my journey and welcomes you into the conversation - let's talk!

A reception for the March Parish Hall artists will be held on Friday, March 16, from 5:00-8:00 p.m. All are welcome!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

What's Love Got To Do With It?

From Laura Smidzik

Marriage equality which would affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every Minnesotan is only a dream of the future. For now, our goal is to keep exclusionary language about marriage out of the Minnesota Constitution. For years, the argument for marriage equality (a preferred term over "gay marriage") has been based on an argument about "rights." As Unitarian Universalists with connections to several of the founding fathers of the United States it is easy to find these arguments compelling. However, I can tell you that on that rainy night in Santa Cruz, CA, when I finally confessed my love to Linda and prayed she felt the same way towards me, "rights" were the furthest thing from my mind! When we held a wedding years later (in 1991) we were banned from any legal rights yet still wanted the nurturing love, witness, and support of our family and friends. Not one of my friends who are in opposite-sex relationships married for "rights," they all married for love. Why would same-sex couples be any different?

I told the story of going on Unity's "Love Bus" to get married in Iowa several years ago. The story includes our then 13-year-old son who gave us the final push to go and get married. A picture from that day sits in our front hallway and serves as a constant reminder of the look on our sons' faces as they participated in our renewal of vows and legal marriage. A woman attending a training on how to tell your story in relation to the marriage amendment exclaimed, "Your story is so emotional and compelling. I don't have a story that I can tap into that has that emotion." All of us have either been in love or seen loving committed relationships. Connect with that story and then open your heart to a vision where any loving relationship can have full societal recognition.

Like it or not, marriage is the one societal norm which unites two loving adults and ties their lives together through the years of joys and sorrows. Yes, there are rights and responsibilities afforded through legal marriage (over 515 of those rights exclude same-sex couples in Minnesota). For me, the longing for marriage equality comes from the desire for the human dignity that is afforded to some and is denied to my loving relationship and family.

Unsure about the marriage amendment?

Are you undecided about the upcoming Minnesota Marriage Amendment? Would you like to talk about this issue with other members and friends of Unity Church? A discussion group is forming. Contact Rachel Lonberg, Hallman Ministerial Intern, at rachel@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456x129 for details.

The Right to Vote, A Continuing Struggle

From Sherman Eagles, Unity Church Member

Last April, I was on a bus in Mississippi, part of a pilgrimage to places made famous during the civil rights movement. These were the places where that long running struggle erupted onto the TV screens and into the consciousness of the rest of America. On a back road, outside Meridian, Mississippi, we visited the grave of James Chaney, a young civil rights activist murdered in 1964 for his work in trying to register black voters in Mississippi. We met there with his daughter, a daughter he never saw as he was murdered retuning to Mississippi only days after her birth. It was a solemn event, on that isolated road with the sun setting, bearing witness to those who sacrificed so much to be allowed to exercise their right to participate in a political process many of us are often cynical about.

The next day, when checking news from home, one headline jumped out at me. **Zeller: "voting is privilege, not right."** The Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives was quoted as saying on a radio show that he believed that voting was a privilege, not a right. He made this comment while discussing legislation that would require voters to show photo identification at the polls on Election Day. From the perspective of that bus in Mississippi, it was a disturbing thing to hear coming out of Minnesota.

Speaker Zeller is wrong of course, voting IS a right. It is called a right in five amendments to the U.S. Constitution. And each of those amendments extends that right to more citizens. James Chaney died because he believed what was written in the 15th amendment: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." The 19th amendment says the right shall not be denied because of sex, the 24th says it may not be denied by failure to pay poll tax or other tax, the 26th says it shall not be denied because of age.

The history of our country is full of struggle for the right to be *included*, to be a *full* citizen, allowed to *take part* in our self-government. But, in Minnesota, there is now an effort to reverse this history and to deny the right to vote because of a failure to have the proper ID. There are many reasons to oppose the effort to require voters to have an ID card, but the first is that it is just plain wrong. To take the right to vote away from someone legally qualified will turn us away from inclusion, away from accepting and loving our neighbors. We shouldn't need to see lonely graves on back roads to know that it is wrong.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

A Unitarian Catechism? Are you serious?

From Sue Conner, Partner Church Ministry Team

Yes, we are serious, says the Partner Church Team. "Look it up on the web!"

Our Unitarian Partners in the village of Homorodszentpeter in Transylvania in Romania, are Unitarians; they and their ancestors for over 400 years have been Unitarians. Our Partners are also Christians. In Transylvania, Unitarianism is a way of being Christian that includes having a Catechism (if you are interested in seeing the Catechism of the Hungarian Unitarian Church in Transylvanian Romania, it is in English at www.unitarius.hu/english/catechism.html).

Of course, when Unitarianism began in our country, Unitarianism was a form of Christianity. The Unity Church—Unitarian expression of Unitarianism is but one branch on our family tree. So when Easter comes along and our choirs raise their voices in Alleluias and we tell stories about springtime and our collective hearts start to lift, we may wonder what it is all about. This is a good time to think about our partners in Transylvania and their expression of the faith. Easter is a holy day for Unitarians in Transylvania and one of the four times during the year that they receive communion.

What can we find in their catechism to help us in our own observation of Easter? We think that American Unitarians will find there a straight forward rational explanation of the role of Jesus in the faith. The following questions and answers are taken from the Unitarian Catechism:

What do we mean by "I believe in Jesus"? When we say, I believe in Jesus, we express our conviction that Jesus is the greatest child and prophet of God, and his teaching is the surest way by which we can come to a real knowledge of God.

What happened after Jesus' death? After Jesus' death, his loyal disciples and followers took his body down from the cross and buried it in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. His disciples and followers loyally kept the memory of their master and teacher and proclaimed his teachings. Easter is celebrated as the Victory of Jesus' ideas.

Which is the greatest law of religion according to Jesus? The greatest law of religion is summarized in the Great Commandments of love, which are as follows: "The first of all commandments: the Lord, our God, the Lord is one: and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength, The second is this: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these."

At Unity Church, we understand the Mystery is called by many different names and approached by many different paths. We can all agree that Love is the basis of our social justice work. We might even say that Love is the basis of our faith. Let us join with our Transylvanian Partners and celebrate Easter as a celebration of Love, the supreme and most enduring value. It is something to celebrate. Especially now. Celebrate Easter and support the work of the Partner Church Team.

Partner Church Team Blooming Plant Sale!

The Partner Church Team will be holding a blooming plant sale from March 11 until March 25. Easter lilies, hydrangeas, tulips, hyacinths and many others. Look for the Partner Church table in the Parish Hall or in the cloister to place your order. You will be able to pick up your plants at church on Palm Sunday, April 1, so that you will have them in your homes on Easter. The monies will be used for needs in the village and for hosting village visitors.



UUSC

*Keeping you informed
and about the
Unitarian Universalist
Service Committee's*



*work to defend and promote human
rights around the world.*

- Ending all forms of gender-based violence in Haiti is the focus of a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives and in the Haitian government. Ask your representative to cosponsor House Resolution 521.
- State congresses in Mexico have approved that the country's Constitution be amended to include the human right to water and sanitation.
- In a February letter to Sacramento, CA, Mayor Kevin Johnson, the United Nations has delivered a clear message: by not providing sanitation and safe drinking water, the city is violating the human rights of homeless persons. The letter, sent by U.N. special Rapporteur, Catarina de Albuquerque, came following her observations during the U.S. mission last spring.
- The UUSC sent advocates to Darfur in early January, to train local imams and leaders around prevention of violence against women. Eighty religious and community leaders developed action plans to use their positions of influence to create mosque-based education and mass media outreach.
- The UUSC provided a one-time seed grant to support the Tierra Nueva Cooperative in Nicaragua. The grant will help the women in the co-op get a chili-growing project started.

UUSC is a human-rights organization that receives no funding from any government or denomination. Support and join the UUSC today at www.UUSC.org.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Greetings from Kerri Meyer! Director of Religious Education

As I write this, I am waiting for my course with Rebecca Parker to begin at Starr King. By the time this newsletter is in your hands (or inbox), the class will have begun and I'll be steeped in ideas from Parker's and Brock's book, *Saving Paradise*. In these few weeks of waiting, I've managed to fill much of the empty space in my days where Unity usually holds sway. Jen and I take the dogs for long rambles in Wildcat Canyon. I've volunteered at a food pantry in San Francisco and an afterschool program in south Oakland. Highlights from February included Chinese New Year and a seder in celebration of Tu B'Shevat. Tu B'Shevat is a lesser Jewish holiday marking the new year for trees and honoring the gifts that trees give to humanity's generations. I think that Unity's families would enjoy celebrating a Unitarian Universalist interpretation of this holiday, grounded deep down in the earth with our Judeo-Christian roots.

The Bay Area wears both its abundant natural beauty and its brutal human brokenness outwardly, for all to witness, no matter the season. It's hard for a midwestern girl to get used to this. My primary spiritual practice has simply been to try to see it – I mean, really see it. A secondary practice has been to live with my low-level seismic anxiety. There was a 3.7 earthquake here in the East Bay yesterday, but fortunately I didn't feel it. I worry that a good hard shake-up will send me packing. I think of all the people in the world who move through their days with and in spite of whatever fears haunt their communities.

I miss my Unity family and look forward to seeing you briefly over Coming of Age weekend. Thanks to all of you who have been of support and practical help to Christy Randall and Mary Blouin-Auffert in my absence. A big hello and hug to every kid and every youth!

Blessings and thanks,
Kerri

Annual Used Book Sale! April 14 and 15

Come stock up on good reads! Unity folks read the best stuff – benefit from our congregation's shared love of reading while supporting Youth Ministries! Donations for the sale can be dropped off in the Religious Education office through April 13.

UNITY MEMBERS ONLY SNEAK PREVIEW

Midnight to 1:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 14, before the sale opens to the public! Please, no book sellers!

Saturday, April 14: 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 15: 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., plus \$5 Fill-A-Bag from 3:30–4:30 p.m.

2012-2013 Religious Education Registration

Families planning to enroll children and youth in next year's Sunday School program **MUST** attend an in-person registration session. Please mark these dates on your family's calendar and choose **ONE** to attend. Childcare provided at all sessions.

Wednesday, April 18, 7:10 p.m.

Sunday, April 22, 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 24, 7:10 p.m.

Saturday, April 28, 10:00 a.m.

Note that at all sessions, parents will sign up for their volunteer role in our shared ministry. To view a list of volunteer roles with descriptions, log onto www.unityunitarian.org. At all sessions, pledging families will have priority registration, followed by returning teachers, followed by open enrollment. Classes are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Mary Blouin Auffert by email at kerri@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x104.

Unity Youth: Spend a Night on the Street!

Raise funds and awareness to end the crisis of youth homelessness in our cities on Friday, April 20. Hundreds of Twin Cities youth of all faiths will sleep out in boxes in an expression of solidarity with the more than 1500 teenagers who have nowhere to sleep on any given night in Minnesota. A Night on the Street asks youth not just to learn about homelessness but to be a part of the solution. Register by requesting a permission slip from Luke Stevens-Royer and returning it by March 25. Visit <http://nighthonthestreet.org> for details about this life-changing annual event.

Teachers Needed for Religious Education!

Our shared ministry with children requires many hands and hearts! Several Workshop Leaders are need for our upcoming RE Unit on Endings. Teach the same lesson several Sundays to different groups of kids: April 1, 15, 22 and 29 as well as May 6 and 13. Lessons and materials provided. Our central idea is that everything in the known universe is impermanent. How does this bless and challenge us as human beings?

11:00

Body – Create a large sand mandala

Drama – Act out “Kisa and the Mustard Seed”

Music – Sing “Sing of the Living, Sing of the Dying” and listen to Mozart's *Requiem*

4:30

Drama – Act out “Kisa and the Mustard Seed”

Music – Sing “Sing of the Living, Sing of the Dying” and listen to Mozart's *Requiem*

MUSIC MINISTRY

Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries

“One music, two musicians, four hands, twenty fingers... another one of those lessons in community!” — Ruth Palmer

As I sit here writing this article, I am so aware that I should be at the piano... practicing! It is only four days away from our Concert with a Cause on February 19, *Waltzing Your Way Through Winter*. I am working on a huge amount of piano four hand repertoire for this with my professional and Unity staff colleague, Kathy Kraulik. The layers of work involved are somewhat daunting at times with attention to individual notes and technical challenges, coordination with those other two hands, logistics of how we both move together and/or stay out of each other's way, agreement on interpretation, coordinating all details so that the music itself is truly represented, shared and released beyond us for the enjoyment of the audience. How do we contribute our individual energies and still keep the broad view which embraces that 'one music' which is far beyond our separate concerns. How do we get those twenty fingers to realize and create this music?

When Kathy and I have presented some of this four hand piano music in church, people often ask me how we manage to stay together, how we manage to be enjoying the music when we are each so busy at our own tasks, etc. For me, the answer is simple and a continuing lesson throughout my career: it is the broad view of the music itself that is most important. When that is shared by more than one, even the most insistent personal concerns find their proper place and balance in the whole. You bet, I may be playing along and privately twisted in knots with concern over particular passages. However, over and over again, I discover that the music holds room for every finger's worth of concern and lifts it into a stream of vision and beauty that gives importance to every stroke, while balancing its importance in relationship to the whole.

“It strikes us as magical, beyond coincidence, almost supernatural even, when highly individual musicians merge into a perfect synchronized whole, as though they are all parts of a greater body, as though music itself has the beat and is passing through them.” (From *The Mastery of Music: Ten Pathways to True Artistry* by Barry Green)

Being here at Unity Church for twelve years has taught me that everything we all do, in every way, is an example or lesson in community: the contributed energies of individual abilities, concerns and voices; how we move together and/or stay out of each other's way; how we move past our separate concerns in order to allow the 'music itself' to pass through us.

“Communication is thus like a dance, with everyone engaged in intricate and shared movements across many subtle dimensions... There has to be a willingness to participate that comes from trusting or letting go to the energy and spirit of the music, whether you're a performer or a member of the audience. This communication is made possible by the silent rhythm that connects everyone. This is what allows for spontaneous magic to lift people into a state of perfect synchrony where everyone can perform and experience the music as one.” (from *The Mastery of Music: Ten Pathways to True Artistry* by Barry Green)

Such a magnificent process! Thanks for letting me 'speak in music' to say how deeply I trust that "silent rhythm that connects everyone" within this community to lead us through our current challenges, to keep our balance in seeing past immediate and personal concerns to that broad view of the "music itself." Okay, back to the bench for me. There's so much tough practice to get through but the music is just sitting there, waiting for me to catch up!

THREE

2012 Children's Musical

Thirteen Unity Church fifth and sixth graders will star in our production of the original musical **THREE**.

THREE takes a group of children, trapped in a snowstorm, on a musical journey in search of a lost friend. Performances of **THREE** will be held in the Sanctuary on:

Thursday, March 1 at 7:00 p.m.

Friday, March 2 at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 3 at 5:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$3 for children or \$15 for families. Tickets are available at the door.

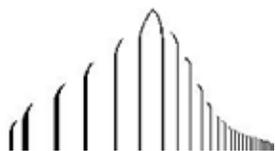
Concerts with a Cause

Come and hear wonderful musicians who are donating their time so that we might support an important cause that needs our help. \$10.00 suggested donation however all concerts are free and open to the public. All proceeds benefit Unity's effort to defeat the 2012 Minnesota Marriage Amendment

Piano Recital

Sunday, March 4 at 3:00 p.m.

Featuring Catherine Kautsky, Professor of Music; Chair, Keyboard Department, Lawrence University, Appleton, WI. The featured work on this program will be *De Profundis*, written in 1992 by composer Frederi Rzewski. The text is Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*, the letter Wilde wrote decrying his imprisonment for homosexuality and extolling the rebirth he hoped to experience as a result of it. Rzewski chooses excerpts from the letter and sets them with precisely the flamboyance due the author. To say that the pianist speaks while playing is to grossly understate the situation!



UNITY CHURCH—UNITARIAN

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Call to Meeting

Saturday, April 7, 2012
10:00 a.m. until noon
Sanctuary

A special meeting of the congregation has been called by the Board of Trustees for Saturday, April 7.

The meeting will include up-to-date information on the results of the capital campaign and a detailed proposal for how best to finance the project. All voting members of the congregation are strongly encouraged to attend. A final agenda for the meeting will be distributed following the Trustees meeting of March 10, 2012.

Save the Date!

Saturday, April 21, 2012

for the

Ordination of Leon Dunkley



Help Prepare a Meal for the Jeremiah Program

Help cook a meal for moms and kids at the Jeremiah program! Volunteers are needed on Tuesday, March 20; Tuesday, April 24; and Thursday, May 24, from 4:45–7:00 p.m. Jeremiah assists single mothers in breaking the cycle of poverty by providing a community where they can prosper. Contact Karen Buggs at 651-297-0111 or buggs745@hotmail.com.

Whole Farm Coop

Buy meat, cheese, produce and more from local, sustainable farms and pick it up at Unity Church! Order from www.wholefarmcoop.com or call 320-732-3023 by Wednesday, March 14. Orders will be delivered to Unity Church on Wednesday, March 21.

Evergreen Foodshelf

The third Sunday of every month is Evergreen Food Drive Sunday. Donations can be brought anytime and should be placed in the barrels located at both the Holly and Portland Avenue entrances. Suggested items for March 18: peanut butter and jelly.



Unity Tomorrow Congregation Review and Comment Session

Sunday, March 11 • 12:30 p.m. • Sanctuary

Come for an update on the *Unity Tomorrow* facilities planning process including financing options. There will be time for learning, questions, and comments. All are welcome and childcare will be provided.

Turn to pages 8 and 9 for an update on the facilities planning process and words from the capital campaign team. All of the most recent renderings, floor plans, and design development details are available online at www.unitytomorrow.org