

## Service

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

Integrity. Service. Joy. Those three words have shaped the culture and practice of Unity Church for over a decade. They are woven in, amongst and beyond much of what happens in the life of the congregation.

Although these themes are — or will be — explored as part of the monthly themes — they were carefully chosen and inextricably linked together, like a strand of pearls which are meant to both inspire and challenge.

The word service has a multiplicity of meanings, of course. We get our cars “serviced.” We attend a worship service or eat at a restaurant that has a dinner service. Our youth are required to do service projects, and misdemeanor offenders may be required to do community service. We may volunteer our services at church or retire from military service. Yet, the word service has a complex history. The root of the word can be traced back to Medieval Latin, *servitium* which connotes the state of serving or being in another’s command. In essence, it meant the “condition of being a slave, servitude.” The word is complicated.

When I was in seminary, I attended a learning-service trip to Haiti. It was sponsored by the United Methodists and the program was geared around being in service to the Haitians by helping them build a schoolhouse in a remote village. Another group had gone before ours, and they were charged with the task of laying the foundation of the school. Our group was to build on the foundation. When

we arrived, we saw that the foundation had crumbled and was useless. “What happened?” we asked our Haitian contact. He smiled and shrugged. “They didn’t ask me what kind of brick they should use. I could have told them that those bricks would dissolve in the first rainstorm.”

We know that sometimes our efforts to be of help can be patronizing and/or paternalistic. To be of service without examining our motives or, in this case, being the white savior, can do more harm than good. We see this particularly during times of crisis when people with compassionate hearts rush to a disaster wanting to help, but without taking the time for deeper reflection on how that help may impact individuals or a system.

So how do we apply our desire to be of service to humanity, to sentient beings and to the planet, without doing harm? To be of service requires us to reflect on critical questions. What is the primary reason I want to be of service? Is it because it might make me like myself better? Is it because it would look good on my resume? Is it because I’m convinced that my way is the right way? All of these motivations *can* lead us into a more selfless service, but not without some form of spiritual interrogation.

The Quaker writer and theologian Parker Palmer wrote, “Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic self-hood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we

ought to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks — we will also find our path of authentic service in the world.”

Authentic service is what arises from knowing one’s motivations. It also involves being mindful of one’s own capacity to serve. Sometimes we can’t be of service to others. Sometimes we need to allow ourselves to receive service and help from others. It is not only in the giving that we receive; but in the receiving, we also learn to surrender our insistence on only being the one who gives.

May this month of “service” provide you with rich opportunities to give and to receive.

*Written by Rev. Kathleen Rolenz with  
Rev. KP Hong,  
Rev. Andrea Anastos,  
Drew Danielson,  
and Rev. Karen Gustafson*

### Theme Resources

For further reflection on this theme please see this month’s Spiritual Practice Packet which will be available online at [unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html](http://unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html).

# IN THE MEANTIME / WHEEL OF LIFE



## In the Meantime

### Reflections from Unity's Interim Senior Minister

One of the great things about being your interim minister is that I am “at your service.” It is a different ministry than a settled ministry, in that my short-term status as your minister means that my tasks are focused on preparing you for the next chapter of your congregational life.

One of the things I’ve discerned over these last five months is that despite your most recent conflict, you are essentially a healthy congregation. An astute staff member asked me about that assumption. They wondered, “What makes for health? I thought we were healthy before we entered the search process.” I didn’t respond in the moment to that question, but I have been thinking about it.

So, what are the qualities of a healthy congregation? In the nearly thirty years of serving as a minister and collegial/congregational consultant, these are some of the markers of institutional health that I can identify:

1. A clear sense of mission and purpose.
2. A commitment to connect with and care for one another.
3. Dynamic worship.
4. Significant lay leadership groups.
5. Programs for identifying, recruiting, equipping, sustaining and supporting leaders.
6. Listening to and acting on the concerns of those from historically marginalized communities.
7. Widening the circle of concern so that all may attend and participate.
8. A clear path and practice for dealing with conflict.


If I were taking Unity’s annual physical, I’d say that, to a greater or lesser degree, this congregation has established healthy habits in numbers 1–7. However, #8, “Developing a clear path and practice for dealing with conflict,” is a muscle that you haven’t had to use for a while. So what do we do when my values come into conflict with your values? Can we still break bread together at Wellspring Wednesday? Sing in the choir together? Or do we simply try avoid one another, hoping the feelings will diminish over time? Building on the Team Dynamics training on complexity and conflict, my next area of focus — both for individuals and as an institution — will be to learn to skillfully work through conflict. This work will put Unity Church in the best position to go forward with your next ministerial search. I have a lot of faith in you — Unity Church.

I am joyfully, at your service,  
Rev. Kathleen

The Wheel of Life  
In Memoriam  
**Barbara Taylor**  
February 13, 1938–January 20, 2023

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FAITHFULLY BECOMING  
**UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
PITTSBURGH • JUNE 21 - 25, 2023

Register now for in-person and virtual attendance: [www.uua.org/ga/registration](http://www.uua.org/ga/registration).  
If you would like to serve as a delegate from Unity Church, email Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).

# MARCH SUNDAY SERVICES

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## Worship Services

Unity Church offers two in-person services each Sunday at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. (except where noted). The 9:00 a.m. service is offered via livestream.

### March 5: *The Middle of Our Mission*

**Rev. Kathleen Rolenz // Worship Associate Merrill Aldrich**

Livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=5PuvEdgwJME](https://youtube.com/watch?v=5PuvEdgwJME)

On February 3 and 4, Unity Church engaged in a process known as a "Congregational Life Review." During that process, we explored milestone events in our congregational history. This Sunday will reveal what lies at the middle of Unity's mission as discovered through the review. What did we learn? What did this process tell us about ourselves and this church — and how might these insights illuminate Unity's next steps?

### March 12: *Heeding the Call: A Deep Dive into Jonah's Whale*

**Rev. Shay MacKay // Worship Associate Russel Balenger**

Livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=fu1mlrHaTMQ](https://youtube.com/watch?v=fu1mlrHaTMQ)

What does it mean to be chosen, to be called by something deep inside toward a life of service, compassion, truth, and courage? What do we do when we really don't want to follow that path? And how do we find the strength to do it anyway?

### March 19: *UUSC: Giving Life the Shape of Justice*

**Rev. Karen Gustafson // Worship Associate Nancy Dilts**

Livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=fVvnyPB7w5c](https://youtube.com/watch?v=fVvnyPB7w5c)

The Principles and Sources of Unitarian Universalism make specific references to justice seeking. In the sixth principle, "The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all," and the second source, "Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love." For many of our members across the globe, these are the statements that have drawn them to our faith and provide the most compelling part of our covenant. They have been moved to express their faith in an organization formed over eight decades ago which we now know as the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. The stories of this vital expression of our presence in the world remind us of the power of service grounded in faith and principle.

### March 26: *In Service of Worship*

**Rev. Kathleen Rolenz // Worship Associate Rebecca Flood**

Livestream: [youtube.com/watch?v=3LCPxnIEfxl](https://youtube.com/watch?v=3LCPxnIEfxl)

This Sunday we welcome the South African choral group 29:11. Their group is named for a verse from Jeremiah 29:11: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" We will celebrate the music of 29:11, and explore the changes to Unity's liturgical tradition while breaking open new possibilities for the future.

## Offering Recipients

Each week, seventy percent of our Sunday offering is given to a community non-profit and thirty percent supports the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church.

### March 5: Citadel Food Bank St. Paul

Citadel Food Bank, located on West 7th Street in St. Paul, is a long-standing community resource providing boxes of food for up to 350 families each week. Fresh foods are donated by local stores but Citadel Food Bank needs to purchase shelf-stable foods and home products for the families they serve. Unexpected shortfalls in the 2022 holiday donations have left the food bank scrambling for funds to meet the needs of its clients. Unity Church member Pam Scott is a Citadel volunteer.

### March 12: Exodus Lending

Exodus Lending helps Minnesotans get out of predatory loan debt and back on track financially. Through their 0% interest refinance program, qualified participants are able to pay off payday, pawn, and car title loans carrying an average interest rate of 200%. The average family in payday debt is trapped in revolving payday debt for at least five months out of the year. This cycle deters them from pursuing any financial future outside of paying off debt. Unity Church members Ray Wiedmeyer and Karen Abraham support Exodus Lending. [exoduslending.org](https://exoduslending.org)

### March 19: Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is a non-profit, nonsectarian organization advancing human rights together with an international community of grassroots partners and advocates. It supports self-determination and defends the rights of people displaced due to climate, conflict, or economic hardships. The UUSC responds to humanitarian crises as partners with people whose access to aid is most limited. This collection will support the UUSC response to the earthquake impacting Turkey and Syria. [uus.org](https://uus.org)

### March 26: St. Joseph's Coat

St. Joseph's Coat, serving nearly 700 people weekly, is a St. Paul free store providing clothing and services for those in need. The organization offers essential support to low income families, people without homes, those living on fixed incomes, new immigrants, individuals facing unemployment, those recently released from incarceration, and individuals battling chemical addictions and mental health issues. Unity Church member Sharon Hogenson, a retired social worker, supports St. Joseph's Coat. [josephscoatmn.org](https://josephscoatmn.org)

To nominate an organization to receive the Sunday offering, visit [unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html](https://unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html) and complete the online nomination form.

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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## What Do I Think?

**LauraSue Schlatter, Trustee**

I am new to Unity's board this year. We had a retreat in January, and our first regular meeting in February. "So how is it?" people ask me, "What do you think?" I am writing this column in February — and, appropriately, the word I think of when I

think of Unity's board is "integrity." This is a group of people willing to dig deep and be honest, who believe that the Moral Owners of Unity Church are not only the members of Unity, but "others who yearn for the Beloved Community and see Unity Church-Unitarian as an instrument for its realization."

At our January retreat, we made plans to strengthen the integrity of the board's work, within and among the trustees, in our relationship to our congregational community, and with our Moral Owners. We rearranged our agenda (which you can now find on our webpage, a week prior to our monthly meeting) to achieve a stronger, more intentional focus on antiracist, multicultural awareness and discussion. We moved our generative discussion from the end of our meeting to the beginning. In February, we started our meeting with 40 minutes of conversation about our relationships to certainty, to centering comfort, and to our new covenant. Each of us had a copy of a shorthand version of Tema Okun's "Characteristics of White Dominant Culture," focusing on the antidotes, and Unity's Faith Formation and Antiracist Multicultural Double Helix. The quality of the conversation was striking. To our surprise, we were also able to get all our regular business done on time. What do I think? I think our trustees listen deeply to one another, are willing to change, and take personal risks. It is also a group of people who laugh together.

The board also established a communications and education committee. The committee will work with Rev. Rolenz and the Executive Team to create a plan over the coming year about different aspects of the search process, to help us be better prepared. We hope this committee will help to bring greater transparency to the process of selecting our next settled minister.

Also in February, we began dealing with the nuts and bolts of the new ministerial search process in earnest. Unity has learned an enormous amount about the search process in the past nine months. The board has much to do — and we will be asking you, our church community, to help in a variety of ways — not just with the search itself, but with other aspects of board work. We hope you will consider applying to be on the ministerial search team, offer a nomination, or engage in other ways with the trustees and staff during this busy time!

When I think about the integrity of the trustees, I know that they are not exceptional at Unity Church. I have been a part of this community for more than 25 years — I know that this is a place where integrity and service thrive. I am grateful for this chance to serve on the board, and look forward to engaging in the work with many of you as we move forward.

## The Next Ministerial Search

**Unity Church Board of Trustees**

A number of people have asked for more information about why the board decided to move forward with the next search for a settled senior minister now, rather than a year from now. The questions have been asked from a place of curiosity rather than concern, and we would like to share more information about how we arrived at our decision.

Over the past nine months, the board has been working with Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, and the Executive Team as a whole, to identify areas we need to work on as a congregation to better prepare ourselves for the next search. There have been listening sessions, ministerial support opportunities for those feeling hurt and disappointment with the vote last May, workshops reflecting on what we have learned and identifying areas for growth, and efforts to improve our congregational acumen around complexity and conflict with a Team Dynamics training. All of this work has asked us to lean into the complexity, to listen to and understand a multiplicity of experiences, and to not rush in and "fix" something before we know what needs attention. We have been practicing the antidotes to white dominant culture.

What we heard from Rev. Rolenz and Rev. David Pyle, Mid-America Regional Lead who has come to Unity Church twice since May, is that they see a much healthier congregation than they expected. We are resilient, and doing the challenging work of being with our discomfort and not over-simplifying what happened. We are seeing a clearer picture and gaining a growing understanding of the complex set of factors that led us to where we are today.

In addition to the readiness piece, we also considered the potential loss of momentum to the congregation in moving things out an additional year. This includes not having Rev. Rolenz for a third-year because of her commitment to stay with us for two years only. Finding a one-year interim would be difficult and include a steep learning curve and limited time to build relationships with the congregation. The Executive Team also noted that an additional year of interim would be taxing on staff because of the amount of support required. Interim work is largely a two-year process and we have made great strides in doing much of this work already.

Board focus for the next steps includes:

- Developing the charge for the ministerial search team,
- Implementing a process for selecting the next ministerial search team,
- Examining our bylaws as they relate to voting access, and
- Implementing a communication/education plan in coordination with the Executive Team.

There is additional board work underway on various other matters, but these are the items as they relate to the next search. Please pay attention to opportunities for congregational involvement in the coming weeks and months. We have much work to do — together.

# BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

## Reparations: What's Faith Got to Do with It?

Rebecca Gonzalez-Campoy, Beloved Community Communications Team



Session three of Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light's (MNIPL) Reparations Learning Table ([bit.ly/mniplreparations](http://bit.ly/mniplreparations)) generated discussion and reflection around how our faith community traditions or spiritual practices determine how we engage in meaningful repair work for the long haul.

Take a look at the MARCH/Multifaith Anti-Racism Change and Healing Eco Map as a visual reminder of our reparations journey.



*Credit: MARCH (multifaith anti-racism, change, and healing) Rev. Terri Burnor; Rev. Ashley Horan; Jessica Intermill, Esq.; Liz Loeb, Esq.; Rev. Dana Neuhauser; Rev. Jim Bear Jacobs (Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Nation, Rev. Dr. Rebecca Voekel*

Learning about atrocities that our faith traditions committed against people of color may motivate us to abandon those communities. Yet, they can be the very place in which we find strength and support to engage in what Reparations Learning Table co-leader Jessica Intermill calls “the repentance/repair/return framework.”

This notion of lament, then repair and return of ill-gotten gains with penalty payment included, is a theme found in many faith traditions. The Biblical story of Zacchaeus the tax collector and Jesus (Luke 19:1-10 New International Version, [bit.ly/luke19110](http://bit.ly/luke19110)) is one of several examples. *Aparigraha* in the practice of yoga is the concept that nonpossession of things grounds you

in the universe. Zen Buddhism teaches the ethics of not taking what is not given. Many Indigenous nations live by the code, “take only what you need.” It’s by no means a new concept. We’re just returning to it.

The 7th Principle of Unitarian Universalism calls us to respect “the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” The proposed 8th principle currently under consideration by the Unitarian Universalist Association — “journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions” — could be a call to lament, repair, and return land and resources to our Black and Indigenous neighbors.

What does this action look like? And why do the work as a faith community? MNIPL Reparations Table co-leader Liz Loeb lifted up these reasons:

- Faith communities wield moral and ethical credentials on the political stage — in short, people listen when clergy and congregation members show up to rallies at the State Capitol, for instance. The chemistry changes, suddenly meetings get on the calendar, and media coverage changes.
- Community support within communities is more likely to lead to achievable reparations (as opposed to individual efforts).
- Faith communities typically have resources — they own things that can be converted to returnable resources.
- Faith community members show up to events already organized — this planning and organizing that’s in place can help bring more people together for effective collaboration.

This is intergenerational work: elders possess wisdom that, when combined with the energy and new ideas of younger people, can create a stronger faith community committed to the spiritual practice of reparations, however they are defined.

Here’s a personal example. I have an adopted, now estranged, Ojibwe brother who many in the Two Harbors, Minnesota, public education and law enforcement systems deemed lesser than the white kids, while growing up. When some believed that he could succeed, he did, but many teachers expected nothing from him. And that’s what they got. My brother wound up in juvenile detention for minor offenses. When he got out, the local sheriff typically went after him first when a crime occurred.

I’m currently pursuing a master’s in divinity in UU Social Justice and completing my Community Pastoral Education (CPE) unit with Volunteers of America High School. There I provide whatever support staff needs to help mostly students of color who’ve been bounced out of the mainstream Minneapolis Public School system. My fellow Social Justice CPE cohort meets at Stillwater State Prison because that’s where half of our group lives. We are each trying to make the lives better for those who, for whatever reason, veered off the path to a healthy life. We are trying to return what was taken from the ancestors of our clients.

I work with kids who have family members in prison, who are from immigrant families struggling to make their way in a completely foreign country, who’ve already been to juvenile detention, and/or who are members of gangs. Some will graduate. Some won’t. I could not do any of this work as an individual. Getting involved in Unity’s social justice work led me to pursue a master’s in divinity in UU Social Justice so that I may work in community {continued on page 14}

# WELCOME NEWCOMERS / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS



## Welcome Words

**Laura Park, Director of Membership and Hospitality**

At Unity Church, we talk about service a little differently than most. We do encourage our members to find opportunities for service, as we encourage members toward the other instrumental commitments of membership like pledging and attending Sunday services. Helping out, however, is not the ultimate goal. We're greedier than that. We want our members

to engage with service that deepens practice on both the spiritual and antiracist multicultural side of our Double Helix metaphor. As we make meals and organize events and facilitate circles and welcome on Sundays, our spiritual and antiracist multicultural practices, within us individually and among us in community, help us lean into the liberating discomfort of transformation together. As our hearts break open from doing our practice within and among, compassion arises. We want service that organizes that compassion to bless the world.

Want to know more about the Double Helix practices that can ground you for service or the possibilities Unity Church offers to bless the world? Let me know what questions I can answer about congregational life and the pathways you might explore to know the church better and deepen your life of faith and antiracist multicultural practice. Contact me at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110. I look forward to getting to know you!

## Pathway to Membership Classes

The offerings below invite you to explore a deeper connection to Unity Church and the commitments and opportunities of membership. If you have questions or would like one-on-one conversation about getting connected or about membership, please contact Laura Park.

### Finding Yourself at Unity

**For visitors and inquirers; held Sundays at 10:15 a.m., in the Gannett Room and online via Zoom at [bit.ly/fyuonline](https://bit.ly/fyuonline).** Drop-ins welcome; childcare in the nursery. Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time, and attend sessions in any order.

March 5: Congregational and Pastoral Care

March 19: Building Tour

March 12: Worship & Liturgical Year

March 26: Membership 101

### Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

**Tuesday, April 11 • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**

This session, for people ready to become members, 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.

## Welcome New Members

### Sterling Marlow

I am a new member of Unity church and I have been coming here since September of 2022. I am a member of Sisseton-Whapeton Oyate, a Unitarian, and a Polytheist who loves to study esoteric subjects, play games, and hang out with my cat Toothless.



### Gaida Quinn

I am a retired nurse and I have felt at home here since my first visit six months ago. My wish to seek more spiritual depth through all the stories we share here with respect, acceptance, and love brings me to a place where I can cherish even more deeply my relationships to my family, friends, and community.



## Fellowship Groups

For more conversation about getting connected, contact Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).

**Afterthoughts** offers time following the 9:00 service to discuss the service.

**Caregivers Group** meets on the third Thursday of the month.

**Evergreen Quilters:** This quilting group meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month.

**Families Living with Mental Health Challenges** meets the first Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

**Kung Fu** meets Saturday mornings, 9:00-10:00 a.m., online via Zoom. Email [barney.kujawski@gmail.com](mailto:barney.kujawski@gmail.com) to receive the link.

**Living With Grief Group** meets on the third Tuesday of the month.

**Men's Coffee Group** meets every other Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. for light-hearted conversation.

**Men's Conversation Group** meets Monday, March 6 and 20, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Men's Retirement Circle:** Monday, March 13 and 27, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

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

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

**Textile Arts Group** meets online the first and third Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc.

**Unity Book Club** meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. March 14: *Owls of the the Eastern Ice. A Quest to Find and Save the World's Largest Owl* by Jonathan C. Slaght

**Women in Retirement** meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., in the Center Room. Social hour at noon!

**Young Adult Group** (ages 18-35) — all are welcome. Email [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org) for details.

## MARCH FOURTH Unity Church 2023 Auction Fundraiser

We are very excited for our all-church, multi-generational fundraiser on the evening of Saturday, March 4, 2023! Donations have been rolling in, and preparations are underway! Here's how you can join us for the fun:

- Bid on items! The bidding will begin on March 1. Peruse the fabulous donations and help to get the bidding started! Please note: the catalog is subject to change up until closing time, so be sure to check back before 8:00 p.m. on March 4 to see if you are the top bidder. All bidding is online at <https://uc732.cbo.io/>.
- Come to the event on March 4th! A suggested donation of \$20 per person will be gratefully accepted. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. for hors d'oeuvres and the silent auction. The live auction is at 8:00, followed by check out. If you can't attend in person, you can still bid online, or simply make a financial contribution to the fundraiser.
- Volunteer to help! We still need more volunteers on March 3 and 4 to prepare appetizers, set-up displays and decorations, hang artwork, monitor tables, and help with check out. Contact Barbara Hubbard at [barbara@unityunitarian.org](mailto:barbara@unityunitarian.org) if you're interested in joining the team.

### **Many thanks to all of our donors!**

The approved operating budget for 2023 includes \$40,000 from a fundraiser. Help us achieve our goal; support the mission and programs of Unity Church!

## Hey White People! Save the Date!

Saturday, May 20 • 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Please save the date and plan to participate in the 2nd annual pilgrimage from the Minnesota State Capitol to George Floyd Global Memorial. Join us for the Wellspring Wednesday program on March 15, where we will share information about the logistics of the day and discuss pilgrimage as spiritual practice. See page 11 for details.



## Pastoral Ponderings

**Rev Karen Gustafson**  
Interim Minister of Pastoral Care

On Friday evening, February 3, Rev Kathleen and I introduced the Congregational Life Review process to forty members and friends of Unity with what might be described as a “storytelling

event.” Participants were invited to identify seven to ten significant events or experiences associated with their relationship to Unity Church and plot them on a timeline that reflected their tenure with the congregation. Personal timelines ranged from a few months to several decades — but everyone brought stories which were shared in pairs and in small groups.

Some stories began and extended months or years at places far flung from St. Paul and Unity Church and included tales of religious doubt, questioning from childhood, and stories of seemingly accidental encounters with Unitarian Universalists in random places who sparked a curiosity that would not die. Others told of memorable sermons or classes or encounters during coffee hours that evoked important spiritual shifts, and the ways in which children had been changed by participating in the youth musical and formed bonds of friendship that spanned decades. And memories of traditional services — of Christmas pageants and flower communions and memorial services and weddings and Coming of Age.

And scattered among the delighted recall were a few stories of disappointment and betrayal of trust, of leaving and returning, and of healing. Some of these are stories seeking resolution — if not a happy ending, at least a way to put them to rest.

All of these stories and the ones yet to be shared are the warp and the woof that forms the tapestry that is Unity Church. Your individual stories are, of course, part of the tapestry of your own life, stories that you leverage to make meaning or sense of the complexity of life as you know it. They are the stories you bring to me when you seek pastoral care and the ones you use to define yourself, to connect with others in your community and beyond.

During this month, I will be holding space for you to share stories of Unity Church that you are carrying in your heart but may be reluctant to tell. There will be small group spaces on Sunday, March 5, from noon to 2:00 p.m.; on Wednesday, March 15 and 22, at 7:00 p.m., as part of Wellspring Wednesday; and individual spaces by appointment to [kareng@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kareng@unityunitarian.org).

Let me also celebrate the wonderful sense of community that emerged out of our time together in early February. We will be looking to weave many more such opportunities into the life of Unity Church.

Unity Church–Unitarian presents the 34th Annual Youth Musical

# A Ghost of a Second Chance

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



## Performances in the Sanctuary at Unity Church!

Thursday, March 9 • 7:00 PM

Friday, March 10 • 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 11 • 5:30 PM

## Buy Tickets!

In Parish Hall on February 26 and March 5

Online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org)

At the door on the night of the show

\$5/child, \$10/adult, \$20/family



# LIBRARY-BOOKSTALL / ART TEAM



## Service: The March Worship Theme — Read About It but Find the Joy in Doing It Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

*I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.*

— Rabindranath Tagore

At the risk of stating the obvious, integrity, service, and joy are not mutually exclusive. One of our former ministers used to say that he hoped service to the church would not be something that you feel you have to do, but something that you want to do. Not that everything we do for the church will be necessarily fun, but that ideally, if we serve out of love for our church community, we will find joy in serving, as Tagore said.

### Read About It:

*Serving with Grace: Lay Leadership as a Spiritual Practice* by Erik Walker Wikstrom is about why serving your church is important, and how service as a spiritual practice is part of living a faithful life. In the Anderson Library: 253 W.

The New Yorker called Peter Singer, “the most influential living philosopher.” *The Life You Can Save: How to Do Your Part to End World Poverty* is a compelling and persuasive roadmap to making a difference. In the Unity Bookstall.

### Find the Joy in Service:

There is one thing that you can unequivocally say about Unity Church: there is a plenitude of opportunities for service. In a large church that highly values shared ministry like ours, there is no trouble finding occasion to use our skills and talents, with whatever small or large amount of time each of us have to share: community outreach ministry teams, board of trustees, teaching religious education, serving on welcome team or the pastoral care team or a cooking team, becoming a worship associate or a teaching associate, or staffing the Holly Avenue desk. Or help with our annual auction, Gender + Faith retreat, the Christmas pageant, and youth musical.

Perhaps lesser-known or lower-profile opportunities are in the Anderson Library staff (one of the best and most loyal teams) which is down to a skeleton crew and looking for a co-team leader. Or The Justice Database, one of the Next Right Action initiatives begun in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, could use more help any time of the year. The Congregation Book Read committee is looking for a new chair. Café Unity is in its 15th year — any interest in chairing the committee or helping?

And there are more, but don’t be overwhelmed. If there are teams, programs, events, services, and projects that you think are worthwhile, to make sure that they continue and thrive, pick one that fits with your interest and skills. Then, contact Laura Park ([laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org)) to get involved.

## March Parish Hall Artist

### Mosaic on a Stick

Mosaic artist and sculptor Lori Greene identifies as a community and public artist. She works with and for the community, and has over twenty



years of experience making outdoor public art mosaics. Lori is well-known for creating pieces about healing and recovering from trauma. She believes the process of making art is healing, and she believes there is power in working together to create a work of art and see it through to the finished piece. She works with intention, with an open heart, and with love. Her process involves listening, feeling, researching, and of course the building of the mosaic. It is a long process, but it is a labor of love.

As a multiracial (African American, Native American-Mississippi band of Choctaw, and Caucasian) woman, Lori brings a unique voice and perspective to public art that has not always been represented. Her identity as a woman of color is very visible in her work, as demonstrated through the narratives of her pieces and the people who are represented in them. Lori’s work is bold, colorful, and unapologetic. Patterns, symbols, and motifs reflecting her intersecting cultural identities interweave themselves throughout her works like a visual language. Within them lies stories of survival, interconnection, resilience, and a deep connection to the ancestors. Through Lori’s artistic process she works to honor the legacies of BIPOC people and decolonize our relationship to mother nature. Made with love, her works serve as prayers for a future of justice, perseverance, and intergenerational healing.

## Seeking High Quality Artwork!

Unity Church celebrates diversity of all kinds — diversity in our culture as well as diversity of individual creativity.

Join the growing number of local artists who have successfully displayed their art in our Parish Hall. Get your application in today for a chance to exhibit starting this November.



*Great exposure — hundreds of viewers!*

*Great sales potential — low commission!*

Application deadline: May 1

Application: [unityunitarian.org/artist-apply](https://unityunitarian.org/artist-apply)

Questions: [artteam@unityunitarian.org](mailto:artteam@unityunitarian.org)

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday gathers a multigenerational church community to nourish right and holy relationship among us and deepen our life of faith, grounded in spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural work. Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. in the Parish Hall, a short chapel service begins at 6:40 p.m. in Ames Chapel, and programs begin at 7:10 p.m. Details at [unityunitarian.org](http://unityunitarian.org)

## March 1

*Dinner: meatballs and pasta, chopped salad, dessert*

### **Truth Telling and Healing: Indigenous and Environmental Justice Series Part 5: Land and Reparations**

In-person and online via Zoom: <https://bit.ly/justiceseriesfive>

This session will delve deeper into the homeland on which Unity Church stands and explore what it means to engage in reparations. Jessica Intermill of Intermill Land History Consulting and Strategic Policy Consultant for Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (MNIPL) will introduce us to the Reparatory Eco Mind Map and the use of treaties to determine the early stewards of "this place." Previous Truth-Telling and Healing presentations have invited participants into the act of repairing through several of these portals already. This program will take us beyond the abstract land acknowledgment and connect us in a real way to the place we visit each week to engage in worship and other forms of spiritual practice.

As a Strategic Policy Consultant for MNIPL, Intermill works to engage congregations in the work of reparations and reparatory action, and to advocate for legislation advancing the Land Back and reparations movements. She brings 15 years of experience as a treaty-rights and tribal law attorney to her work in building inclusive pathways that serve all our neighbors.

### **Queer Theology Discussion Group**

In-person, Center Room

Queer Theology is a theological practice that attempts to erase boundaries that exist in religious traditions. These boundaries include the personal such as gender and sexuality allowing people to be themselves. It also erases institutional boundaries such as private vs. public discourse about one's sexuality, eliminating secret closets of toxicity and shame. Queer Theology offers an opportunity to include rather than exclude more voices. This Queer Theology discussion group is not a class explaining the theological movement. Instead, the group will be practicing Queer Theology using readings from Marcella Althaus-Reid, Judith Butler, and Patrick Cheng as a starting point for participants to connect their personal experiences with the world beyond the self.

The group is open to adults of all genders and sexual orientations. Participants are strongly encouraged to attend the Gender + Faith retreat on March 18. Two follow-up sessions are scheduled on Tuesday, March 7 and 14, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Questions? Contact Mike Huber at [mikehuberece@gmail.com](mailto:mikehuberece@gmail.com).

### **Equitable Futures Card Game**

In-person, DeCramer Room

Join Teaching Associate Barney Kujawski to play the Equitable Futures Card Game, an interactive exploration that develops participants' understanding of what challenges we need to overcome and the values and tools we need to build a more equitable future.

### **Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza**

In-person, Choir Room

Join Mayra for beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Learn basic violin posture, note reading, and more! Questions? Email [mayraquitzia@hotmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@hotmail.com).

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

Interested in learning more about Unity's religious education programs? Join us for our new family orientation. Questions? Email [ray@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ray@unityunitarian.org).

## March 8

*Dinner: dilly meat and rice stuffed cabbage rolls with a tangy tomato sauce, roasted potatoes, salad, dessert*

### **Paul Kruse: Once Removed Final Sharing and Workshop**

In-person, Robbins Parlor

Join Artist in Residence Paul Kruse to hear a small sample of the interviews he recorded as part of the Once Removed project, exploring LGBTQ experiences of family. Paul will also offer a brief workshop experience inviting folks to share family stories with each other.

### **Lectio Divina**

Online via Zoom: [bit.ly/lectio22-23](http://bit.ly/lectio22-23)

Following a centuries-old Benedictine spiritual practice of contemplative reading, a chosen poem is read aloud, as attendees are encouraged to lift up what they heard and how the poem spoke to them. A different poem at each session. A rich way to receive poetry's gifts in a small group setting. Led by Lisa Wersal or Shelley Butler. Lectio is offered on the fourth Tuesday and the second Wednesday of each month.

### **Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza**

In-person, Choir Room

### **Wellspring Wednesday Dinner**

Dinner is prepared and served by our food ministry team, and the menus are posted with the programming for each week. The cost for dinner is \$8/adults, \$4/child (ages 5-12), \$2/child (ages 2-4), and \$20/family. If you need financial assistance to cover the cost of dinner, please email Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org). If you would like to help prepare or serve a meal, or you plan to join us and need a special food preparation, email [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org).

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

March 15

*Dinner: chicken or chickpea mulligatawny over rice, roasted pepper salad, dessert*

## **Hey White People, We Have Work To Do!**

In-person, Robbins Parlor

Second Annual Pilgrimage from the Minnesota State Capitol to George Floyd Global Memorial

Saturday, May 20, 2023

8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

"To be an antiracist is a radical choice in the face of this history, requiring a radical reorientation of our consciousness." — Ibram Kendi

Please join Clover Earl and members of the planning team to learn about pilgrimage as spiritual practice. We will open and close the evening with discussion about Unity's Double Helix metaphor and how this opportunity for deep self-reflection supports the realization of our end to "create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships." There will be a brief talk about the history of Hey White People, an overview of what you can expect on the day of the pilgrimage, and time for Q&A.

## **Unity Stories**

In-person, Parish Hall

Join Rev. Karen Gustafson to share stories of Unity Church that you are carrying in your heart, but may be reluctant to tell. Sharing time will also be offered on Wednesday, March 22, at 7:10 p.m., and Sunday, March 5, at noon. Individual appointments are available by contacting Karen at [kareng@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kareng@unityunitarian.org). See "Pastoral Ponderings" on page 7 for more information.

## **Board Game Night**

In-person, Center Room

Open to everyone; **kids are welcome with their adult(s)!** We'll have a variety of board games available that are easy to learn, or bring a favorite board game that you would like to play.

## **Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza**

In-person, Choir Room

March 22

*Dinner: enchilada tater tot casserole, cool cucumber salad, dessert*

## **Diesel Heart Community Discussion 4:30-6:00 p.m.**

In-person, Center Room; snacks provided

Event co-hosts: On Stage: Creating a Community Dialogue Around Live Theater, Community Stabilization Project, Circle of Peace, and East Side Freedom Library.

Join us for a stimulating theater presentation and discussion led by Melvin Whitfield Carter, Jr., and local teaching artists Warren Bowles (director of the play), Maria Asp, and Patrick Bailey. Participants will read two scenes from *Diesel Heart*, a play that History Theatre will be producing from March 11-April 2. The readings will be followed by a discussion of the themes, tying in current events, personal values, and narratives. Participants will receive a ticket discount to see the play.

## **An Evening with Artist in Residence Geno Okok**

In-person, Parish Hall

Join Artist in Residence Geno Okok to learn about his art his approach to the mural project on Unity's lower level. May include time to paint, depending on schedule and interest.

## **Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement®**

In-person, Body Room

Join Suzanne Burr for as many or as few of the eight weeks (3/22-5/10) as your schedule allows. In a non-judgmental environment for organic learning, you will be guided through gentle movement explorations to build self-awareness. Slowing down, using less effort, and exploring small sensory distinctions allows us to learn more about ourselves, grow our capacity to pay attention, cultivate greater capacity for sensing and feeling, notice habits, and value rest. Dress comfortably, and bring a blanket to lie on and a small towel to use to lift your head.

## **Unity Stories**

In-person, Robbins Parlor

Join Rev. Karen Gustafson to share stories of Unity Church that you are carrying in your heart, but may be reluctant to tell. Individual appointments are available by contacting Karen at [kareng@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kareng@unityunitarian.org) to schedule a time.

## **Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza**

In-person, Choir Room

March 29

*Dinner: turkey or veggie shepherds pie, salad, dessert*

## **Pollinators Garden 101**

In-person, Robbins Parlor

Join congregant Barbara Porwit to learn the basics of supporting native pollinators. Learn how to get native plants at low or no cost through programs sponsored by the Act for the Earth Team's Pollinator Team. Attendees can sign up for individual site evaluations and coaching by team members. Barbara will offer this session two additional times on Zoom: Monday April 24, at 7:00 p.m. (register: [bit.ly/polli424](https://bit.ly/polli424)) and Monday, May 22, at 7:00 p.m. (register: [bit.ly/polli522](https://bit.ly/polli522)).

## **Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement®**

In-person, Body Room

See March 22 for details

## **Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza**

In-person, Choir Room

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Partner Church Team

### Helping Ukrainian Refugees

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has displaced more than eight million noncombatant people. Some refugees sought shelter in neighboring European countries, while others sought refuge in western Ukraine, away from the fighting. Via a Sunday offering in March of 2022 Unity raised more than \$32,000 to support refugees. The PCT (Partner Church Team), one of Unity's community outreach ministry teams turned to its Unitarian partner church in Homoródszentpéter in Transylvania/Romania to help direct the donation. The minister of Unity's partner church of more than 20 years, Reverend Kinga-Réka Székely, suggested entrusting the funds to the *Unitárius Gondviselés Segélyszervezet* (USG, or Unitarian Providential Aid Society). Unity's donation was augmented by an additional \$200,000 from other churches. Romania is particularly close to the war as it borders Ukraine.

Throughout 2022, USG volunteers, including Rev. Székely and the Unitarian Bishop István Kovács, made 14 separate trips to Ukraine to deliver supplies: seven trips to Beregszász/Berehove in western Ukraine, partnering with the Reform Church of Transcarpathia; and seven trips to Odesa, Ukraine's principal port on the Black Sea. Shipments included non-perishable food, blankets, sleeping bags, camp beds, clothing, sanitary products (especially diapers). After Russia began attacking Ukraine's electricity grid, portable generators were included so that refugees in Odesa could have backup electricity. About \$140,000 of the total donations from Unity Church and others went to purchase supplies. The cost of transport of the supplies into Ukraine drew upon the remaining funds.

The USG also transformed part of the Unitarian high school in Kolozsvár, Transylvania into a housing project for 70 refugees, including 44 children. With Unity's help, the refugees living in Kolozsvár have their own pre-K and elementary schools, offering instruction in the Ukrainian language. Refugees also use the school kitchen to support a Ukrainian bakery. Unity's donation was also put to work to buy livestock from local farmers to supply the protein needs of refugees; other funds were used to support refugees in other Transylvanian cities.

The PCT will present a Wellspring Wednesday program on our Partner Church program and Ukrainian refugee relief on April 5, from 7:10-8:30 p.m., in Robbins Parlor and via Zoom, and sponsor another Ukraine donation in April. Watch the April *commUNITY* newsletter and weekly emails for details.

## Obama School Team

### 100th Anniversary Celebration

Thursday, June 1, 2023,  
at Obama School

Join the school community and church members for the open house and celebration of the 100th anniversary of the school, from 4:30–7:30 p.m. on June 1! If you are an alum of Marshall, Webster, and/or Obama, you are especially invited. Outdoors you will find bouncy houses, food, and the opportunity to see old friends. Step inside the school for the open house and see how the building has changed, as well as current student activities and art projects. Join in a history-related scavenger/treasure hunt, with hallways open for you to explore and reminisce, a history display of former years' annuals, old floor plans, photos, and more. If you have any memorabilia that you'd be willing to lend or give to the school, please contact Nancy Heege at [nancyheege672@gmail.com](mailto:nancyheege672@gmail.com).

### March is Minnesota FoodShare Month

Like all food shelves in Minnesota, and across the country, the Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf has seen a dramatic rise in the need for its services. The number of people that visit Hallie Q. Brown each month fluctuates, but right now they are seeing 50 new families per month.

In January we collected 270 pounds of donations. Let's double that during March!

During the month of March, please bring soup, tuna, canned chicken, long grain white and brown rice, pasta sauce, diced tomatoes, and tomato sauce. The food shelf also needs brown paper grocery bags. Thank you!



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Affordable Housing Team

### "Bring It Home Minnesota" Bill Has Successful First Hearing

Minnesota is poised to become the first state in the country to guarantee rental assistance to all low-income residents under a bill backed by 40 DFL lawmakers who stated, "no single policy can do more to directly eliminate homelessness than this one." Yet, with competing interests at the legislature, we need to make our voices heard. Rally with our coalition at the State Capitol Rotunda on Monday, March 20, from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Questions? Email [daynamelissa@icloud.com](mailto:daynamelissa@icloud.com).

### Got Spare Keys? Help Unlock the Metro

**We've collected more than 100 keys, but let's get to 150!**

Drop off your unused keys at our Affordable Housing Team table in Parish Hall on the first and third Sundays in February (and March). Why? Metropolitan Council, the largest



distributor of housing vouchers in Minnesota, does not have a policy to distribute them as Project Based Vouchers (PBVs), and our partner, Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, cannot develop deeply affordable housing units without PBVs. In an effort to put the pressure on Met Council, we will deliver the thousands of keys collected from churches all over the metro during a clergy press conference at the end of March and demand that they "Unlock the Metro" and create this needed policy. Don't have any spare keys? No problem. Drop by our table to sign a "tag" that will be fastened to the keys we've already collected.

### Project Home

Did you know that Project Home serves more than 25,000 meals at Provincial House each year? They can use your help. Every Saturday and Sunday, teams of volunteers are needed to assist at meal times at Provincial House, located at 1880 Randolph Avenue in Saint Paul. For complete details (and to sign up) please visit <https://bit.ly/23phmeals>.

### Warming Hubs Update

The St. Paul Warming Hubs Committee is streamlining volunteer work to one location: Faith City Church, 781 East 7th Street. This site serves women and families, and trained staff is onsite. Volunteers are needed to hand out warm beverages and winter clothing for two-hour shifts. Each evening, staff drive to area shelters, making sure to find anyone who can't get into a full shelter and bring them to a warming hub. If you are interested in seeing what shifts are available or to sign up to volunteer, please visit [bit.ly/stpwarm](https://bit.ly/stpwarm).

## Gun Sense Team

### Senator John Marty's Gun Legislation

Unity's Gun Sense team sponsored a presentation by Senator John Marty (DFL – Roseville/Arden Hills/Shoreview) as part of Wellspring Wednesday on February 16. Senator Marty, who has served in the state senate since 1986, has authored two bills surrounding gun safety which are before the legislature this session. The event was attended by about 50 members and friends. Early in his presentation, Senator Marty polled those present to learn how many had been affected directly or knew somebody who had been directly affected by gun violence, and a significant number of hands were raised.

Senator Marty believes the Parkland shooting in Florida in 2018 served as a wake-up call to America that the need for sensible gun legislation is paramount. Prior to that horrific incident, Senator Marty feels Americans were afraid to have adult conversations about guns. He noted that previously, many candidates for office were afraid of the NRA and how that would affect them, but the political impact has changed over the past couple years. What was once a topic perceived as toxic is changing. Senator Marty likened the need for gun regulation in Minnesota to regulation surrounding auto ownership. Regulation saves lives. Motor vehicle regulations cut the traffic death toll by a stunning 90% per mile traveled, over the decades. We could likewise save countless lives and sharply reduce violent gun crime through reasonable gun regulation. States with stronger gun laws average far less than half the gun violence deaths per capita than states with the weakest laws.

Several present expressed their belief that in a DFL-controlled state senate and house and with a DFL governor, now is the time to make a big push in Minnesota for gun safety. While Senator Marty felt that we now have a real chance for progress, moving incremental bills along is key. "We must foster conversation with both sides," said Senator Marty. "Conversations must be civil and kind." We need to make a pitch to every area of the state; the voices of those outstate must be heard. He also emphasized bringing public health, public safety, and childhood safety into the conversation is critical.

"Know your legislators and know what they stand for," said Senator Marty.

For more information about Unity's Gun Sense Team or to join a meeting, contact Richard Birger at [rmbirger@yahoo.com](mailto:rmbirger@yahoo.com).

*Truth Telling and Healing: Indigenous and Environmental Justice Series*  
**Land and Reparations**



**Wednesday, March 1 • See page 10 for details.**



## To Serve Man

**Drew Danielson**

**Coordinator of Youth and Campus Ministries**

In my not-at-all humble opinion, the best episode of the classic *Twilight Zone* series was titled “To Serve Man.” Aliens arrive on Earth and head straight to the United Nations, where they communicate that they have come to help humanity achieve peace, harmony, the eradication of violence, sickness, disease and hunger. To create a Heaven-like existence — Beloved Community if you will. With advanced technology and the eager complicity of humanity, they accomplish all this in a matter of months. Then they begin to transport people by the hundreds of thousands back to their own planet for a “visit.”

When it is too late to stop all this, the team tasked with de-coding the document the aliens presented to the UN titled “To Serve Man” discover that it is a cookbook! It’s a shocking twist I think is just brilliant, and a stunning reminder that Beloved Community cannot come so easily and cannot be created by anyone but us. That we have to embrace service to humanity for our continued survival against all the forces threatening to eat us, if I may be so gruesome.

In the years that I was teaching high school, “service-learning” was growing as a practice in schools at all levels. I think most of us are familiar with and supportive of the idea that youth, and all of us, can learn a lot through volunteer work in social justice and philanthropy. We learn about others, about conditions, about issues. And we certainly learn about ourselves. One of the grandest promises of service-learning curriculum is that it helps us learn and grow as leaders. Some of the leadership skills involved how we worked to plan and organize projects; the larger and harder to grasp concept, is that leadership actually requires us to be of service to others, that is what a leader does. I don’t think we always think of leadership in that way. I’ll go out on a limb and say I don’t think a lot of our “world leaders” practice it that way.

I’ve shared with you before that the majority of our high school youth are to some degree stressed out about school grades, scholarships, and college applications. I have heard them express great guilt over their being too busy to volunteer their time to work on the justice and environmental issues they know are important. Many of them do commit significant hours to performing service at least partly because they know they need to check those boxes on all the applications. I in no way want to criticize them for their busy schedules, nor do I want to suggest they haven’t performed meaningful and important community service, for lots of the right reasons. But I do worry that they get a message that “service” is just a good thing we can do, one of the many choices we can make that have benefit for us and others.

Rather than it being an imperative, what we’re here for. What we are called to do and cannot not do. Those *Twilight Zone* aliens knew we’d easily agree to let someone else make us all fat and happy (and delicious) by taking away all our problems. But no one else can solve our problems. We need to lead each other in service to Beloved Community. It is our work in Religious Education to keep returning to our Unitarian Universalist values, which I believe ask us to keep talking to each other and being honest about how we live out those values and how that impacts our priorities. Can we stand nudging each other, pushing each other, being pushed? Compelling each of us to live in service to others.

## Reparations: What's Faith Got to Do with It?

{continued from page 5}

to repent, repair, and return that which was ill-gotten. As Dr. Maya Angelou said, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then, when you know better, do better!”

I leave you with prompts for reflection: What traditions or practices help ground you when you think about reparations as a lifelong commitment? What insight does your faith tradition or community of practice hold that feels relevant to reparations?

For more information about reparations work, please visit these online resources:

- Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light: [mnipl.org](http://mnipl.org)
- Reparation actions from around the country: [bit.ly/repact](http://bit.ly/repact)
- Amicus: [amicususa.org](http://amicususa.org)
- Volunteers of America: [voa.org](http://voa.org)
- The Justice Database, a project of Unity Church: [bit.ly/JusticeData](http://bit.ly/JusticeData)



## Music Notes

**Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries**

Between 1985 and 1994, Hungarian composer György Ligeti wrote two books of études for solo piano. They are marvelous works, each exploring technical ideas and expressive concepts that stretch the body, heart, and mind in all sorts of ways. They are also incredibly difficult to play, particularly No. 13 *L'escalier du diable* (The Devil's Staircase) and No. 14 *Coloana infinită* (Infinite Column).

The first version of number 14 was so complex that at the time it was judged to be too difficult for a human to play and Ligeti recomposed it so that it could be performed... these days, a search on YouTube turns up several videos of young pianists playing this “impossible” version of Étude No. 14.

Étude No. 13, *The Devil's Staircase*, refers to a continuous function in mathematics also known as the Cantor function. The structure of the piece follows this function, starting on the lowest end of the keyboard and constantly rising, ending with the clanging of bells, as loud as possible, in the highest register of the piano. It is the longest of the études, its relentless crescendo a test of endurance and stamina. When it was first published in the 1990s, only a handful of pianists in the entire world were capable of playing it in a program and its difficulties seemed insurmountable for all except a handful of virtuoso performers. These days, it is a standard competition piece and occasionally in the repertoire of teenagers auditioning for conservatory and college music programs. I taught a masterclass in Michigan a couple of years ago where I listened to a sixteen-year-old play a brilliant, seemingly effortless rendition of *The Devil's Staircase*.

An online search for this étude reveals tens of thousands of results, young musicians all over the world posting recordings of themselves playing *The Devil's Staircase* on YouTube, SoundCloud, TikTok, Instagram, and numerous other platforms. Young people have carved out a space for themselves where they share their art, comment on each other's performance, iterate and learn, and the talent on display is mind boggling. I always find something unique and exciting when I listen to a young musician taking joy in their art, comfortable with being in process, discovering new things without being stuck in tradition and old ways, building on the techniques and concepts from the older generation. A big part of why sixteen-year-olds can now play *The Devil's Staircase* is that no one told them it was impossible. They approached this piece building on the work of that initial handful of virtuosos that untangled the piece's seemingly insurmountable difficulties.

This talent is present at our church. It is a part of our community. We have five graduating seniors (that I know of) in Unity families that are auditioning for world-class music programs around the country, looking to pursue a career in music. Among our youth we have competition winners, young musicians that play first chair in their school bands and orchestras, or even all-state ensembles, young people (including my own child) who are constantly creating music in all sorts of different genres. I have heard young musicians from Unity performing with great success all over the Twin Cities. And yet, they're not bringing their music to Unity. We have spaces that could be used to present recitals, we have worship services and chapel services that weave music throughout, and Wednesday night programming where this talent could be showcased, but something about our culture, about our space, is explicitly or implicitly saying to our youth “your gifts are not welcome here.” Changing an entire culture is hard, it's generational work, and I'm not really sure what, if anything, I can do to encourage our young people to think of Unity as a place that can serve their music, except to explicitly say to them “Yes. Your gifts (and your wounds) are welcome here.”



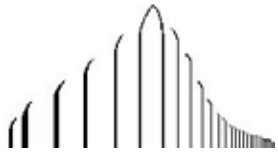
## Second



## Chance

2023 Unity Church  
Youth Musical  
Details on page 8.





# 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)

REV. KP HONG, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
BARBARA HUBBARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
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# MARCH FOURTH

Unity Church  
2023 Auction Fundraiser

AUCTION!! FOOD!! FUN!!  
JOIN US ON MARCH 4 AT 6:00 PM

## Gender + Faith Retreat

Join us for a faith formative experience which expands our personal and collective understanding of gender, faith, and the intersection between them. Together we will explore our gender journeys, share stories about the intersection of gender and faith in our lives, and work to create a brave space where people of all genders can show up whole and holy in the multiplicity of their identities.



Interested in attending? Please complete a participant interest form by Monday March 6: [unityunitarian.org/gender-faith-retreat.html](http://unityunitarian.org/gender-faith-retreat.html).

The retreat will be held on Saturday, March 18, approximately 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., at Unity Church. Lunch is included and the church will be covering all costs for the retreat. Questions? Contact Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

## In The Justice Database

[bit.ly/JusticeData](http://bit.ly/JusticeData)

Clean Election Minnesota, a non-profit, non-partisan organization working to expand voter rights, ensure access to voting, and keep Minnesota elections safe, accessible, and free of dark money.

