

## Surrender

*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.*

Surrender doesn't get much play in Unitarian Universalist circles. Nothing in our seven principles encourages the practice, not even when the principles are read with subtlety and nuance. We don't sing about surrender: the word doesn't appear in the gray hymnal and it's missing from the teal hymnal as well. Outside the walls of Unity Church, very few sermons get preached on the subject. Surrender? Why would UUs want to do that?

As a result, many of us probably associate surrendering with what happens on the battlefield. Surrender happens at the barrel of a gun, the point of a sword, means domination and the loss of power. Surrender hurts.

Even without the war-like connotations, however, many UUs are uncomfortable with the notion of surrender. We UUs tend to place great value on our own ideas and to focus on self-determination and personal decision-making in our quest for truth. Indeed, our fourth principle encourages us toward a "free and responsible search for meaning." Because the search for personal truth is central to our faith, surrendering our ideas to someone else's perspective can seem almost antithetical to spiritual development.

And then there's our history. Ibrahim Farajaje, former provost at the Starr King School for the Ministry, explains that Unitarianism emerged during what he terms the "En-white-ement." Farajaje argues that ideas of white supremacy and manifest destiny had been baked into Enlightenment ideals and thus continue to determine how we practice our religion. The values of modernity — autonomy and the centrality of the individual, the value of reason, the uplifting of ethical thought over doctrine and emotion — don't encourage humility, don't leave much space for backing down or surrendering

to someone else's will. We pursue our self-interest, we see to our self-care, we exercise our self-control. Farajaje argues that being white meant always expecting to be right. No retreat, no surrender.

Yet our desire for control often harms our spiritual growth, makes us susceptible to crushing perfectionism, and prevents us from finding our way toward health and happiness. Most of us probably have a story of wanting something and "going for it" relentlessly, only to grow more and more frustrated as our goal eludes us. Clinging to behavior or ideas that once felt productive no longer works. Only when we gave up, when we stopped looking, or stopped trying, did the possibility for change occur.

Giving up control allows us to focus more on being than on doing, taking us out of the relentless striving for perfection that characterizes modern society. In *The Artist's Way*, Julia Cameron claims that we will struggle if "we try to push, pull, outline and control our ideas instead of letting them grow organically. The creative process is a process of surrender, not control." This is as true for life as it is for art.

Sometimes we have no choice. We get bad news from a doctor, our job gets downsized, a loved one dies; maybe addiction ensnares us, an accident happens, our friends disappear. At these moments, our sense of control cracks and shatters and surrendering can be the only way through the grief and loss and pain. Humbled by our failures and our fears and yearning for a grace beyond our understanding, we give in to the mystery. To the unknown. We let go. Philosopher Mark Nepo writes that "buried seeds/crack open in the dark/the instant they surrender/to a process they can't see." In acknowledging that we don't have answers and cannot control the future, new ways blossom, new possibilities emerge. We relax into the dark.

Surrender connects us to the holy. Theologian Richard Rohr explains that "surrender is about a peaceful inner opening that keeps the conduit of living water flowing." For Rohr, "surrendering to the divine Flow" transforms an unproductive willfulness into an expansive willingness of spirit. Similarly, in Buddhist practice, surrender signals the letting go of individual desire in search of a larger becoming. Surrender is oneness, an unfolding awareness of the whole, a richness that only happens when humility overtakes ego.

None of this is easy. Given our conditioning and the social expectations of control, it takes practice to let go. Surrendering is counter-cultural, maybe even anti-UU. But when tiny acts of surrender become part of our daily practice, we release our need for control, we admit our vulnerabilities, we allow our creative inspiration to rise. It seems worth the effort.

*Hallman Ministerial Intern Kathryn Jay  
with this month's theme team:  
Drew Danielson, Rob Eller-Isaacs,  
Ken Ford, KP Hong, and Ruth Palmer*

## Surrender Theme Resources

### BOOKS

*The Year of Magical Thinking* by  
Joan Didion (2007)

*How to Change Your Mind: What  
the New Science of Psychedelics  
Teaches Us About Consciousness,  
Dying, Addiction, Depression, and  
Transcendence* by Michael Pollan  
(2018)

*The Dark Interval: Letters on Loss,  
Grief, and Transformation* by Rainer  
Maria Rilke (2018)

*The Silent Cry: Mysticism and  
Resistance* by Dorothee Sölle (2001)

# JUST WORDS / WHEEL OF LIFE

## Just Words



### Our Faith Is in the Conversation

One of the great gifts I receive from serving the Unity Church congregation and community is being able to attend meetings! Quoting from a colleague's ministerial odyssey, "If I had any idea how many evening meetings and Saturday meetings I would attend in a life-long ministry, I would have curled up and died right then and there." I understand those feelings. I have been known to joke that I am suffering from a terminal disease called, "Death by Meetings." And yet, those meeting shape directions and craft language and imagine the possible future for an organization. But just think, several monthly meetings, five or six meetings each week, year after year. Each year following a similar pattern but with new and different people, topics, and goals.

What I also know is that we are shaping the future out of these collaborative exchanges. I sometimes walk out of meetings here at Unity Church amazed at how energized I feel and how impressed I am by the capacity of the people with whom I am collaborating. Our faith does emerge in these collaborative conversations, improving or expanding, deepening or clarifying what is being discussed.

Recently I was describing the process that goes into designing a worship service. First there is the weekly collaboration with the ministers in charge of worship and the music director. Then comes the quarterly gatherings of the worship associates which then in turn means at least two conversations between preacher and worship associate for a particular service. All of this translates into a depth of connection between the lay leaders and the professional leadership. We are indeed blessed.

Recently Rob and I have been meeting with the music director search team. What a thoughtful group of people! In creating the interview questions for the three semi-finalists, I was amazed at how our suggestions complimented one another's ideas. Each person suggesting a profound question that provided plenty of room for deep conversation. Just as we hear the harmonies of the sacred when we sing in worship, we can hear the harmonies of the holy emerging in our conversations. I do regularly, and am always amazed by what emerges.

— Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs

**The Wheel of Life**  
*In Memoriam*  
**Mary Temple**  
 March 27, 1931–February 4, 2019

*In Celebration*  
**India Rae Flattum**  
 born one more redeemer  
 February 7, 2019  
 to parents  
 Molly and Jordan Flattum

**Flowers for Worship**  
 If you would like to provide flowers for Sunday worship, contact Martha Tilton at 651-228-1456 x105 or [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org).




**Just one pint,  
saves three lives.**

**American Red Cross Blood Drive**  
**Monday, March 25**

**11 AM - 5 PM**      **Parish Hall**

Registration will be online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) in March!



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# MARCH SUNDAY SERVICES / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

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## March Services

Sunday worship services are held at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. except where noted. Religious Education for children and youth is offered at all three service. Sermon podcasts and archives are available online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org).

### March 3: *The Courage to Let Go*

The word surrender carries a variety of negative connotations, but the process of surrendering into faith is an essential element of spiritual growth. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Erika Sanders will offer a service on theologies of spiritual surrender.

### March 10: *Willing to Be Changed by What We've Started*

In *Bring Many Names* Brian Wren invites us to sing: "Young, growing God, eager still to know, willing to be changed by what you've started, quick to be delighted, singing as you go: hail and hosanna, young growing God!" The hymn offers portraits of the many faces of the God within. It invites us to try on ways of being we can scarcely imagine. Revs. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs and Karen Hering will welcome us the very threshold of our changing lives.

### March 17: *Surrender Dorothy!*

Was the witch telling the Munchkins to surrender Dorothy to her, or for Dorothy, our heroine, to give up and surrender to her evilness? Perhaps only the wizard knows for sure, but Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Alex Askew will wrestle with the witch to better understand what she meant as she spewed her message across the sky.

### March 24: *Not My Will but Thine*

Given the costs of empire and patriarchy it is troubling to consider the insistence that we must submit or surrender to a power far beyond our own if we are to have any hope of spiritual fulfillment. How does power play into religious practices designed to encourage enlightenment? Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Lia Rivamonte will delve into these troubled waters.

*Story Sundays happen frequently throughout the church year, with children in grades 1-8 beginning in worship with the congregation in the Sanctuary. After the opening hymn, prayers, and children's message, Workshop Rotation children (grades 1-5) proceed with their Journey Guides to classes while junior high youth (grades 6-8) remain in the Sanctuary for the entire worship service.*

### March 31: *The Hope of Surrender*

It has been said that surrender is the antidote to despair and the door to freedom. And yet it can take a lifetime to discern what is worth surrendering, and to what, or to whom. In a world that teaches us never to surrender our truest selves, Rev. Lisa Friedman and worship associate Bob Peskin will offer a service exploring how the practice of surrender can bring hope and meaning to our task of being human.

## March 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 3: Project Namnyaki

Project Namnyaki provides need based scholarships to students at the Namnyaki Girls Secondary Boarding School in Tanzania. Namnyaki School provides a safe and supportive community for approximately 70 girls, most of whom might otherwise be forced into early marriage and never have an opportunity to pursue education. Tuition with room and board runs close to \$500 per year. The project's goal is to raise funds for 10 scholarships in each of the four secondary grades. Unity's Joe Lewis, Education Professor at Hamline University, is the director of Project Namnyaki and a frequent guest teacher at the school.

### March 10: Growth & Justice

Growth & Justice is a non-partisan, non-profit, research and advocacy organization, focused on expanding prosperity in Minnesota. It promotes policies that reduce inequality and eliminate racial disparity through investment in human capital and public infrastructure by ensuring universal and affordable health care, and through a cleaner and greener economy. Unity Church member Dane Smith is president of Growth & Justice.

### March 17: Listening House St. Paul

Listening House is a sanctuary from the streets where practical assistance, counsel, and a friendly ear are offered to people who are homeless, disadvantaged, or lonely. Staff and volunteers aspire to create a sense of community and belonging by providing respect for all. About 120 adults visit Listening House daily. Over 10,000 volunteer hours annually breathe spirit and love into this humble space where rich friendships are established and nurtured. Unity Church member Bernie Troje is a strong voice for Listening House.

### March 24: Balazs Scholar Program

This offering supports the Balazs Scholar Program that brings a minister from the Unitarian homeland of Transylvania to study in the U.S. at the Starr King School for the Ministry. This offering is rooted in the bonds between Unity Church and Unity's partner church village in Homorodsztpetter.

### March 31: People Helping People

People Helping People in the Border Zone (PHP) is an all volunteer community organization of Arivaca, a group of Arizona residents providing crisis-relief and working for border demilitarization. Its mission is to work together for the protection of human life, regardless of immigration status. PHP distributes resources for humanitarian aid: water gallons, food packs, home medical kits, clothing, Red Cross international phone service, legal and medical assistance, consulate information, Spanish-language interpretation, and more. Hallman Ministerial Intern Kathryn Jay nominated PHP.

## Persistence and Surrender

From Ruth Kirkland, Trustee



I do not think of myself as a good candidate for surrender, this month's theme. For Christmas a year ago my daughter gave me a silver bracelet engraved with "Nevertheless, she persisted." I love that quote about Elizabeth Warren. My mother told stories about how stubborn I was as a child. I have translated that label into a more positive one; I like to

be known as tenacious. I see myself as someone who when committed, never gives up.

And yet, I accept there are times when I must let go, even surrender. Letting go of unhelpful beliefs and accepting the reality of life, such as our mortality, can lead to richer and more meaningful choices. I recently read in Mary Pipher's *Women Rowing North*, a book about aging, that we can have everything we want; we just have to choose carefully what we want (i.e. keep it real). This is especially important when doing board work. Letting go of ego driven desires and focusing on our values of wonder, open-hearted engagement, and courageous action along with our mission to "foster transformation through a free and inclusive religious community that encourages lives of integrity, service, and joy," helps me to avoid unhelpful clashes during meetings and in life.

At a recent board meeting we were asked to consider "What is the substance of the church that needs to be preserved even as music directors and ministers leave?" This question, which we all should consider, calls for deep consideration of what is transient and what is permanent in our religion. For me the characteristic that first came to mind was the belief that revelation is on-going, meaning we are always seeking more truth. My favorite Ends statement is "Create brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture." I know this means surrendering my blindly held prejudices and opening myself to truths that speak to my hope for a better world. This will not be easy but I know I will persevere!

## Ordination of Andrea Johnson

Andrea Johnson served as Unity's ministerial intern during the 2017-18 church year. The congregation of Unity Church is warmly invited to attend Andrea's ordination into the Unitarian Universalist ministry on Saturday, March 16, at 2:00 p.m., at the Minnesota Valley UU Fellowship (10715 Zenith Avenue South, Bloomington, MN 55431). A reception will follow the ordination and all are welcome.



## Join the Heritage Society

Leave a Legacy for Future Generations at Unity Church

From Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director

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. Your "estate" is the sum of your assets, including property you own, insurance policies, retirement accounts, cash on hand, etc. Wealthy people may have large estates, but people who aren't wealthy often have the resources to make a legacy gift.

There are many gift possibilities. Each of these gifts allows flexibility, though some requirements apply, and you always retain the right to amend your estate plans.

- A charitable bequest in your last will and testament can be a specific amount or a percentage of what remains after providing for your heirs.
- A life insurance designation names Unity Church of St. Paul as owner or beneficiary of the policy.
- Retirement plan assets name the church as a beneficiary of an IRA, 401(k), 403(b), profit sharing or other retirement plan.
- Other types of legacy gifts include gift annuities, life-estate agreements, and charitable remainder trusts.



By making a legacy gift to Unity Church you will be joining over 200 others who have committed to supporting the church into the future.

**Our annual Heritage Society Dinner on Friday, May 10, is the church's way of thanking those individuals who have made legacy gifts. This year we welcome guest speaker Joseph Haj, Artistic Director of the Guthrie Theater.**



If you have already made a legacy gift to Unity Church (but haven't told us!), if you are in the process of making a gift, or if you would like more information about legacy gift possibilities, please contact Executive Director, Barbara Hubbard, at [barbarah@unityunitarian.org](mailto:barbarah@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x116. We have individuals on our Legacy Team who would be happy to advise you in your considerations.

## News from Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism

From the Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism Team

### Organizational Vision

The Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism Organizing Collective is proud to share our vision as an organization.

Over the last four years we have developed a clear mission:

- Expanding the power and capacity of Black UUs within our faith
- Providing support, information, and resources for Black Unitarian Universalists
- Justice-making and liberation through our faith

We have also created a deeply personal set of working agreements which lay out the values we bring into this work together — we invite you to read those working agreements here: [www.blacklivesuu.com/working-agreements/](http://www.blacklivesuu.com/working-agreements/)

We share this vision with you because it is, and has already been, a guiding light in our work since we created it together in December:

*BLUU harnesses love's power to combat oppression and foster healing as a spiritual and political imperative. We know the power of love to be life changing, inclusive, relational, uncomfortable, unconditional and without end.*

### Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium

**Proclaiming a Black UU Theology • October 30-November 2, 2019 • St. Paul, MN**

The Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium responds to a longing on the part of many Black Unitarian Universalists to more fully understand where we have been, who we are now, and how we hope to live out our Unitarian Universalism as Black people.

This four-day gathering will offer a welcome reception, interactive plenaries, spiritual grounding and worship experiences, and joy-filled networking and community-building opportunities. We will conclude our time together with a worship service on Saturday morning, open to all, at Unity Church.

We are opening ourselves up to an articulation of Unitarian Universalism that is unapologetically Black and proceeds from our co-creation and co-development, such that we might proclaim and clarify a vision for a Black Unitarian Universalism.

The symposium is open to everyone, and we are prioritizing spaces for Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color. Please register and we'll follow up and let you know when registration is full. Registration is online at [www.blacklivesuu.com/symposium-registration](http://www.blacklivesuu.com/symposium-registration). Donations to a registration scholarship fund can be made online at [www.blacklivesuu.com/bluu-shop/symposium-registration-donation](http://www.blacklivesuu.com/bluu-shop/symposium-registration-donation).

This symposium is named for Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (abolitionist, suffragist, author, Unitarian) and Rev. Joseph Jordan (the first Black ordained Universalist).

### Make a Donation

Donations in support of the ongoing work of BLUU are gratefully accepted online at <http://bit.ly/bluudonate>.



# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

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

**6:00 p.m.:** Dinner in the Parish Hall! \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family. (Children under age two are free.) All meals will offer vegetarian and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies may contact [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org) to arrange for a special preparation. Please email Kathryn Jay at [kathryn@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kathryn@unityunitarian.org) for financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner.

**6:50 p.m.:** Intergenerational worship in the Ames Chapel

**7:15 p.m.:** Learning and Fellowship  
*Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance.*

## Help cook and serve a Wellspring Wednesday meal!

Help is needed on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Contact [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org) to volunteer!

## Propose a Wellspring Wednesday program!

Is there a program or class you would like to see offered — or that you would like to offer — at Wellspring Wednesday during the this year? Submit a proposal! Proposal forms are available online at [www.unityunitarian.org/wellspring-wednesday.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/wellspring-wednesday.html).

## March 6

*Dinner: TBA*

### **Book Reading: Melvin Carter Jr., *Diesel Heart: An Autobiography***

Melvin Carter, Jr., a long-time community leader, founder of SOS-Save Our Sons, and father of the current St. Paul mayor, will read from his new autobiography about growing up in the Rondo neighborhood of a racially-divided St. Paul in the 1950s and 60s, and going on to serve his city for 28 years in the St. Paul Police Department. *Diesel Heart* is the story of a leader who created a powerful family legacy by standing up for what is right, even in the face of adversity. Books will be for sale; signing to follow reading. Russel Balenger, leader of the Circle of Peace Movement and longtime friend of Mr. Carter, will offer the introduction.

### **Grounded Meditation**

Come learn a grounding meditation and a short grounding exercise, and explore the benefits of each. Grounding is the process of connecting one's own energy with the earth's energy, and using that as a "foundation" of calm and strength, and as a "battery" to recharge — physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. This can also strengthen your connection with your values and goals and leave you more able to take conscious action in manifesting your life's purpose. Kristen Wernecke has been a massage therapist and energy healer for over 25 years.

### **Textile Arts**

This group is open to textile creatives of all ages. Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc. Contact: Linda Mandeville at [bindamandeville41@gmail.com](mailto:bindamandeville41@gmail.com).

### **New Family R.E. Orientation**

This session, led by Director of Religious Education KP Hong, is for families new to Unity Church who would like to learn more about religious education for children and youth.

### **Tween Group**

Meet in Ames Chapel at 6:45 p.m. for worship, then heads to Jr. High classroom 21. Pick up is at 8:30 p.m.

### **No yoga on March 6!**

## March 13

*Dinner: Roasted sausages (including vegetarian), colcannon, green salad, dessert*

### **Fr. Vito Sarducci: The Pleasure, the Pain, and the Shame**

Please join Fr. Vito (congregant Tom Esch) and pianist Laura Hlavac for comedic and musical reflections on pleasure, pain, and shame. Following the comedy Tom will discuss his life as a Catholic priest, including why he left and how his spirituality has changed. He will also offer his thoughts on why the clergy sexual abuse scandal has been so systemic within the church.

### **Open Page Writing Session • Surrender: The Nerve Center of Consent**

RSVP to [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org)

Henri Nouwen called surrender an act of deep listening and receiving. Howard Thurman often referred to it as the "nerve center of consent." Others have defined surrender as an offering of ourselves. To what sacred truth and presence do you offer yourself? What is the meaning of surrender in our spiritual journeys? What does it ask — and not ask — of us today?

### **Yoga: Loving Kindness Meditation with Special Guest Colleen Dooley**

Metta bhavana, or loving-kindness meditation, is a meditation of care, concern, tenderness, loving kindness, friendship — a feeling of warmth for oneself and others.

### **Tween Group**

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

March 20

Dinner: TBA

## **One Minnesota Equity Blueprint Dane Smith, Growth & Justice**

Minnesota faces three existential threats to its prosperity and fabled quality of life: Environmental degradation and climate change, worsening racial and economic injustice, and a widening political and cultural divide between rural and urban areas. Many Unity members are working on at least one or two aspects of these perils. But what might a comprehensive statewide plan to address these threats look like? The One Minnesota Equity Blueprint Project seeks to provide a long-term guide to a more equitable and sustainable economy and society. Participants will get an overview of the project's emerging policy and action agenda, and will have opportunity to comment and actually amend the blueprint.

## **The Global Travels of Women's Liberation**

Many of us know that the practice of consciousness raising (CR) spurred an explosion of the American women's liberation movement in the 1960s. It turns out that CR was a global phenomenon! Not only was CR influenced by international ideas, but the practice took off outside of the US, as women from Italy to Argentina adopted and adapted it. In honor of Women's History Month, join University of San Francisco professor Elisabeth Jay to learn about the global roots and wings of this feminist practice that helped women build community and foment action — and to explore what lessons its travels have for contemporary women's organizing.

## **Committing to Unity: Joining the Church**

Have you been considering membership at Unity? This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's needs meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church! Email [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) if you plan to attend this class.

## **Yoga: Vinyasa Flow**

This class is for individuals seeking faster and more rigorous movement. Flowing from pose to pose is coordinated with regulated inhales and exhales to strengthen muscles and build balance.

## **Textile Arts**

Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc.

## **Tween Group**

March 27

Dinner: TBA

## **Urban American Indians: 101**

Minneapolis's urban Indian community has been in the spotlight recently because of the Franklin-Hiawatha homeless encampment. Please join Dr. Joe Hobot, President and CEO of the American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center, as he explores the historical causes that have brought the encampment and other issues into existence. Dr. Hobot will also discuss opportunity for our Indigenous community to prosper through culturally-contextualized education and holistic support.

## **The Women are Always There**

Women's History Month is a good time to remember that women have been largely written out of history. Women's accomplishments have too often been overlooked or diminished; their stories have gone unheard. But we are fortunate to be living at a time when that's changing. Feminist scholars are moving women to the center of the story and reinterpreting the history we think we know. In this session we will hear some stories about women from ancient times to modern, and we will practice two techniques you can use to notice the women who are always there when you read history.

## **We are Worthy Now: Sending Books to UUs in Prison**

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) has almost 900 members who are currently incarcerated. They communicate with CLF solely through the mail which involves a lot of folding, stuffing and addressing of envelopes! Join Unity Church member and CLF staff member Hannah Franco-Isaacs to send out correspondence courses to UUs in prison.

## **Yoga: Balancing the Chakras**

Use movement, mudra (hand gestures), and chanting to activate the chakras and provide energy for every part of the body, mind, and spirit.

## **Tween Group**



**GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER!**  
**Unity Church Talent Show**  
**Wellspring Wednesday, May 8**

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## A New Better Angels Workshop

*Depolarizing America: Starting with Yourself and People on Your Own Side*

**Saturday, March 30 • 9:00 a.m.-noon • Unity Church**

**Register online at: <http://bit.ly/ucubetterangels>**

**Presenter is Bill Doherty, Unity Church member, Co-founder of Better Angels, and University of Minnesota Professor**

Much of today's epidemic of toxic polarization is driven by how we talk with like-minded people about those on the other side. Too often we stereotype, dismiss, or ridicule our fellow citizens who support the other political party, its leaders, and its policies. Political conflict and stereotyping have always been around but were less problematic when people interacted more outside their own silos. Nowadays, people on the other side have become not just strangers but enemies. How we talk among ourselves about them fuels fires that threaten our democracy.

What if we learn the discipline of non-polarizing attitudes and words about the political "Other" with whom we share a national past and future?

This workshop will:

- Help you become more aware of polarization inside us and between us
- Teach skills for being critical—even sharply critical—without demonizing, dismissing, and stereotyping
- Help you learn how to intervene in a constructive way in social conversations that veer into contempt and ridicule for people who hold other political views.

Better Angels is a national nonprofit with a mission to depolarize America. Learn more at [www.better-angels.org](http://www.better-angels.org).

## Pathway to Membership

Contact Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement, at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x107 to sign up for these classes.

### Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Inquiry

Finding Yourself at Unity is offered on a regular basis on Sundays, from 10:20-11:15 a.m., in the Ames Chapel.

- March 3: UU History
- March 10: Social Justice and Community Outreach
- March 17: Q&A with Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs
- March 24: Membership 101
- March 31: Religious Education for Children, Youth, and Adults

### Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church Wednesday, March 20 • 7:15-9:00 p.m.

This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church!

## Fellowship Groups

**AA Groups:** Unity Church hosts **12-step programs** in partnership with local AA and Al Anon groups. Al Anon meets Wednesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Science Room; Fresh Air AA meets Thursdays, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Anderson Library.

**Afterthoughts** offers time to discuss the service. This group meets after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact: Paul Gade, 651-771-7528.

**Caregivers Group:** An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (March 21), noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Elders Circle:** Meets the third Tuesday of the month (March 19), 1:00-3:00 p.m., Center Room.

**Evergreen Quilters:** The group meets the second Tuesday of the month (March 12), 7:00-9:00 p.m. (at Unity Church), and fourth Saturday of the month (March 23), 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (offsite). Contact: Peggy Wright, 651-698-2760

**Families Living with Mental Health Challenges:** A support group for families living with mental health challenges. Meets the first Saturday of each month (March 2), 9:30-11:30 a.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Living With Grief Group:** For people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (March 19), 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Men's Retirement Group:** Monday, March 11 and 25, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Tom Zell, [tomzell@me.com](mailto:tomzell@me.com)

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

**New Look at the Bible:** Meets the second Thursday of the month (March 14) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade, 651-771-7528

**Recovery from White Conditioning:** Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m., Gannett Room. Contact: Dayna Kennedy, [daynamelissa@icloud.com](mailto:daynamelissa@icloud.com)

**Textile Arts Group:** Meets the first and third Wednesday of each month (March 6 and 20), 7:00-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc. Contact: Linda Mandeville, [lindamandeville41@gmail.com](mailto:lindamandeville41@gmail.com)

**Unity Book Club:** Second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne, [jack.hawthorne@comcast.net](mailto:jack.hawthorne@comcast.net).  
March 12: *Hillbilly Elegy* by JD Vance  
April 9: *Grace and Grit* by Lilly Ledbetter  
May 14: *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea* by Barbara Demick

**Women In Retirement:** Meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month (March 14 and 28), 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Friedman, [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org)

**Young Adult Group** (ages 18-35) meets every other Thursday (March 14 and 28), 7:00-9:00 p.m. Meet at 6:30 for dessert and tea. Contact KP Hong, [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org)

**Zen Meditation:** Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Ames Chapel. Instruction offered March 5 at 4:30 p.m. Contact KP Hong, [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org).

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## Annual Queer Retreat

Saturday, March 23 • 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. • Unity Church

The Queer Retreat is for all people ages (18+) who identify under the LGBTQIAPP2+ umbrella, especially folks whose bodies and/or genders don't fit into the gender binary. Join us for restoration, community, and joy through spiritual practice, creative expression, and conversation! Registration and child care requests will be available online at [www.unityunitarian.org/lgbtq.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/lgbtq.html). Deadline for registration is March 15. For more information contact Ray Hommeyer at [ray@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ray@unityunitarian.org).

## 2019 Unity Church Men's Retreat

Saturday, April 13 • 8:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m. • Unity Church



Stories! Stories we tell each other. Stories other people tell us or impose on us.

Come explore some of the many stories shaping our lives as self-identified men. Here is just a small sample of what you might hear about at the Unity Men's Retreat following the church themes of within, among, and beyond.

- How do we define ourselves with our work?
- How might we identify and work with shame?
- What stories enriched or harmed your childhood family and its relationships? How about your current intimate relationships - partner, children, friends?
- When did you last cry?
- How do you respond to #MeToo?

We have three dynamic and interesting presenters telling us their stories and encouraging us to tell our own.

**Javier Morillo** • Political activist and Moth Radio Hour storyteller will share with us his ideas on how to tell our stories to ourselves and to others.

**Mark Meier** • Founder, Facelt Foundation, will be bringing us face to face with some of the issues that plague us as men — loneliness, depression, and how to talk with our family and friends when things aren't going well.

**Tony Signorelli** • Author, speaker, and serial entrepreneur will be leading a session exploring what it means to be a man out in the wider world.

Recognizing that gender is not binary, we welcome all individuals who self-identify as male.

Online registration coming soon. Questions? Please contact either Steve Harper ([steveharper.home@gmail.com](mailto:steveharper.home@gmail.com)) or Rob Eller-Isaacs ([robei@unityunitarian.org](mailto:robei@unityunitarian.org)).

## March Parish Hall Artist

Ed Caldie

Caldie is a perpetual apprentice to the arts and to the beauty of life. Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, he began drawing and painting in his teens and enjoyed an early career as a self-taught musician. His captivation with nature prompted frequent canoe expeditions into the Canadian wilderness and his creative curiosity led him to design, own, and operate several upscale restaurants in the Midwest before engaging in a rewarding career as an architectural designer.

In 1999, Caldie was involved in a serious traffic accident that prompted him to re-evaluate his life's purpose. After undergoing eight surgeries to restore a substantial loss of his vision, he sold his design practice, moved to Arizona, and dedicated himself to the mastery of his life-long passion for the fine arts.

Family and friends enticed this artist to return to Minnesota after nearly 20 years of residency in the Southwest, where his painting talents began to flourish. It was patience, keen focus and sheer determination that eventually distinguished this mostly self-taught artist as a master, and his art can now be found in collections all over the world. Traditional painting disciplines are sometimes combined with three-dimensional elements to express a more tantalizing and creative concept, always with a vigorous commitment toward composition. Adjusting to the change in climate, this artist offers several of his artistic expressions, during the month of March, as a way to introduce himself to the Unity Church community he now gratefully calls his own.

### Artist Statement

It seems that the preferred human experience is that of beauty and order. In my paintings, I attempt to employ these elements to lure the spectator away from the turbulence of their daily circumstance and offer them relief in a subtle narrative that can only be experienced in the hush of their emotional response.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## Gun Sense: A Teacher's Perspective

From Sue Conner, Unity's Gun Sense Ministry Team

Unity's Gun Sense Team spoke with church members Jackie and Dave Smith, long time teachers. We asked:

*As teachers, how do you see gun violence impacting the children you work with? How does it affect your work? How do you "deal with" the reality of gun violence as you work with children in a school setting?*

### Jackie and Dave:

*Last year three families in Jackie's school lost close family members to gun violence. Dave's school was the first place a mother, shot in the arm, ran to with her children when an intruder came to their nearby home. It is evident that the damage that this type of trauma leaves is deep and generational. How does a fourth grader heal after seeing her brother shoot himself? Do sisters ever come into their own while being raised by a mourning mother? The stress of this comes not just with the event, but supporting children who live with this type of grief, fear, and guilt for their entire lives, raised by parents who feel the same. The role of teacher is to care for children as they negotiate all the strain in their lives, and help them move forward. It is hard to learn when there are traumatic barriers in their lives.*

As we begin this new Minnesota legislative session, we have another opportunity to pass some sensible gun policy bills that will save lives in Minnesota. Other states have done this, why can't we? The bills being presented are:

- 2019 Red Flag Bill (House File 9/Senate File 436)
- 2019 Criminal Background Check Bill (House File 8/Senate File 434)

Read about them on [protectminnesota.org](http://protectminnesota.org)

The leader of the Minnesota Senate has stated firmly that he will work to prevent new gun policies from passing in this session. We urge you to do what you can to influence members of the Minnesota Senate.

If you have questions about the work of Unity's Gun Sense Ministry Team, please contact Sue Conner at [sue.conner@comcast.net](mailto:sue.conner@comcast.net) or Joan Duke at [joanduke@comcast.net](mailto:joanduke@comcast.net).



Unity's Gun Sense Ministry Team at Protect Minnesota's lobby day for common sense gun laws.

## Unity's Sustainable Living Team News

Fourth Friday Sustainable Film Series:

### An Inconvenient Sequel

From Meggie Exner, Unity's Sustainable Living Ministry Team

"Collective action problems" happen when we say, "I'm just one person. My choices won't make much difference on a global scale." Of course, when millions of individuals act this way, we end up with pollution, ecological devastation, and climate change. Confronting this can feel overwhelming. Even if we make radical lifestyle changes, we're each still only one person.

When I find myself on this train of thought, reminding myself of instances of "collective action solutions" is what restores my hope. I've experienced these directly at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage and indirectly when I recently viewed *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*, which is Al Gore's sequel to *An Inconvenient Truth*, and the Sustainable Living Team's choice for March's Fourth Friday Film.

Three summers ago, I spent a few months at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage where residents' commitment to their environmental values and the vibrancy of village life revitalized my passion for sustainable living. Residents constructed their own homes from natural building materials and cooked in kitchens shared with neighbors, swapping homegrown vegetables and goat cheese. Three vehicles were owned in common. The community boasted a small solar garden and two wind turbines — enough to put more energy on the grid than they used. It was a community that returned more to the Earth than it consumed.

Though most mainstream towns and cities are a far cry from living so gently on the land, it's not just ecovillages that are relying predominantly renewable energy sources. Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Sequel* includes the story of Georgetown, Texas, which has committed itself to 100% renewable energy and has already reached the 90% mark. Several other cities across America are on the same track. These smaller-scale actions were perhaps even more exciting to me than the footage that *An Inconvenient Sequel* included on the Paris Climate Agreement.

Though the documentary begins with footage of climate change induced glacial melt, flooding, and hurricanes, it ultimately, conveys that global efforts are taking place and that, in the absence of a national leader, communities can pave the way toward positive change. It was a lovely affirmation that collective action solutions are possible.

*An Inconvenient Sequel* will be shown Friday, March 22, at 7:00 p.m., in the Robbins Parlor. Join us for popcorn and discussion. Discussion will be facilitated by Sam Potter, a climate scientist who gives talks, teaches classes, and conducts original research on the impacts that global warming will have on Minnesota.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## Help Support Obama School Scholars and Families

From Nancy Heege, Unity's Obama School Ministry Team

The past few weeks have been challenging for the intrepid Unity folks who volunteer at Obama School. Below zero weather, streets nearly impassable with snowfall after snowfall, school closures due to the weather — lots to contend with! But the school staff are cheerful and happy to see us whenever we can make it, and the scholars are eager to learn and fun to be with. As we enter the last third of the school year, here are some things for you to know about this outreach ministry of our church.



Just over thirty Unity volunteers are active in the program, most going at least once a week. Our volunteers meet at church three times a year to share information and give support. Our tutor/mentors say what most scholars need is someone who not only listens to them read but also cares about them. We'll be recruiting volunteers in May for the next school year, so background checks can be completed and we can get started by the first part of October, after the teachers and students have settled in. Look for information in the April and May newsletters.

At the Obama staff's suggestion, our Cub Food gift card program has changed this year. Obama families can now earn a \$60 gift card by volunteering in their child's classroom; this has increased opportunities for parent education and participation. We are providing three rounds of \$60 gift cards this year, 75 cards each time. We have many generous donors from Unity who have donated to the program, and we will need more money for the upcoming round of cards. Please consider a donation of \$60 or more. Send a check made out to Unity Church to the church or pay online at <http://bit.ly/cubcard>, with "Friends of Obama" in the memo/comments line. Your gift will be appreciated! Thanks to all who are involved in any way to benefit the school and community!

## Project Home Steering Committee Needs Your Help

From Ann Russell, Unity's Project Home Team

We all recall the polar vortex and the disruption it brought to our lives and that of our family. What we perhaps forgot and failed to appreciate was the safety and comfort of our homes. For some it was even a wonderful opportunity to hunker down, drink hot chocolate, and read books and play games. However, some families saw nothing but fear and insecurity as they moved with their children from shelter to shelter. Others relied on Project Home, an agency that does more than shelter, helping families stabilize and find affordable and safe places to live.

Unity Church supports Project Home and each May we open our religious education classrooms to house parents and children while they are in this transition. We recruit over 150 Unity Church members to staff the program each day from 5:00 p.m.-8:00 a.m.. Recruiting, training, and organizing this effort takes planning and the team needs a few more creative minds to make it go smoothly. This is a perfect service task for some because is time limited — we gear up in April and are finished by May 31. If you are willing to help, please contact Justine Nelson at [justinenelson1@hotmail.com](mailto:justinenelson1@hotmail.com).

## Help Provide a Meal for Jeremiah Families

Help cook a meal at The Jeremiah Program (932 Concordia Avenue, St. Paul), a residence and education program for single moms and their children. Meals are provided before evening classes and Unity Church volunteers are needed to help with preparation on the following dates: Tuesday, March 19; Thursday, April 18. Helpers (including kids over eight years old) work from 4:00-7:00 p.m. To volunteer contact Karen Buggs at 651-297-0111 or [buggs745@hotmail.com](mailto:buggs745@hotmail.com).



## Food Shelf 1,000 Pound Challenge

In 2018, 763 pounds of food were donated to Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf by Unity Church members and friends. That's a lot of food. Our contributions supported about eight families for one month. Let's donate even more in 2019!

Bring a can of soup or other non-perishable items every time you come to church. Collection trunks are located by the church entrances. The challenge for 2019 is 1,000 pounds!

## Pick Up Your Pi Day Pie! Thank you for your support!

If you ordered a pie during Unity's Rainbow Chalice Alliance Pi(e) Day Bake Sale, pies will be available for pick up on Sunday, March 3, after each service. Your pie purchases make it possible for RCA to support Q-Quest, Queer Prom, and Youth Pride.





## *Diesel Heart: An Autobiography* by Respected Community Leader Melvin Carter, Jr.

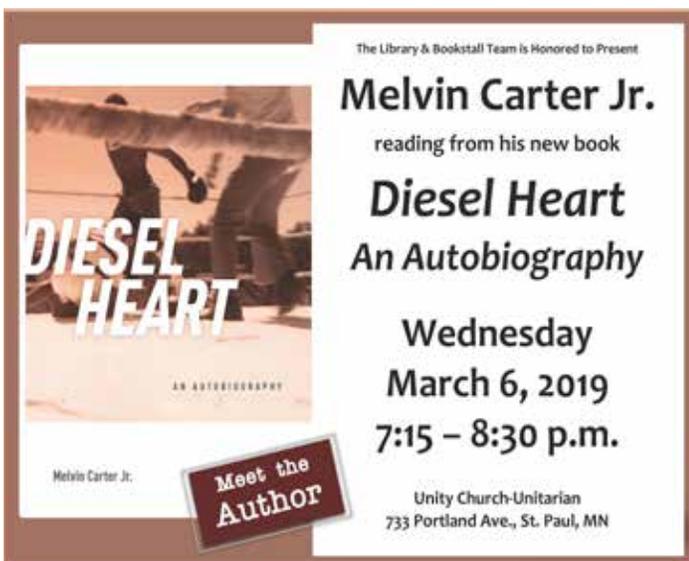
From Shelley Butler, Libraries and Bookstall Team

Melvin Carter, Jr., is a well-known leader in our community. He served in the St. Paul Police Department for 28 years, and in 1991, founded the SOS—Save Our Sons organization to reclaim youth who have found their way into or are at risk for entering the juvenile justice system. He grew up in the Rondo neighborhood in the 1950s and 60s, joined the Navy as a young man, and rose to sergeant in the St. Paul Police Department where he served for 28 years.

Lou Bellamy (founder and artistic director emeritus of Penumbra Theater) says:

*Melvin Carter's autobiography not only describes his personal journey to manhood but places that journey inside of a larger movement that captures the local, national, and, to a degree, the world racial climate at the time. His honest and entertaining account reads as a bildungsroman, chronicling personal, family, city, and community evolution.*

Unity Church and the Library and Bookstall team are honored to host Melvin Carter, Jr., reading from his new autobiography *Diesel Heart* on Wellspring Wednesday, March , at 7:15 p.m. Books for sale; author signing. Please join us for this special event.



## Open Page Writing Sessions

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, Open Page writing sessions are invitations to correspond with the "still, small voice within." Using stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, and provided prompts, participants reflect on the month's theme in their own words and on their own pages. No writing experience is necessary. Bring something to write with and on; the rest will be provided! Free; RSVP requested to [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org).



### ***Surrender: the nerve center of consent*** Wednesday, March 13 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Henri Nouwen called surrender an act of deep listening and receiving. Howard Thurman often referred to it as the "nerve center of consent." Others have defined surrender as an offering of ourselves. To what sacred truth and presence do you offer yourself? What is the meaning of surrender in our spiritual journeys? What does it ask — and not ask — of us today?

### ***Freedom***

#### Wednesday, April 3 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

"Freedom is not something that anybody can be given," said James Baldwin. "Freedom is something that people take and people are as free as they want to be." How do we find and claim the freedom we each want and need? And what responsibilities accompany our freedom? How does true freedom ironically bind us to others?

### ***Peace: inside and out***

#### Wednesday, May 8 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

"Peace is people talking together with a heart in between them." So says a wise eight-year-old, reminding us that peace is less about the absence of conflict than our ability to respond to one another with hearts engaged and held open in conversation and relationship. This session explores the inner and outer dimensions of peace and how one affects the other.

### ***Wisdom***

#### Wednesday, June 5 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

"At the crossroads, Wisdom takes her stand." As we consider the crossroads of our own times, this writing session explores the proverbs Wisdom offers now as her stand and guidance. What proverbial wisdom, old and new, do we need today and where might we find it, worldwide and within?

*Other literary programming: For more information about additional writing programs offered in other locations, visit [karenhering.com](http://karenhering.com), or to receive periodic e-mail notifications of Karen's upcoming literary programs, please contact [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org).*

# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

## Pitter-pattering Questions

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

From KP Hong, Director of Religious Education



Maybe from hanging around mathematicians or puzzling over Escher's ants in their never-ending crawl on this curious surface, most of us have probably run across the topological curiosity known as the Möbius strip. Aside from its many mathematical curiosities and enigmatic geometric properties — inspiring inventive applications from engineers, nano-technicians, artists, environmentalists, and even magicians — the Möbius strip is basically a curious object lacking a distinct "inside" and "outside." Most things have a front and back, up and down, inside and outside such as our bodies, dress shirts, smartphones, and favorite trouser belt. But a Möbius strip is a very different thing, with just one side and only one edge. (You can make a model by taking a strip of paper, giving it a half twist, and taping the ends together; like a cylinder but with a twist.) If you trace a line along one side of the strip, you will find that you have drawn the line through the whole thing, as it has only one side.

Or as mathematicians would say, the Möbius strip plays with a property called *orientability*. Space and objects within three-dimensional space are *orientable* if you can consistently choose directions such as inside/outside or up/down at every point on the surface and never end up at the same point upside down or inside out. With a Möbius strip, you travel around like Escher's ants and end back where you started, but completely disoriented. Inside is outside, top edge is bottom edge. Huh?

But is not such disorientation the very precondition for any new (re)orientation? From how we are oriented toward bodies and genders, races and cultures, immigrants and neighbors, does not the world spinning around us ask how we have come to see what we see through our orientations? Of what it means to orient ourselves toward some and not toward others? And of that most foundational and undisputed orientation that twists the topology of our being into "me" and "not me," and the lurking fear that baits us into building walls so we will never have to surrender to terrorists on the other side?

The noted child psychiatrist Donald Winnicott, however, saw a different congenital orientation in children — a *middle realm* of play, wonder, and exposure where "me" and "not me" feels permeable, and what is inner/outer and subject/object are not self-established but dynamically grounded in a stability as a spinning top finds stability. A middle realm that does not negate the distinction of identity and difference, of continuity and discontinuity, but playfully gives it a twist, entwining them. That seemingly separate "sides" are actually continuous with one another, and separate only as a function of our limited perspective. What if we could surrender that most automatic orientation of the autonomous self, that habit of atomistic individualism, and risk extending ourselves further than we have imagined, into that single continuous confounding curvature called love?

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



By M.C. Escher, 1963 (Image from *The Magic of M.C. Escher*, Thames & Hudson)

## R.E. Calendar

March 2019

**Sunday, March 3:** Regular R.E.; Celebration of New Lives ceremony (4:30 p.m. service, RSVP required)

**Wednesday, March 6:** New Family Orientation 7:15 p.m.; No OWL (Tech week for musical)

**Thursday-Saturday, March 7-9:** Children's Musical 7:00/5:30 p.m.

**Friday, March 8:** OWL spring overnight 7:00 p.m.

**Sunday, March 10:** Regular R.E. (Daylight savings begins)

**Sunday, March 17:** Regular R.E.

**Sunday, March 24:** Story Sunday (grade school and junior high children in Sanctuary)

**Sunday, March 31:** No R.E. Classes (Spring Break); activities for school-age kids, nursery care available; no COA



## Summer Camp at Unity Church 2019!

*Are you ready for another summer of community, excitement and fun?*

*We are!*

**CHALICE CAMP**

**July 8–12 and July 22–26**

**CHALICE KIDS**

**July 15–19 and July 29–August 2**

The 30th Annual Unity Church Children's Musical Presents

# A Little Anxious

Unity's 6th, 7th, and 8th Graders  
Written and Directed by Mary Blouin Auffert  
Music by Sandy Waterman

## Performances

Thursday, March 7 • 7:00 PM

Friday, March 8 • 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 9 • 5:30 PM

In the Sanctuary at Unity Church

## Tickets

\$5/children • \$10/adults • \$20/family

Children under age 5 are free.

Purchase tickets at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org),  
in the Parish Hall on Sundays,  
and at the door before the performance.



# MUSIC MINISTRY

## Music Notes



From Ruth Palmer,  
Director of Music Ministries

*We must surrender to the quieting of all intent and regret, so that the small light of the beginning can rise in us, again and again.*

— Mark Nepo

There are moments, in the life of a musician, that seem to live in direct contradiction. There are moments (actually, endless ones) that are a total brew of opposites. There are moments that constantly beg the question of balance between repetitive disciplines and enlightened creativity. And then, there are moments when one is graced with the insight which allows "surrender to the quieting of all intent" and releases one to "the small light of the beginning"... that sacred place where the music really happens.

As I move closer to my life transition into retirement (what is that anyway?), I, along with my partner Lorelee, are involved in a yearlong class with poet and philosopher Mark Nepo. It involves four weekends of in-depth work as a way to "deepen your own path over a year of your life". This, for me, was perfect timing as these four weekends take place between October 2018 and October 2019. Interesting to me is the discovery that, similar to my musical life's journey, it follows the same journey of intent, release and surrender to allowing that "small light" of another beginning. The following poem speaks to me so clearly to this continuing balance of intent and giving over to that next beginning.

Breaking Surface — Mark Nepo

*Let no one keep you from your journey,  
no rabbi or priest,  
no mother who wants you to dig for treasures she  
misplaced,  
no father who won't let one life be enough,  
no lover who measures their worth by what you might  
give up,  
no voice that tells you in the night it can't be done.*

*Let nothing dissuade you from seeing what you see  
or feeling the winds that make you want to dance alone  
or go where no one has yet to go.*

*You are the only explorer.  
Your heart, the unreadable compass.  
Your soul, the shore of a promise too great to be  
ignored.*

Each song we sing, each phrase, each breath we take is a new beginning... a chance to allow that "small light of the beginning" which takes us to "the shore of a promise too great to be ignored." Sing on, friends, and let the music happen!

## Congratulations to our Unity Singers!



Unity Singers will be traveling to Kansas City, MO, on February 28 to sing at the National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association. Our singers are one of two choirs chosen to sing in the Music and Worship Event on Friday, March 1, as part of this 60th year Jubilee celebration. It is an honor and an opportunity to share broadly the music ministry of Unity Church. We will sing with the heart and connection felt in this community.

## Save these dates!

**Wednesday, April 10 • 7:30 p.m.**  
**Unity Singers Concert**

**Sunday, May 5, All three services**  
**Arthur Foote Music Sunday**

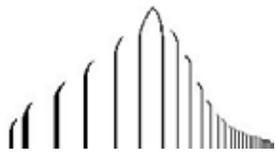
## Celebrate Ruth Palmer

**Saturday, May 11, 2019**  
**6:00-7:30 p.m. • Program**  
**7:30-9:00 p.m. • Reception**

Mark your calendars for the evening of Saturday, May 11, when we will have the opportunity to celebrate our dear Ruth Palmer and the enormous impact she has had on our musical and spiritual lives. Jake Runestad and Dale Warland have each been commissioned to write a piece in honor of Ruth as she starts her retirement. These pieces will be premiered that evening, with a reception, including appetizers and dessert, following the concert.

### Help Honor Ruth Palmer

Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries, will be retiring this spring and the celebration planning team needs your help honoring her! Please send photos of Ruth and the choirs for a photo book, as well as written testimonials that will become part of a collage of voices read at Ruth's retirement celebration on Saturday, May 11. Photos and testimonials should be sent to Martha at [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org).



# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

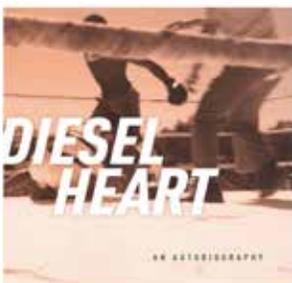
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**TIME SENSITIVE  
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The Library & Bookstall Team is Honored to Present

**Melvin Carter Jr.**  
reading from his new book  
**Diesel Heart**  
An Autobiography

Wednesday  
March 6, 2019  
7:15 – 8:30 p.m.

Unity Church-Unitarian  
733 Portland Ave., St. Paul, MN

Meet the Author

**aninconvenientsequel**  
TRUTH TO POWER



Al Gore pursues the inspirational idea that the perils of climate change can be overcome by human ingenuity and passion.

Post-movie discussion facilitated by climate scientist Sam Potter

March 22, 7 p.m.  
Robbins Parlor

The 30th Annual Unity Church Children's Musical Presents

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