

## 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, and religious education; and in our community outreach ministries, our literary journal and programs, and many other opportunities.*

If you've been anywhere near Unity Church in the past few weeks, you're sure to have heard of the work being done around getting us all talking about death and dying. Mortality. Choices. Fear. Grief.

These are big things. Serious things. Important things to think about and talk about.

You may be wondering why it's so important. I'll tell you what I think.

I had the privilege of facilitating one of the early group conversations. In the midst of the conversation, there is a question — you will all be asked it when you attend your small group — and this question, as soon as it was asked, fell heavy on the room. Answers were rife with emotion. There were some tears. Lots of fears shared. It's a difficult question to think about — even more difficult to put an answer into words. (I'm giving you advanced warning here, so you can ponder your own answer in privacy before sharing it with others.) The question is this:

How do you imagine your own end-of-life scenario — what do you want and what do you fear?

It might not be so hard to think of how you hope your end-of-life experience may be, but it seems to be pretty hard to imagine dying in ways that scare you. Overwhelmingly, the answers that people in my group shared included something along the lines of: I'm afraid of suffering.

It's certainly what I'm afraid of. Suffering. Especially suffering alone.

Paulo Coelho says, "Tell your heart that the fear of suffering is worse than the suffering itself."

Well, Mr. Coelho, I can tell my heart that all I want, but that doesn't make it stop worrying!

Another aspect of these death and dying conversations is encouraging each of us to talk with our loved ones about death and end-of-life wishes/concerns. Already those of us being trained to lead these conversations have heard over and over again, "My loved ones refuse to talk about this with me." For many people, it can feel morbid or too hard or too sad or too scary. Nobody wants to face the thought of someone they love suffering — or we don't want to face the thought of our own suffering and grief when we are dealing with the loss of someone we love.

Now, at this point I feel it is important to make a distinction between pain and suffering. Death very often involves physical pain of some sort. We have very little choice in this matter, other than accepting what comforts modern medicine can offer. But how we deal with that pain — and how we deal with the fact that we are dying — how we mentally, emotionally, spiritually interpret and contextualize pain and mortality and misfortune and happenstance and natural causes — *that* is suffering.

And our friends and families, through their love for us, suffer emotionally because of our pain.

So — stay with me here — how we deal with our own death (now and at the time of its occurrence) directly affects how much those who love us will suffer. Because if we can somehow manage to talk about it openly *now*, we are preparing ourselves and our loved

ones ahead of time with answers and information for when something does happen and emotions are high and decision have to be made.

And by being prepared, by talking about it now so that in the midst of pain and grief there are no surprises, we can alleviate some suffering for ourselves and our beloveds.

Does this make sense?

Of course, there is no way to avoid all suffering. No guarantee. There will be some surprises. There may be pain. There will be grief. Because, as the first of Buddhism's Four Noble Truths states: suffering is.

But we can be prepared. We can help prepare others. We can build up strength and courage to face what comes. We can be honest, name our fears — by doing so we reduce their power over us. We can reduce the possibility of our own suffering when medical emergencies happen or death approaches. By naming, by speaking, by sharing we can break free of some of the darkness of the unknown and set our hearts free from the fear of suffering. In facing death (together) we can fully live.

Hallman Ministerial Intern Shay MacKay  
with this month's theme team:  
Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs,  
Lisa Friedman, Karen Hering,  
K.P. Hong, Karen Hutt, Ruth Palmer,  
and Rose Schwab

Suffering Theme Resources  
See page 2

## Just Words



I begin with a story: A child came home one day because he was not feeling well. He went to bed. His mother gave him good things to drink and healthy food to eat. She sang to him and tried to make him feel better. Nothing she did seemed to make a difference and each day he grew sicker. Healers from their village were summoned and they too tried to help heal the child. Despite everyone's efforts, the child continued to grow sicker. Finally he was too weak to move. His mother held him close and sang her sweet lullabies to him. He looked up at her loving face and smiled as life drained away. She was heartbroken, as any grieving mother would be. She had heard of a great teacher who was visiting in a nearby village. She decided to walk there with her dead child to see if he could help bring him back to life. She arrived and asked to speak to the Buddha who consented to meet with her. She told him of her great love and her great sorrow. Then she made her request, "I know you are a wise teacher and healer and I want you to bring my beloved child back to life." The Buddha looked at her compassionately of course and made this request: "I want you to go to every home in your village. I want you to ask them about their own loss and pain. If you can find anyone who has not experienced great loss, come back and I will grant your wish." She left his patient and compassionate company and immediately returned to her village, certain that she would find someone if not many people. When she returned to her village, she began going door to door asking her neighbors if they had known great pain and loss. At each place she stopped, the answer was the same. They each shared their own stories of pain and loss with her. No matter where she went, it was always the same. Tried as she had, she still had been unable to find a single person who had not known pain and suffering. It was then that she was able to put her child's body down and begin to grieve. It is also told that her compassion for other's suffering and her wisdom increased as she listened to their stories.

It has been an honor and a privilege to listen to people's stories of loss and grief during our process of making end of life small group conversations available to the congregation. We have met with close to 100 people and everyone has some experience with loss. Everyone has struggled to live through the days of grief where we are asked to integrate the reality of the loss of our loved one.

This month, we are hoping to hold the majority of our small group end of life conversations and are inviting you to join us. You see, because we are a religious community we don't just want to ask you to fill out a promissory note to fill out your health care directives. We want the conversations to be grounded in our own experiences with the health care system and losing loved ones. We want to create deeper connections with each other, possibly people you have never met. So please, when the invitation to participate in one of these small groups arrives, sign up! You will be amazed what you learn from the wisdom of your fellow Unity Church friends.

— Janne Eller-Isaacs

### End of Life Conversations • Sign up today!

All adult members and friends of Unity Church are encouraged to sign up to be a part of facilitated small group discussions focusing on end of life choices, selecting health care agents, and creating a health care directive. Sign up for a discussion group online at: [www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html) or in the Parish Hall on Sundays during March.

If you have questions about this process, please contact Janne Eller-Isaacs at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x106.

## The Wheel of Life

*In Memoriam*

Sue Hodgson  
Rosamond Jacob

## Suffering Theme Resources

### FILM

*Poetry* (2011)  
*Daughters of the Dust* (1991)  
*Life is Beautiful* (1997)  
*Departures* (2008)

### MUSIC

*Requiem* by Herbert Howells  
*Take My Hand, Precious Lord* by Rev. Thomas A. Dorsey  
*The Storm is Passing Over* by Charles Tindley  
*Songs for Cello* by Rufus Cappadocia

### YOUTH

*Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson  
*Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls  
*Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* by Eleanor Coerr  
*The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green

**commUNITY** is the newsletter of Unity Church–Unitarian. It is published monthly, except the month of July. Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Subscriptions are free to those who make pledges to Unity Church and are available to others for \$30 per year.

Unity Church–Unitarian  
733 Portland Avenue  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-228-1456  
[www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org)

# MARCH WORSHIP CALENDAR / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

## February 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](http://www.unityunitarian.org). **NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO 4:30 SERVICE ON EASTER SUNDAY!**

### March 6: *The Courage to Name Suffering*

It can be challenging to share with others that we are in distress. We tend to guard our vulnerabilities from others. But everyone suffers and when we do share our pain with others, we often lessen our own. When we don't the consequences can be disastrous. Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Brian Newhouse will explore the cost that suffering can exact when we deny it, or think that we are self-sufficient and can solve our problems by ourselves.

### March 13: *True Stories, Real Lives*

Come experience the first fruits of Unity's partnership with the St. Paul Almanac. The Almanac reaches out to every community in the city to celebrate the full and growing diversity of St. Paul by asking people to share their stories. This will be a service to remember as we loosen the liturgy a bit to let the whole world in. The service will be led by Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs, worship associate Rene Meyer-Grimberg, and members of the Almanac staff.

### March 20, Palm Sunday: *Moving Toward the Pain*

We can celebrate the eternal return of joy and spring because we have lived through the demands of dark times in our own lives and in winter. In order to fully enter into the Easter season, let us live through Palm Sunday first. Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Heidi Mastrud will conduct the service.

### March 27, Easter Sunday: *Practice Resurrection*

The whole Unity Church family will gather to celebrate Easter. The service will include our ministers and a Story for All Ages by Rev. K.P. Hong. What can resurrection mean for those of us for whom the bodily resurrection is a metaphor at most. Come help redeem the story of Easter. Come learn to practice resurrection. **NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO 4:30 SERVICE ON EASTER SUNDAY!**

## Maundy Thursday Service

Thursday, March 24 • 7:00 p.m. • Ames Chapel

Please join us for a service of ritual and community, sharing in traditional holy week practices of Eucharist and Foot Washing. In the Memorialist tradition, we join to remember the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, which include welcoming all people to a meal of love, giving thanks for the gifts of life, and serving each other in humility.



## Offering Recipients

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

### March 6: Transforming Central

Transforming Central is a community effort to reshape the urban landscape of St. Paul Central High School. This volunteer-driven project addresses the school's stark and prison-like exterior. The completed project will create a more welcoming sense of place providing natural landscaping, improved accessibility, lighting, and gathering places in time for the school's 150th anniversary. The total project cost is \$840,000 of which \$500,000 has already been raised. Upon completion this unprecedented undertaking will have been achieved through the tireless teamwork of faculty, staff, and many Unity Church parents and students.

### March 13: Exodus Lending

Exodus Lending offers trapped payday borrowers a pathway to financial stability by refinancing high-interest payday loans at no interest. Through its innovative lending program, financial coaching, and community support outreach Exodus lifts financially stressed individuals from the clutches of predatory debt. In 2015 forty clients refinanced 30K in loans, collectively saving over \$132K in interest and fees.

### March 20: CLF Prison Ministry

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) is a Unitarian Universalist congregation without walls. Its prison ministry brings hope and inspiration to over 700 inmates nationwide through its pen pal matches, reading materials, pastoral care, and UU classes. Today's collection will be used to send CLF print materials to prison congregants. Unity Church members Hannah Eller-Isaacs, Rev. Danny Givens, and Erin Cerny are actively involved in the CLF Prison Ministry.

### March 27: Mano a Mano International Partners

Co-founded in 1994 by longtime Unity Church members Joan and Segundo Velasquez, Mano a Mano International Partners is dedicated to improving health and economic wellbeing in rural Bolivia. In collaboration with the Unity Church Mano a Mano Outreach Ministry team, Unity member and Mano a Mano volunteer Jackie Smith will lead a group of Minnesota teachers to Santivanez, Bolivia, in June to train and learn from teachers in its district's schools. In addition to workshops on teaching math, language skills, and science, the Bolivian and Minnesota teachers will learn how each group engages parents in their children's learning.

*If you would like to nominate a non-profit organization to be an offering recipient, please visit our website (<http://www.unityunitarian.org/nominate-the-offering.html>) and complete the online nomination form or contact Rev. Lisa Friedman at the church office.*

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES / ORDINATION

## Policy Governance: {Don't} Move the Furniture

From Bailey Webster, Trustee



I'm a furniture mover. Not professionally; recreationally, therapeutically, compulsively. More often than not, my coping mechanism of choice when dealing with stress is moving furniture around in my house. This is either a genetic or a learned trait, passed down from my grandmother to my mother to me. The other day I was having my boyfriend Abe help me move some furniture into my house, unashamedly taking advantage of the extra set of muscles to move some other stuff around while we were at it. About halfway through, he stopped and looked at me, recognition dawning in his eyes. "This is a special treat for you, isn't it?" Whoops. Guilty as charged.

I like moving furniture because it refreshes spaces I look at every day. It's better than just picking up or cleaning — it's like getting a whole new room! The way furniture is arranged affects the way I feel in a space; it affects my creativity, my productiveness, and my sense of welcome. It affirms that I deserve to have a home that feels good; that supports me as I do the hard work of showing up to life.

As I contemplated writing this column, I thought about my experience as a board member since being elected in November. I haven't had the chance to get into the nitty-gritty yet; most of the meetings to this point have been mercifully centered around the big question, "what does it mean to be a trustee on a board?", which has an amazingly convoluted answer. I've learned that it's easier to define what the board *doesn't* do than what it *does*. The more I thought, the more my mind wandered... to furniture moving. My coping mechanism for stress, right??

And then I realized, moving furniture is the perfect analogy for board work! That is, what the board is NOT supposed to do. As an organization, Unity Church follows a governing process called policy governance. And as board members, the number one lesson we need to learn is to not move the furniture. We're roll-up-our-sleeves sort of people, and this is hard for us.

Consider this scenario: you're used to moving furniture around in your house. You enjoy doing it. It makes you feel good. The people in your household decide it's time for you to take a different role; you're no longer allowed to touch the furniture. You are, however, responsible for the overall aesthetics of the house. How it looks and who feels welcome there. Someone else is responsible for not only moving the furniture, but deciding how to arrange it. Your job is to say, "this is how I want the house to *feel*," and then get out of the way. The other person is completely at liberty to arrange the existing furniture, bring in new furniture, or do whatever else they think will achieve your goal for the feel of the house. Your only other job is to monitor their progress to ensure that they don't burn the house down.

This is an oversimplification, of course, but it's basically what being a board member amounts to. The board is responsible for the ends statement—"this is how we want our 'house' to feel." The person who actually moves the furniture is the executive team. They are responsible for the means, i.e. figuring out how to rearrange the furniture to achieve the right "feel." And we're not allowed to touch the furniture. Because touching the furniture would violate the trust we have in the creativity, imagination, and commitment of the furniture movers.



The members of  
Unity Church-Unitarian  
warmly invite you to

**The Ordination of Rose Schwab**  
to the Unitarian Universalist Ministry

Saturday, April 9, 2016  
3:00 p.m.  
Reception to follow

Unity Church-Unitarian  
733 Portland Avenue, St. Paul

Clergy, seminarians, and religious  
professionals are invited to robe  
and process.

Please arrive at 2:00 p.m.

Kindly RSVP online at  
[www.unityunitarian.org/ordination.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/ordination.html)

## Save the date!

May 7, 2016 • 3:00 p.m.

The Ordination of 2014-15 Unity  
Church Hallman Ministerial Intern  
**Lindasusan Ulrich**  
First Unitarian Universalist Church  
of Ann Arbor

## Flowers for Sunday Worship Services

If you would like to provide flowers for Sunday services, there are many dates available. Please contact Barbara Hubbard ([barbarah@unityunitarian.org](mailto:barbarah@unityunitarian.org) / 651-228-1456 x116) to reserve the date of your choice and to make arrangements.



## UUA MidAmerica Regional Assembly

*The WHO in the New Era of Unitarian Universalism*  
April 29-May 1, 2016 • Saint Paul, MN

Keynote Speakers: Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen, Rev. Jeremy Nickel, and Kenny Wiley

If you are interested in attending the conference, volunteering, or learning more about Unity's Denominational Relations Team, please contact Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org). Details at [www.midamericaregionuaa.org/ra](http://www.midamericaregionuaa.org/ra).



## UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY June 22-26, 2016

The theme for GA 2016 will be *Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect*. The faith world is increasingly multifaith. People are crossing borders of religion and spiritual practice to create wholeness in their lives individually and collectively. General Assembly 2016 will assemble leaders and communities of many faiths to worship together, learn from one another, and create a new vision of faith that no longer divides us, but connects us to an interdependent future that works for all. If you are interested in serving as a Unity Church delegate, please contact Barbara Hubbard at [barbarah@unityunitarian.org](mailto:barbarah@unityunitarian.org). Details and registration: [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga)

## Camp UniStar

Would you enjoy a week on a beautiful island retreat where you can unplug, unwind, and enjoy nature? A place where you can learn something new and engage – when you want to – with a village of old and new friends who are largely rooted in Unitarian Universalist values?

Camp UniStar is a special week-long rustic retreat for individuals, couples and families with shared values. Reachable only by water, the camp is surrounded by the Chippewa National Forest on Star Island in Cass Lake, one of the largest lakes in northern Minnesota, near Bemidji.

Visit [www.campunistar.org](http://www.campunistar.org) to plan your summer adventure!

## 2015-16 Hallman Ministerial Intern

Shay MacKay



My seminary community, and the world, lost a very special man this week. Baba Ibrahim Farajajé was extraordinary in every sense of the word. Among all of the amazing things he did during his life, he was currently serving as the provost of Starr King and beloved to many, many people. His death was difficult and unexpected, and left me and my friends

shaken and bereft. I spent the morning after he died on the phone with sobbing classmates and was glued to Facebook the rest of the day, eager for information. I was desperate for connection with those I loved — and who loved me — during this time of such great sadness, and it was hard to be so far away from my community in Berkeley.

With great gratitude and many tears, through the miracle of technology, I was able to be with the Starr King community as we gathered for a service of grief and remembrance the day after Baba's death. From the comfort of my couch, cuddled up with my dog and favorite fleece blanket, I prayed and sang and wept and laughed with my friends. I was able to see their faces, albeit a little fuzzy and delayed, but familiar and comforting none-the-less. I was able to hear their beautiful voices lifted in song and story as we shared memories and music of a beloved friend and teacher. And I was able to be present, to witness both the pain of this loss and the power of the love that binds us together.

I tend to want to suffer alone; to withdraw and isolate myself, cry my tears, lick my wounds, and then get on with the business of living. And sometimes, this works — sometimes it may even be the best thing for me. But then there are times like this week, times when all I really need is to be held by a community who knows and loves me. It is in this warm embrace that I find the safety I need to let go, the understanding and compassion that moves with me through my grief, and the strength that gently guides me toward healing.

I have been fortunate to find many such communities in my life, Unity being among them. This week has reminded me that sometimes I need to reach out, that my community actually *wants* to be present for me, and, perhaps even more importantly, that they need *me* to be present for them. This covenant between us, this call to a relationship of commitment to each other, is a two-way street. By isolating myself during a time of communal grief, I deprive myself of support and comfort, but I also deprive my beloved community members of the support and comfort they need from me. And so, through my tears, I smile in gratitude of this beautiful gift we give each other.

Shay MacKay can be reached by phone at 651-228-1456 x129 or by email at [shay@unityunitarian.org](mailto:shay@unityunitarian.org).

# WELCOME WORDS & MEMBERSHIP / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

## Welcome Words



My childhood minister talked about each of us carrying a “loose-leaf” bible. At any particular moment of our lives, each of us carries with us our own carefully chosen sources of truth. They might be scripture from world religions, wisdom stories, poetry or prose. They are words that ground

our spirits and give us insight into life’s meaning. Why loose-leaf? It was his way of capturing the face that revelation is not sealed. Sometimes, on our religious journeys, we gain new understanding that inspires us to remove a page that no longer fits. Other times, we discover new insights that compel us to add fresh pages in. What sacred words and stories do you carry? How have they changed through the years?

See you in church!

Rev. Lisa Friedman

Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement

## Pathway to Membership Classes

Unity Church offers three different classes for visitors who are exploring Unity as a spiritual home. Sign up at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement, at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x107. She is also happy to meet with you personally to answer questions and to welcome you into the congregation. Childcare is available by request at least one week in advance.

### Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

**Sunday, March 13, 12:15-1:30 p.m.** ~also offered ~

**Wednesday, March 23, 7:15-8:30 p.m.**

If you have been visiting Unity Church and would like to find out more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation, we invite you to join us for a Welcome to Unity class. Together, we will explore the mission and vision of this church, as well as historical and contemporary Unitarian Universalism.

### Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Inquiry

Finding Yourself at Unity is now offered on a regular basis on Sundays. These sessions can be attended in the order that works for you. In these classes, we will have an opportunity to share part of our religious journey, to take a more in depth look at the history of Unity Church, to discuss the expectations and benefits of membership, and get to know the programs and ministries of the congregation.

### Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

**Wednesday, April 13, 7:15–9:00 p.m.**

Have you been considering membership at Unity Church? This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world’s needs meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class will conclude with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and join the church!

## Fellowship Groups

*These groups are open to all members and friends of Unity Church. If you are looking to connect with a group, please contact the person listed below, visit the church website at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) for meeting information, or call the church office at 651-228-1456.*

**A New Look at the Bible:** Second Thursday of the month (March 10) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

**Afterthoughts:** This group meets 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 17) from Noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Evergreen Quilters:** Second Tuesday of the month (March 8) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (March 26) from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760.

**Living With Grief Group:** For people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (February 16) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

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

**Unitots!:** A drop-in playgroup for families with kids through preschool age. Every Monday and Thursday, from 9:30 a.m.-noon, in the nursery. Contact Michelle Hill at [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org)

**Unity Book Club:** Second Tuesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. All are welcome—even if you haven't read the book. Contact Jack Hawthorne at [jack.hawthorne@comcast.net](mailto:jack.hawthorne@comcast.net). **March 8 selection:** *In the Garden of Beasts; Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin* by Erik Larson

**Unity Bridge Club:** The next meeting of the Bridge Club will be Friday, March 4, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209.

**Women In Retirement, The Choice Years:** This group meets the second and fourth Thursday (March 10 and 24) of each month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) for more information.

**Young Adult Group:** Potluck supper on Tuesday, March 22, at 6:30 p.m., in the Center Room. See page 7 for additional Young Adult Group programming. Contact: Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org)

**Sangha Zen Meditation:** Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. Instruction is offered on the first Tuesday (March 1) beginning at 5:00 p.m. Contact Ken Ford at [kford5@comcast.net](mailto:kford5@comcast.net)

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## Young Adult Group (ages 18-35)

The Young Adult group is growing! We have two events planned for March. Join us on Saturday, March 12, at 1:00 p.m., for a trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (we will meet in the front entrance at the museum). The on Tuesday, March 22, bring your favorite dis for a 6:30 p.m. potluck at the church. Our theme will be renewal. All are welcome! Contact Rev. Lisa Friedman ([lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org)) to be added to the email list to receive Young Adult news and announcements, and to join our Facebook group.

## Elders' Group

### Gentle Yoga for Everyone

**Tuesday, March 15 • 1:00–2:30 p.m. • Foote Room**

Elen Bahr will be leading us in gentle stretching and movement exercises. Come in comfortable clothing. Folks of all physical capabilities welcome!

## Spiritual Practice for Leaders

**Saturday, March 26 • 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. • Unity Church  
Rob Eller-Isaacs and Sarah Cledwyn**

**Pledging Members: Free // Non-Pledging: \$25**

Effective leadership operates at the intersection of action and spiritual practice. One informs the other. Those in positions of leadership whether at church, work, or in civic life are too often driven by the expectations of productivity and accomplishment that can leave them off kilter and burned out. Spiritual practitioners can get so focused on their internal experience that they can be paralyzed or insular. Leadership grounded in practice, keeps us sustainably focused and engaged, choosing our action with intent and consciousness from the truth of our being. This workshop asks that we develop both the understanding and the discipline to integrate practice and action so that we might be more effective, better balanced, and more loving people and leaders. Email [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org) to sign up. Email [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org) by March 19 to request child care.

## Unity Church Heritage Society

Consider making a legacy gift to Unity Church and become a member of Unity's Heritage Society. Legacy giving is an intentional act that leaves a lasting legacy in your name and sustains the powerful work of this church for generations to come. A legacy gift is a designation from your estate to a charitable organization. Contact Barbara Hubbard at [barbarah@unityunitarian.org](mailto:barbarah@unityunitarian.org) for more information.



## Committed Couples Class

*Space is still available!*

Committed Couples is a class designed to support all couples who are committed to one another and to promote healthy and productive conversations about relationships. The class will cover issues like finances, spirituality, the impact of family of origin issues, parenting, intimacy, and conflict. There will be sharing and work done in small groups and as couples. Each creates a relationship vision together which serves as a foundation for the work that happens during class.

Led by Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs, the Committed Couples class will be held on seven consecutive Tuesday evenings, from 7:00-9:15 p.m., beginning March 8 and continuing through April 19. Registration is free for pledging members of Unity Church and \$110 for non-pledging friends. To register, please contact Martha Tilton by email at [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x105.

Contact Michelle Hill by email at [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org) to request childcare.

## Unity Church

## Arts & Treasures Sale

**Saturday, May 7\***

*\*Please note date change from originally published April 16.*

Is there something gold and lovely languishing in your jewelry box? Is a working musical instrument gathering dust in your attic? Donate your still-valuable, but no longer needed items to Unity's Arts & Treasures sale, and help us reach our 2016 fundraising goal. Bring your treasures to the church office, marked "attention Barbara Hubbard" or to the Peace Coffee table on Sundays. If requested, Unity will provide a formal letter of acknowledgement for your gift which could accompany your gift appraisal for your taxes.

Questions or want to help make this fundraiser a success? Contact Barbara Hubbard at [barbarah@unityunitarian.org](mailto:barbarah@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x116.



# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun. Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., followed by worship at 6:45 p.m., and an evening of rich programming beginning at 7:10 p.m. All are welcome. Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance. **Dinner:** The cost for dinner is: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family. (Children under the age two are free.) All meals will offer vegan and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies may contact [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org) to arrange to have a special preparation. Email Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) for financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner.

## March 2

*Dinner menu: Rainbow vegetables over couscous with a honey-lemon vinaigrette*

### **A Poetic Miscellany: Some Poems We Like and a Few of Our Own**

Jim Armstrong and Kim Chapman have written, read, and shared poetry for some thirty years. They bring a few of their favorites poems by others — Whitman, Frost, Billy Collins, Mary Oliver — and a few of their own. Their belief in the power of poetry to capture and express the details of the world, both human and natural, is what makes poetry important and entertaining for them. Come share their enthusiasm.

### **End of Life Conversations**

All adult members and friends of Unity Church are encouraged to sign up to be a part of facilitated small group discussions focusing on end of life choices, selecting health care agents, and creating a health care directive. Sign up online for this group: [www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html)

### **Addiction and Recovery Ministry • Everyone is welcome!**

This group offers topics for discussion and time for sharing and peer-to-peer support ministry. The use of the terms addiction and recovery are meant to be inclusive and self-defined with a focus on strengths, community, and spiritual development.

### **Textile Arts Group**

Bring your knitting, crocheting, tatting, embroidery, and cross stitch for an evening of fellowship and service. This group will meet regularly on the first and third Wednesday evenings. All ages and levels of experience are welcome! If you have any questions, please contact Linda Mandeville at [lindamandeville@aol.com](mailto:lindamandeville@aol.com).

### **Embodied Spiritual Practice: Take It Easy Vinyasa**

Led by Elen Bahr, this is our slow and gentle version of “power yoga” or “fitness yoga.” We’ll use classical yoga poses (Warriors, Downward Facing Dog, Chair Pose, balance poses, etc.) but we’ll take them slow and easy to help you unwind at the end of your day. Bring a yoga mat and blanket, if possible.

### **New Family Religious Education Orientation**

An orientation for families whose children are enrolling in Religious Education for the first time. Contact [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org) if you plan to attend this orientation session.

### **Go: The Chinese Game**

Learn and play Go, the Chinese board game. Anyone above the age of 10 is welcome. Bring your own board and set if you have one. [www.usgo.org/what-go](http://www.usgo.org/what-go).

## March 9

*Dinner menu: Spanakopita, Greek salad, pita bread, dessert*

### **Partner Church Movie Night: *The History and Modernization of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church***

In 2012 the Starr King School of Ministry made a video focusing on the Balázs Scholars and their role of modernizing the Unitarian Churches in Transylvania. The Balázs Program is immensely successful, providing meaningful educational experience for Transylvanian ministers. Not only do the Balázs Scholars add vitality and breadth to Starr King classes, they also help to strengthen Partner Church programs all over the U.S. At Unity Church we have regularly hosted the scholars at our congregation, in addition to supporting the people of our partner village, Homrodszentpeter. Join our Partner Church members to watch this one hour video, learn about the Transylvanian Unitarian history and meet many Balázs scholars through the video. There will be time following the film for conversation and community.

### **Contemplative Conversation: Suffering**

Join Spiritual Director Sarah Cledwyn in contemplative conversation around the worship theme of suffering. Where do we encounter suffering and what do we do with it when it visits us? What is the role of community in our experience of suffering? We will engage with the theme through a group process of listening, sharing and witness.

### **End of Life Conversations**

All adult members and friends of Unity Church are encouraged to sign up to be a part of facilitated small group discussions focusing on end of life choices, selecting health care agents, and creating a health care directive. Sign up online for this group: [www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html)

### **Embodied Spiritual Practice: Yoga Round**

Elen Bahr leads this practice which alternates between deep breathing, guided meditation and physical movement, to create an introspective and relaxing hour. We spend most of the time sitting on the floor or a chair with some periods of lying down and standing. Wear non-restrictive clothing. Bring a yoga mat and blanket, if possible.

### **Go: The Chinese Game • See March 2 description**

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

---

## March 16

*Dinner menu: Happy St. Patrick's Day! Irish sausage with mashed potatoes and roasted white bean salad*

### **Islamophobia in America Today**

#### **Jaylani Hussein, Executive Director of CAIR-MN (Council of American-Islamic Relations)**

Islamophobia is on the rise in America. Reports of Islamophobic discrimination, intimidation, bullying and harassment, threats, and violence targeting American Muslims, or those perceived to be Muslim, and Islamic institutions have increased significantly as compared to any other period of time since the 9/11 terror attacks. What is Islamophobia? And how does it tie into the concept of "legislating fear?" This session will discuss the root of these issues and suggest ways of addressing them as individuals and as an organization.

### **End of Life Conversations**

All adult members and friends of Unity Church are encouraged to sign up to be a part of facilitated small group discussions focusing on end of life choices, selecting health care agents, and creating a health care directive. Sign up online for this group: [www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html)

### **Embodied Spiritual Practice: Therapeutic Yoga**

Elen Bahr leads this practice which is great for those with chronic tightness, chronic pain, or who simply want to move their bodies more freely. The 75 minute-long practice takes place lying on the floor, with slow, subtle movements and gentle breathing. We find this practice is best for adults, not youth. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat and blanket, if possible.

### **Textile Arts Group • See March 2 description**

**Go: The Chinese Game • See March 2 description**

## March 23

*Dinner menu: Roasted chicken and carrots with an apple, fennel, and endive salad*

### **Unitarian Universalists Reflect on the Death With Dignity Movement with Rev. Harlan Limpert & Rebecca Thoman**

Unitarian Universalism's first principle (the inherent worth and dignity of every person) is the spirit behind so many of our justice efforts including a woman's right to choose, immigration justice and the right to vote. With medical advances often extending a persons death rather than enhancing a persons life, the right to choose the time and circumstances of ones death is becoming an urgent desire of many. The Minnesota Compassionate Care Act has recently been introduced in Minnesota. Modeled after Oregon's Death With Dignity law, if passed it would enable people with less than six months to live and of sound mind the right to request medication from their physician to end their suffering. This presentation will enable members and friends, in the safety of our religious community, to explore their thoughts and feelings about the proposed legislation and how our UU principles speak to a persons right to die with dignity.

### **Chakras and the Journey of Healing: Part I**

Come learn about your body's chakra system! You will learn the consciousness associated with each chakra as well as its association with a major nerve plexus, glandular center and physiological center within your body. This information can help integrate your body, mind, and spirit connection and can improve your physical health. Kristen Wernecke is a minister of healing and Unity Church member who uses energy healing, massage therapy, and health coaching to assist her clients. She also teaches Grounding Meditation and is the author of *Choosing Conscious Health for a Vibrant Life*.

### **End of Life Conversations**

All adult members and friends of Unity Church are encouraged to sign up to be a part of facilitated small group discussions focusing on end of life choices, selecting health care agents, and creating a health care directive. Sign up online for this group: [www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html)

### **Welcome to Unity with Rev. Lisa Friedman**

If you have been visiting Unity Church and would like to find out more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation, we invite you to join us for a Welcome to Unity class. We will explore the mission and vision of this church, as well as historical and contemporary Unitarian Universalism.

### **Embodied Spiritual Practice: Take It Easy Vinyasa**

**See March 2 description**

**Go: The Chinese Game • See March 2 description**

## March 30

*Dinner menu: Garlic roasted pork loin with mashed potatoes and gravy*

### **International Solidarity and the Work for Peace in South Korea**

Come hear Unity Church member Barry Riesch talk about his experience traveling with Veterans for Peace on an International Solidarity Trip to Jeju Island, South Korea, in December 2015. While there, they witnessed the continued construction of a Navy base which is part of the United States' missile defense strategy and learned about the struggles of local villagers who have labored daily for over eight years to stop the base's construction.

### **End of Life Conversations**

All adult members and friends of Unity Church are encouraged to sign up to be a part of facilitated small group discussions focusing on end of life choices, selecting health care agents, and creating a health care directive. Sign up online for this group: [www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/end-of-life-conversations.html)

### **Chakras and the Journey of Healing: Part II**

**See March 23 description**

### **Embodied Spiritual Practice: Therapeutic Yoga**

**See March 16 description**

**Go: The Chinese Game • See March 2 description**

## Volunteer Corner

To sign up for any of these volunteer opportunities and get connected with our shared ministry, please contact Madeline Summers, Volunteer Coordinator, at 651-228-1456 x126 or [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org).

### Soup Suppers

#### After the 4:30 Sunday Worship Service

All meals will offer vegan, vegetarian, and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies may contact Madeline Summers at [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org) to arrange to have a special preparation. Volunteers to help prepare, serve, and clean up are always welcome!

**March 6: Pea and arborio rice soup and Parmesan lemon and chicken Soup**

**March 13: Chili**

**March 20: Roasted pork and poblano pepper soup and Sweet corn puree**

**March 27: No 4:30 service so no soup! Happy Easter!**

### Volunteer Bakers are needed

Our Memorial Services team is continually recruiting bakers to help with cookie and bar making. If you are able to bake three dozen cookies at home and bring them to church 3-5 times throughout the church year, please let us know and we will add you to our volunteer list. This volunteer job is very flexible and well suited to family volunteering.

### Try out a Welcome Team!

We are currently looking for additional Welcome Team members at the 9:00 and 4:30 services. We invite you to join us and try it out this month. Volunteers greet members and visitors as they arrive to church, welcome them to Religious Education and to worship, pass out orders of service, ring the church bell, collect and count the offertory, and assist with serving coffee during our fellowship time after the service.

### Wellspring Wednesday Dinner Help

Help prepare, serve, and clean up a Wellspring Wednesday meal! Available shifts include:

**Tuesday, March 1, 15, 22, 29 • 5:30-7:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, March 2, 16, 23, 30 • 5:30-8:30 p.m.**

### Circle of Peace Movement

Rondo Circle of Peace held on Mondays supports the Rondo community's young men who are at risk for incarceration. A Hmong Women's circle and African American Men's circle meet on Thursdays. A welcoming atmosphere at Circle starts with a homemade meal. The Restorative-Racial Justice team needs your help with bringing a part of a meal. You can sign up online for the Monday meal at [www.signupgenius.com/go/8050a4faea72ca46-monday](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050a4faea72ca46-monday) and at [www.signupgenius.com/go/8050a4faea72ca46-thursday/](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050a4faea72ca46-thursday/) for the Thursday meal.

## Evergreen Quilters

### Sew Many Colors

Evergreen Quilters are busily working on their entries for "Sew Many Colors," their bi-annual Parish Hall show and silent auction that will run April 1 through noon on April 24. Please come to the artists' reception in the Parish Hall on Friday, April 8, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Meet the artists, see their colorful works, and snack on light refreshments.

In even-numbered years, Evergreen Quilters show-case their quilted creations in a silent auction for church members and friends. This year there will also be buy-it-now items for sale each Sunday. All the money raised helps support projects and programs at several local organizations that offer services to homeless and hungry families including Sharing Korner Food Shelf; The Family Place, a day shelter for families; and Jeremiah House, a transitional housing and job-preparation program for young mothers and their children. Occasionally, when there are similar programs that have special needs, we contribute to them, as well.

The center-piece of Evergreen Quilters' show and sale is the large queen-size raffle quilt they have made. Raffle tickets will be available for sale in April. The winning ticket will be drawn at noon on Sunday, April 24. Bids on all displayed items will be taken each Sunday, after morning services, from April 3 through 11:45 a.m. on Sunday, April 24. Items "won" through the silent auction will be available to take home on April 24.

Evergreen Quilters are Unity Church members and friends of varying skill-levels who are interested in making quilts together. All members and friends are welcome to join the group at any time. The group meets year-round on the second Tuesday (7:00-9:00 p.m.) and the 4th Saturday (10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.) each month, with a few exceptions. If you're interested in participating, for information and to double-check meeting times, please call Peggy at 651-698-2760 or e-mail her at [pwright@rubywings.com](mailto:pwright@rubywings.com).

For more announcements about this event, watch the church bulletin boards, the April newsletter, and *This Week at Unity*.

### Food Collection for Sharing Korner

Unity's Evergreen Quilters coordinate an on-going food drive for Sharing Korner Food Shelf. Collection baskets are stationed in the main lobby and by the Holly Avenue doors. Donations of non-perishable items are always welcome.

**Thank you!**



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Project Home needs your expertise!

Unity Church welcomes homeless families with children to stay overnight in our Junior High classrooms during the month of May. To get ready for their visit, a core group of volunteers will be making preparations during March, April, and the beginning of May. Please join us for this meaningful work! We are looking for volunteers to serve on the organizing team, working behind the scenes. We especially need:

- Enthusiastic extroverts to help recruit volunteer hosts on Sundays in April.
- Computer-savvy folks to assist volunteer hosts as they sign-up online.
- Folks available some afternoons in May to call and remind volunteer hosts of their shift.

Join us for our kick-off meeting on Sunday, March 6, at 10:10 a.m. in the DeCramer room. Contact Anna Newton for more information at 651-295-1524. Thank you, and welcome!



## Rainbow Chalice Alliance Pick up your pie!

If you ordered a pie during Unity's Rainbow Chalice Alliance (RCA) annual Pi(e) Day Bake Sale, pies will be available for pick up on Sunday, March 13, after each service.



## All We Need is the Air That We Breathe, and...\*

From Aleks Kinclara, member of Unity Church and the UU Solar Coalition Team



**We have come to a fork in the road and we are taking it.**

About sixty Unity households attended Unity's Community Solar Garden presentations in January. Roughly two thirds of attendees have already moved forward with the sign-up process. Go Solar – it's a happy thing.

**"Going Solar with Us" may be different (better) than you think.**

Community solar subscribers DO NOT purchase exclusive solar energy. Instead, we sponsor additional production of clean energy for use by everyone on the grid. Our community solar panels generate solar output that replaces fossil fuel-based energy within the total energy mix used by all Xcel customers, including ourselves. Everyone benefits.

**Your participation matters.**

Your decision to participate may seem like an insignificant symbolic vote for a better future – just a gesture. But what you do helps others decide to do it too. Our collective impact will inspire other faith communities to do this also. Minnesota's success will be copied in other states. With your help, community solar will speed our transition to a healthier, safer world.

**What community solar is really about...**

- It's about the air that you Breathe. Deeply. In.
- It's about reducing ground-level ozone and soot – the smog implicated in cardiovascular disease, lung cancers, and respiratory diseases such as asthma. Asthma makes it difficult for an individual to breathe. Difficult to get enough air. The incidence of asthma is much higher for children in lower-income areas – inner cities, near industry, near power plants.
- It's about slowing the planetary warming that raises pollen levels for people red and bleary with uncomfortable allergies, or that challenges individuals with heart failure, or that increases the northward range of ticks, mosquitos and other vectors of devastating diseases.
- It's about reducing the mercury residue stored in fish that can damage the brains of people who rely heavily on our polluted rivers for their food.
- It's about bringing down high per capita emissions in the U.S., knowing that we otherwise continue to export suffering to indigenous peoples and poorer nations.
- It's about saying goodbye to centuries of burning noxious fossil fuels into our air, disrupting climate.
- It's about replacing old-fashioned, dangerous energy with smart energy, helping to build a clean energy industry with clean energy jobs – the kind that can lift people without making them sick.



**Can everyone help sponsor additional solar? What does it take to make community solar successful? Is a community solar subscription manageable for you? Does it matter when you sign up? \***

Watch for solar presentation meeting dates or visit us and pick up a brochure at our table in the Parish Hall. Maybe you know of a group or organization that would like to host an introductory presentation. If so, contact Paul Densmore at [unitysolargarden@gmail.com](mailto:unitysolargarden@gmail.com).

\* Download the complete version of this article at [www.unityunitarian.org/solar](http://www.unityunitarian.org/solar).

# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH

## Pitter-pattering Questions

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



From KP Hong, Director of Religious Education

There is no shortage of suffering. Just listen in as our high school youth gather for weekly circle and begin with check-in, and the litany of trouble becomes all too familiar: a friend at school hospitalized for depression, love unrequited, someone's mother has cancer, another disappointment about college, a back injury and piling homework, anxiety about the world, and adversity and grief of shattered life falling in on itself—a parody of any sense of life's radiance. The Buddha would seem to agree, that suffering is universal and inescapable.

In one of the most heartbreaking stories from the Buddhist tradition, a young woman named Kisagotami loses her mind at the death of her child. She refuses to believe that her child is dead, and carrying the tiny corpse on her hip, she wanders frantically from house to house, begging neighbors for medicine to revive her child. Finally, someone directs her to the Buddha, who offers to provide medicine if she would bring him an ordinary mustard seed obtained from a family in which no one has died. She goes from house to house asking for mustard seed, and no one refuses her. But when she asks if anyone has died in the family, the response is always, "Oh, yes, of course." She eventually reaches the very outskirts of town without having found a single family that has not been visited by death. She returns to the Buddha and in his quiet presence, her mind clears. She understands the meaning of his words and from that day becomes one of his devoted followers.

The moral of the story? That suffering is universal, that Kisagotami learns that impermanence and loss are inexorable experiences common to us all? Perhaps, but such a reading of the story would find little purchase in the profoundly *practical* scheme of early Buddhism — not an ossified *belief* system but a *lived* reality and *practice* premised on its efficacy in life. Kisagotami's release from suffering and debilitating grief does not occur from some enlightened insight about suffering but with the Buddha's directive to go from house to house, inquiring of the inhabitants whether death has occurred there. Kisagotami is not some faceless character in a generic tale but someone known by others in the village. When she knocks on a door and asks if death has occurred in the home, beyond a brusque yes or no, her aching question would call forth their grief and suffering. She would be invited into their house and haltingly told about the eldest son, Sanjaya, who was to be married but had died on a routine hunting trip. She would be told about his bride-to-be, a teenage girl who may have been Kisagotami's own younger cousin or niece. She would look into the face of his father who could no longer smile, even though laughter had returned to the youngest children in the house.

Hearing these stories and being drawn into her neighbors' lives, their sorrows and joys and fears, Kisagotami begins to viscerally understand that suffering is never merely objective or subjective, but profoundly interpersonal and shared. That suffering, like nothing else, insists that *relationality and not individuality* is existentially prior and original. That persons do not enter relationships but are in fact constituted by them. That medicine for suffering is not an achieved psychological or mystical state of consciousness but the embrace of community and its forms of deep recognition that reveal what is broken and beautiful about ourselves to one another.

Listen in as high school youth gather weekly for check-in, their practice of going from house to house asking for mustard seed. Listen in to aching questions that insist on something far more substantial and transformative than insight or knowledge. Listen in as they claim relationships that can confer personhood strong enough to suffer this broken and wildly beautiful world.

## Teachers' Cafe

Greater Twin Cities area gathering of religious education volunteer teachers, parents, and Unitarian Universalist friends drawn to ministry with children and youth, for community and dialogue on "Teaching as Spiritual Practice."

Anyone who has risked courageous teaching knows that it tugs at the heart and breaks it wide open into astonishment and love. "The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it seems able," writes Parker Palmer, and learning becomes sacrament of a deeper reality and the mystery of life itself. Such teaching has little to do with technique or method but rather illumines the identity, integrity, and heart of the teacher. And teaching becomes spiritual practice.

Please come to share in conversation and friendship over coffee, tea, and lunch with fellow R.E. teachers about teaching as spiritual practice.

**Date:** Saturday, March 19, 2016

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. -1:30 p.m. (childcare and lunch provided)

**Place:** Unity Church, Parish Hall

**Registration:** Online at [www.unityunitarian.org/teachers-cafe.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/teachers-cafe.html)

**Speaker:** Dr. Mark Hicks is the Angus MacLean Professor of Religious Education at Meadville Lombard Theological School and Director of the Fahs Collaborative.



He is a nationally-recognized leader in helping transform the teaching-learning lives of public school teachers and children. More recently, he is familiar among Twin Cities UU congregations for leading Beloved Conversations that help communities risk intimate conversations about race and culture.

## Religious Education at Unity Church

### Listen... The Walls Are speaking to You

From Megan Casselman-Condon, Religious Education Ministry Team member

Stand still and listen. Can you hear it? Look closely. Can you see it? The walls are beginning to speak and the voices are those of our children.

Sometimes, at the right time of day, I can hear the youthful chorus of conversation grow from the ground up, enlivening the foundation of this church as it resounds and tumbles around the rooms spinning, rising, falling and landing at the feet of those lucky enough to be nearby.

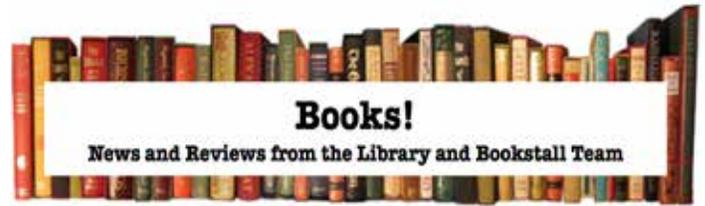
I found myself wrapped in this beautiful wave of conversation the other Sunday while putting up signs encouraging our children to participate in making community art murals for the Rotation classrooms. Children poured down the hallway after meeting upstairs, lost in conversation and laughter, bringing energy to the silent and waiting lower level. In those moments, our children became the architects of the space, shaping how others engaged within it. Suddenly, with the presence of our young community, the space began to take shape through dialogue and interaction of those within the room.

It is a beautiful thing to watch a space come alive with conversation. What if these conversations were always there and didn't end? It is possible and it is happening in RE spaces at the foundation of our building. You might wonder, what is happening to the walls to make them speak? And WHY is it happening? As a member of the Religious Education Ministry Team and the design team for the lower level space, we are working to keep the conversations going by bringing thoughtful structures of curriculum, philosophy and design to classrooms in order to further strengthen our children's voices and ideas.

At Unity Church and within UU religious education, we teach our children about sacred spaces within the community. Then we began to ask, what if the structure of religious education spaces could become another sacred conversation and sacred space — a true reflection of our principles and values as a community? Spaces that act as an invitation to wonder, dialogue, and discovery.

And this is where you are invited to participate. Come downstairs and help build the sacred spaces, come to have a conversation, come to look... and listen as these spaces become a third teacher that actively reflect the ecology of learning, conversation and community within RE programs.

Changes are everywhere. The Spirit Play rooms are already changing, and changes are moving into Rotation classrooms in the form of community murals. Already, there are displays of learning and art placed inside classrooms and along hallways, transforming walls from a static environment into one responsive to learning and children's vision. Come down to the lower level. Look... Listen... and Learn from our children. And if you don't happen to see or hear our children... listen to the walls. They are speaking to you.



### It's Not About Dying Well so Much as It Is About Living a Good Life

From Shelley Butler, Libraries and Bookstall Team

You may have noticed that there has been some talk about death and end-of-life issues around Unity lately. Atul Gawande, doctor and author of *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*, says that though it takes a great deal of courage to face mortality and act on the truths we find along the way, that conversations about our own mortality are the ones that matter most.

The American Psychological Association says, "Death and dying can be stressful for dying people, their loved ones, and care-givers." Personally, I'm grateful and dare I say somewhat proud that Unity's ministers and congregants are facilitating conversations about death and dying in a bit more depth than the APA.

The Library and Bookstall Team want to help! Look for these new and/or recommended books at Unity:

- *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi; a new memoir by a surgeon who faced his own mortality, and in doing so, explored those things that make a life worth living.
- *The Good Death: An Exploration of Dying in America* by Ann Neumann; after caring for her dying father, Neumann noticed that the way we talk about death and the way we die are different. Neumann became a hospice volunteer. In the course of writing this book, she talked to patients, activists, doctors, nurses, clergy, and bioethicists to come to a greater understanding of the controversial subject of dying.
- *Hard Choices for Loving People: CPR, Artificial Feeding, Comfort Care and the Patient with a Life-Threatening Illness* by Frank Dunn is a guide of common sense and practical advice for helping patients and families with end-of-life decisions.

And, if you missed Karen Branan's book reading last month (and we understand if you did, it was Valentine's Day after all), take a look at *The Family Tree: A Lynching in Georgia, a Legacy of Secrets and My Search for the Truth*. She started out researching a story about a lynching that happened in 1912 in her hometown in Georgia but the search for truth turned personal as she discovered that in her family tree were people involved in the crime and the victims of it.

See you in the Library or Bookstall!

# MARCH PARISH HALL ARTIST

## March Parish Hall Artist • Ken Starlin

I have always been "artistic" yet it is only after coming to prison that I have become an artist. Unfortunately this seems to be the case for most of the men that I have spent the last eighteen years of my life with. Seeing the amount of artistic potential confined behind these walls has led me to view art in a light that I could have never believed possible... as a way to change people's lives.

I started drawing designs on envelopes when I was seventeen. This had little to do with being an artist but instead it came from a more basic instinct — one of survival. In prison, if a person has nothing — then they are nothing. Or worse, they are victims. As a teenager stuck in with grown men in a maximum security prison I had to find a way to support myself, to feed myself, and to make sure that I had the things that I needed to be comfortable... and safe. Drawing for people was the key; and to my surprise I found that I was good at what I did. I drew the best envelope designs; charging people soup, soap, and soda for patterns of roses, hearts, and "I luv You."

Eventually I learned that I could do better. I taught myself how to draw with pencils, pens, kool-aid, and coffee. Then I learned that if I stayed out of trouble long enough I would be allowed to order paint. Well let's just say that this blew my mind! So, that is exactly what I did. I minded my own business long enough to be able to order painting supplies, proper artist pens, and real colored pencils. In one way or another I have been creating ever since.

I have found myself studying every book, VHS demo, and TV drawing show that I could find in an effort to learn how to be an artist. But besides one Introduction to Art college class, which was textbook only, I have never had anyone to actually teach me anything. See, and question "how?", has been my method. A process that doesn't work for everyone (and often kicks my butt!).

And so, I study... and I teach. I show everyone, willing to listen how to paint. And what I do not know how to do I try to figure out by reproducing an artist of similar style. I have copied at least a dozen Modigliani paintings — then painted my own. I copied pastel after pastel by Degas until mine looked exactly like his — then I taught others how to use pastels, then acrylic, H<sub>2</sub>O oils, and even crayons. And through all of this I have learned to talk to people, I have learned how to treat people with respect and even with compassion. I have seen a man that I have taught to paint, work for his "grub" — instead of taking it from someone else. And now this is why I do art — to help others be able to created something... to inspire those around me to try to be better... to help myself become better.

Now, a dear friend of mine out there in the free world wants to take some of the hundreds of paintings I have floating around and have an "Art Exhibit." A show of my art at which I cannot be present... but am? Yes, I am. This art show is a blessing to me... An inspiration in my artist journey to someday be "an artist." So thank you for all of your support and for all of your good wishes. I am grateful for this opportunity and one day I will be there with all of you. Until then I have some friends to teach... and some more lessons to learn.

## From Bryan Kujawski: Ken Starlin's Friend

I was fortunate to meet my friend Ken Starlin through the Amicus One-to-One program. Though Ken has been incarcerated for his entire adult life, he has cultivated a refined, self-directed love of learning. Ken takes every opportunity he can to learn from other people, reads across a landscape of topics, and practices his pursuits with great discipline. One of Ken's passions is art. He explored different painting and drawing techniques, using whatever supplies he could acquire. As Ken was transferred from prison to prison, there would be different sets of restrictions on what art supplies and which art works he was allowed to keep. Ken managed to ship artwork he wasn't allowed to keep to his Aunt Michelle, and recently, to me. Ken offered his art as a gift. "Do what you'd like with it: hang it, give it away — you decide". Michelle and I decided to put Ken's art out in the world. I hope you find the pieces moving, and the circumstances in which they were created a reminder that art can thrive in the most inhospitable conditions.

### *Amicus One to One Program*

For over 45 years, Amicus has matched trained volunteers to individual offenders at four of Minnesota's metro area Correctional Facilities — Lino Lakes, Shakopee, Stillwater, and Oak Park Heights. Volunteers commit to visiting, writing, and forming a true friendship with their One to One match for a minimum of one year. If you would like to apply to become a One to One volunteer or are interested in learning more, please visit [www.amicususa.org/programs/one-to-one/](http://www.amicususa.org/programs/one-to-one/).



### *Proceeds and Reception*

Proceeds from the sale of Ken Starlin's art will pay for framing and shipping costs. Additional funds will then be given to "Free Arts Minnesota," an organization that inspires hope and builds self-esteem for youth who have experienced poverty, homelessness, abuse, and mental illness, using the healing powers of artistic expression and caring adult mentors.

A reception honoring Ken's work will be held on Sunday, March 6, during coffee hour in the Parish Hall.

# MUSIC MINISTRY



## Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries

*"The artist's life cannot be otherwise than full of conflicts, for two forces are at war within - on the one hand the common human longing for happiness, satisfaction and security in life, and on the other a ruthless passion for creation which may go so far as to override every personal desire . . . There are hardly any exceptions to the rule that a person must pay*

*dearly for the divine gift of creative fire."* — Carl Jung

Well, actually, I do not describe my life in the usual role of the "suffering artist." I say this because I have felt so blessed with extraordinary people, experiences, and moments in my life thanks to "living it in music." However, I totally agree with the idea of conflict in balancing the everyday reality of practical skill building and those moments of creative perception which seem so immediate in comprehension and yet so far away in realization.

To explain... I was recently asked the question in our monthly theme meeting, this month on suffering, for any examples of music that I might recommend in reference to this idea. I was basically no help at all as my answer was, "well, all music." Other than the obvious requiems that speak to loss of life, etc., it has been my experience that there are no limits to what speaks to, describes, or alleviates suffering. I have witnessed expression and release of trauma, grief, concern, physical and mental suffering — any number of descriptors that we might apply — all spoken to by an infinite array of music; no boundaries, no limits.

For some reason this brought me to that angst that is particular to this discipline, though I am sure the this is shared in many, if not all processes. There is a distinct inner pulling apart of "seeing/hearing it" and "doing/preparing it." A long enough road, that musicians often forget what that original spark was that got them into it in the first place. My personal rule is to never pick a piece of music that does not touch me deeply enough to stick with it to the end... what I call my "cry rule." It is in that sweet reach from vision to completion that I truly find the music and what I need to learn in the process.

I would be so interested to hear from any of you as to what music or musical activity speaks to you in moments of need or suffering. That combination of "where the music is" and "where you are" is individual and infinite.

## Off the Rails

**A western tale about tradition, cooperation, and progress.**

The 27th annual Unity Church Children's Musical presented by Unity's 6th, 7th, and 8th graders

### PERFORMANCES (in the Sanctuary):

Thursday, March 3 • 7:00 p.m.

Friday, March 4 • 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 5 • 5:30 p.m.

**TICKETS: \$6/adult, \$4/child, \$20/family**

Tickets are available in the Parish Hall after the service, online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org), and at the door.

One Voice Mixed Chorus Presents...

## The Love Show

In The Love Show, OVation, the a cappella ambassador ensemble from One Voice Mixed Chorus, takes on the theme of love and its many flavors. Join us on a musical exploration of love, with humor, honesty, and pride!

Tickets are \$15 online and \$20 at the door.

Sunday, March 6 • 3:00 p.m.

Mayflower United Church of Christ  
Tickets and details: [www.ovmc.org](http://www.ovmc.org)



## Arthur Foote Music Sunday

May 1, 2016

9:00, 11:00, and 4:30

How can  
we keep  
from singing?

*How music speaks to the relationships in our lives, the community, and beyond; transcending time and place.*

## SPECIAL ALERT!

9:45, 10:45, and 4:15

Join us before each service for a 15 minute Community Sing led by Tesfa Wondemagegnehu, MPR Manager of Choral Activities and Sing to Inspire. We are delighted to have Tesfa as our guest. You can count on his exciting presence and talent inspiring our music of the day!

Children's Choir

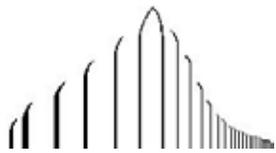
Unity Singers

Women's Ensemble

Unity Choir

and combined choirs singing!





# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
Business Entrance: 732 Holly Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-228-1456 • fax: 651-228-0927 • [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) • [unity@unityunitarian.org](mailto:unity@unityunitarian.org)

MARK FOSTER, CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REV. JANNE ELLER-ISAACS, CO-MINISTER  
REV. ROB ELLER-ISAACS, CO-MINISTER  
BARBARA HUBBARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
REV. LISA FRIEDMAN, MINISTER OF CONGREGATIONAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO. 1141

**TIME SENSITIVE  
MATERIAL**

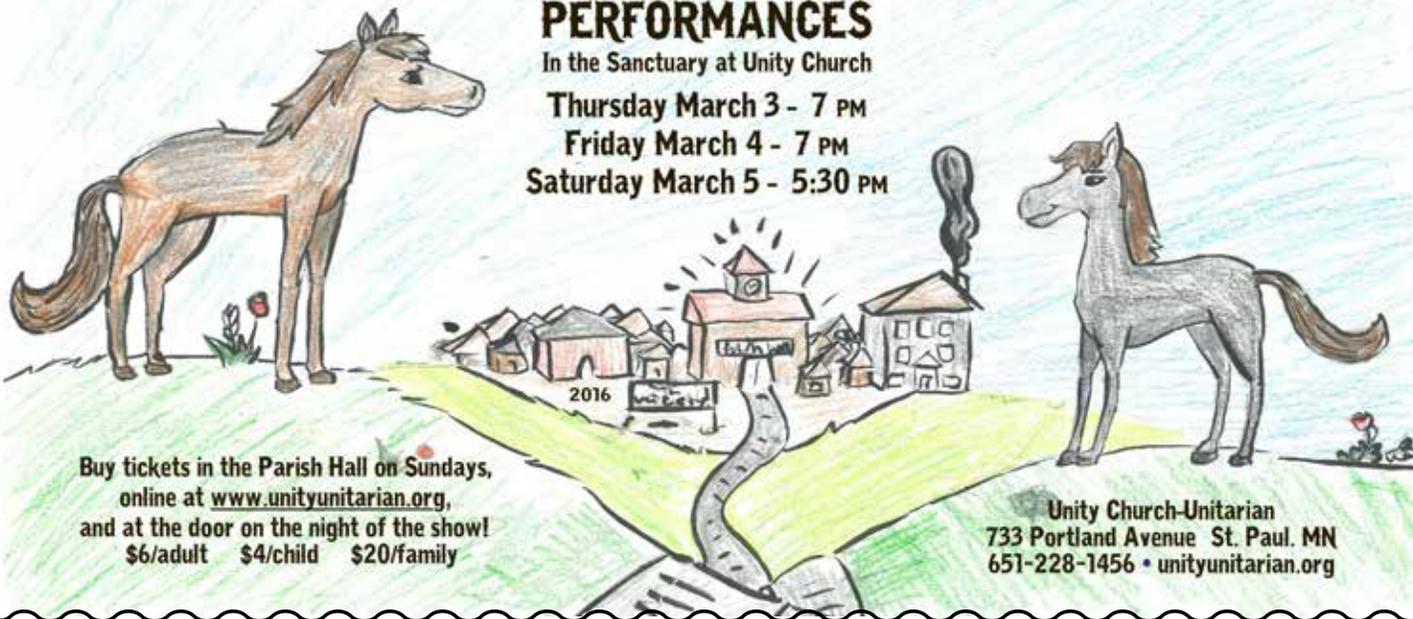
**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Unity Church-Unitarian presents the 27th Annual Children's Musical**  
Music and Lyrics by Sandy Waterman      Written and Directed by Mary Blouin Auffert

# OFF THE RAILS

## PERFORMANCES

In the Sanctuary at Unity Church  
**Thursday March 3 - 7 PM**  
**Friday March 4 - 7 PM**  
**Saturday March 5 - 5:30 PM**



Buy tickets in the Parish Hall on Sundays,  
online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org),  
and at the door on the night of the show!  
\$6/adult \$4/child \$20/family

Unity Church-Unitarian  
733 Portland Avenue St. Paul, MN  
651-228-1456 • [unityunitarian.org](http://unityunitarian.org)