

Beauty

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.

At first glance, selecting “beauty” as the monthly theme for May seems to be an obvious choice. While we may marvel at the beauty of fresh new snow, by this time of year, we are longing for the black-cruled mounds of snow to reveal something — well — beautiful underneath. Spring green! Flowers! Flowering trees! Most of us anticipate the coming of spring not only as an antidote to the cold temperatures and treacherous sidewalks, but because nature makes herself so stunningly beautiful, delighting us with beauty enhanced by the fact that it is so fleeting. If the definition of beauty as “A combination of qualities, such as shape, color, or form, that pleases the aesthetic senses, especially the sight,” it seems like such a simple concept — one that we all can agree on, right?

Not so fast. As we dig deeper into the concept of beauty, we realize that it’s complex and multifaceted. Google “beauty” and what comes up are thousands of websites all advertising beauty “products.” They are usually geared towards either younger or older women, although the market has expanded to include cisgender-men and even children. However, the politics of what is considered “beautiful” changes. Early in the 20th century, Black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey described European or white standards of beauty as a deep dimension of oppression. White standards of beauty, Garvey argued devalued Black bodies. Although 21st century understandings of “beauty” continue to evolve, the image of beauty which is constantly reinforced in Western culture is thin, young, white, able-bodied, wrinkle and fat-free.

Philosophers and theologians would argue that beauty is not skin-deep;

that beauty is inextricably linked to something far less tangible. Islam would locate beauty in that which connects us to the universe and the divine in each other. “Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty,” said the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him). Judaism reminds us that each of us is created in the Divine image and that the outer body reflects the inner beauty of the Creator. Jesus would continually invite those around him to behold God’s presence in one another. In all three of these great religious traditions, beauty doesn’t exist as a stand-alone concept. It exists in relation to another; in fact, we could say that we cannot experience beauty without being in some form of relationship to it. I may view an astonishing sunset, but I am not separated from that experience; I am in relationship to it. The experience of beauty can uplift us and inspire us towards appreciating that beauty on its own merit; or, it can create a desire to own it — claim it — make it ours and keep it forever. This is the challenge of beauty. It will always change. It will never stay the same. It is ephemeral. It is also deeply subjective, as we bring our apperceptions about what constitutes an aesthetically pleasing experience to that which has captured our attention and appreciation.

Why then, do we believe that an infant’s face is more beautiful than an aged one? Why are millions drawn to see Mona Lisa’s smile, a painting which of inestimable value, while at the same time, millions purchase copies of paintings by Thomas Kinkade? Some would look at Kinkade’s work and find great beauty, others have called it kitsch. Perhaps that’s one of the reasons why trying to define beauty will ultimately fail,

because one person’s idea of what is aesthetically pleasing may not affect another as powerfully.

If we can learn anything from our engagement with Unitarian Universalism, it is the sure fact that engagement with these questions may not bring us closer to *the* truth, but to a deeper understanding of other’s truths. What once may be perceived as “ugly” can be appreciated on a more nuanced level as we expand our capacity to understand and to feel. If we can get behind and beneath our initial reaction to something as “beautiful” or “ugly” we can allow beauty to lead us into something more than a shallow appreciation or rejection. We can go to the heart of how these assemblages of shape, color, texture, form come together to create an experience that provides a window into the Mystery that lives in, among and beyond us.

As you go about your days this month, see if you can apply this chant to that which you experience:

Beauty is before me and beauty behind me; above and below me, hovers the beautiful. I am surrounded by it; I am immersed in it. In my youth, I am aware of it and in old age, I shall walk quietly the beautiful trail. In beauty it is begun; in beauty it is ended.

May it be so.

By Rev. Kathleen Rolenz on behalf of this month’s theme team:

Rev. Andrea Anastos, Rev. KP Hong, Rev. Karen Gustafson, Rev. Tom Duke

Theme Resources

For further reflection on this theme please see this month’s Spiritual Practice Packet, available online at unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html.

IN THE MEANTIME



Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Reflections from the Interim Senior Minister

Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Accredited Interim Senior Minister

As I write this, it is going to be 85 degrees today — and then drop thirty degrees in the next 48 hours. I want to tell the buds that are threatening to burst, “Don’t do it just yet! We’re not ready!” In the spring, nature’s primary job is to grow, bud and bloom. Perhaps it knows that the cold snap to come is just

another part of the larger cycle — and that it is hardy enough to withstand the fluctuations of weather.

It’s not unlike Interim Ministry. My job as an interim is to help congregations draw on their own strengths and build capacity for both the times when everything seems dormant and when church life is a riot of color and semi-controlled chaos! Although the church year seems like it should be winding down, May always brings with it a burst of energy before many of us take some well-deserved time to rest, reflect, and recharge in the beauty of a Minnesota summer.

I once had a spiritual director who challenged me to see the beauty in every single thing I encountered that day. Beauty in a pencil? Oh—kay. Beauty in the person who narrowly missed hitting my car? Mmmm... Beauty in the legislature who is railing against values I hold dear? Harder still... Beauty was not only in the eye of the beholder, it was a choice to decide if I was going to accept or reject that challenge.

What that small spiritual practice did for me was to enlarge my understanding of, and capacity to appreciate beauty. One of the unique and wonderful things about interim ministry is that I get to experience each congregation’s unique beauty in ways that they don’t often see — because it’s just “the way it is.” I get to experience those rituals, programs, and practices that have emerged over time and have become a part of a congregation’s history, identity and culture. The challenge arises when a person not acquainted with a congregation’s history, identity or culture doesn’t see the beauty in it. One person adores organ music; another feels traumatized by it. One person loves the congregational news after the sermon, another feels it breaks up the space where they used to contemplate the sermon.

And then, it is further complicated when new members come with their own ideas about what makes for a beautiful church life and/or worship experience. Is the only answer then, to say “beauty is in the eye of beholder?” But we have so many eyes beholding our shared experience! I think my spiritual director was onto something back then, because as a result of that practice, I’ve had to enlarge my understanding of beauty. I may resist seeing the beauty in (yet another) snowfall, while my friend the snow-shoer, is excited to get out in it. What is deeply meaningful to me may not be to others — and vice versa. That’s where we get to dig deeper into what it means to truly build shared community — with and for one another and not solely based on our own needs and wants.

Unity Church — I see so much beauty here. Not only in the aesthetically pleasing spaces and art shows, musical offerings, poetry readings, gifts of such extraordinary talents, I see it in the simple everyday acts of kindness and generosity that is here as well. May you see, and feel it as well!

Keep the Faith,
Kathleen

Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for a summer Sunday worship service, or if you would like to volunteer as the Sunday flower coordinator, please contact Martha Tilton at 651-228-1456 x105 or martha@unityunitarian.org.

Food Shelf Donations

During the month of March, Unity Church members and friends donated 331 pounds of much needed food to Hallie Q. Brown food shelf. During the month of May the food shelf needs donations of salsa, dry pinto beans, dry black beans, syrup, pancake mix, boxed macaroni and cheese, and canned sardines. If you would like to donate money for perishable food items you can visit hallieqbrown.org.

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MAY SERVICES

Sunday Worship Services

Unity Church offers two services each Sunday at 9:00 (including livestream) and 11:00 a.m. May 28 marks the shift to our summer service schedule with just one service each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

May 7: Arthur Foote Music Sunday

Unity's Music Ministry

Livestream: youtube.com/watch?v=NPtzHPLrr80

This year's service features new choral works by Linda Kachlemeier, Nico Gutiérrez, and Carol Barnett that were commissioned for Unity's Music Ministry to premiere. It also will include selections by the Children's Choir, and music by Abbie Betinis, Jonathan Dove, and Ruth Moody of the Wailin' Jennys. The poetry and flow of the service has been curated by our wonderful worship associate Marg Walker. It is our sincere hope that the music we share will honor the 70 minutes we will have together in a way that resonates and endures in people's hearts and minds.

May 14: *The Good Enough Mother*

Rev. Karen Gustafson

Livestream: youtube.com/watch?v=qdwdRnAwUfA

On this Sunday, when Hallmark and florists across America can imply a close connection between motherhood and sainthood, let us pause to celebrate the people who the other 364 days of the year imperfectly but adequately — with and without roses — meet the needs of our most precious natural resource, our children.

May 21: *Now We Live in Beauty*

Flower and Bridging Ceremonies Family Sunday

Rev. Kathleen Rolenz

Livestream: youtube.com/watch?v=p6yj8VQgHVo

Join the whole church family and bring a flower to place on the flower arch (or email a photo of a flower if worshipping online: unity@unityunitarian.org) as we celebrate the resilience and diversity of the Beloved Community. This uniquely Unitarian Universalist ritual recalls the life and ministry of Norbert Čapek who defied the Nazis and died a martyr at Dachau. The service will also honor Unity's graduating high school seniors with a bridging ceremony.

May 28: *Lives Knit Together*

One service only at 10:00 a.m.

Rev. Ruth MacKenzie // Musical Guest: Buffalo Weavers

Livestream: youtube.com/watch?v=nuiUx5yVlms

The lives of the dead, and the lives of the living are knit together. This is the wisdom of poets, prophets, cultural healers, and faithful leaders. On this Memorial Day Sunday, join Rev. Ruth MacKenzie and musical guests Buffalo Weavers as we recognize and reconstitute those connections, honoring lives lost, and lives forever changed by war, inviting the graves of so many to inform patterns of justice and equity.

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. Donations are gratefully accepted online at bit.ly/sundayoffering.

May 7: Foote Music Sunday Fund

Arthur Foote was minister at Unity Church from 1945-1970. Upon his death in 1999, the Arthur Foote Music Fund was created as a permanent endowment to provide an annual music Sunday in his memory. This offering will augment the reserves in Unity's Arthur Foote Music endowment.

May 14: Unity Church Evergreen Projects

Evergreen Projects are an umbrella outreach ministry that supports Hallie Q. Brown food shelf, Project Home, Jeremiah Program, and other local community organizations related to child welfare and food security. This collection will be used to purchase supplies for Evergreen's quilt raffles, and One More Redeemer quilts that are given to Project Home families as a way to honor the families in our congregation who have welcomed new babies. unityunitarian.org/evergreen-projects.html

May 21: Urban Roots

Urban Roots provides paid internships for up to 80 high school students each summer. Urban Roots maintains seven large gardening plots on the East Side and the students learn farming, entrepreneurial, conservation and cooking skills. The student interns grow summer vegetables for their families and for sale to the public via Community Supported Agriculture shares. Unity's Kathy Sidles volunteers her time with Urban Roots planting native pollinators to complement the organic crops being raised by the student interns. urbanrootsmn.org/

May 28: Faith Builders Habitat for Humanity

For the past ten years, Unity Church has joined other neighborhood churches, under the umbrella name of Faith Builders, to staff two weeks of volunteer labor for home construction in St. Paul. Congregations engaging in this work of promoting affordable homeownership and advancing racial equity in housing, are asked to provide \$7,500 per work week for building materials. This offering will contribute to the total funds raised by Faith Builders congregations. See page 13 for our Habitat for Humanity construction dates. Unity's Chuck Griggs is a seasoned Faith Builder. tchabitat.org/faith-builds

To nominate an organization to receive the Sunday offering, visit unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html and complete the online nomination form.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



The Search Process Begins

Louise Livesay-Al, Chair

Here we are, beginning again, with the process of calling a new settled senior minister. Voting for the next Ministerial Search Team (MST) opens on April 30 and ends on May 7 at 3:00 p.m., and I hope you have taken time to review the slate of candidates that are ready to give of their time and energy to engage in this process. Each voting member can cast up to five votes online and the top four candidates will automatically become members of the MST. The full board will select the remaining three to ensure a well-rounded team. Contact Martha Tilton at martha@unityunitarian.org, if you are unable to vote online.

As a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, our church is in a covenantal relationship with the Association, other UU congregations, potential ministers in search, and with one another as church members. Covenants are a key component of our Unitarian Universalist faith; they are the sacred promises we make to one another as we enter into the task of calling our next senior minister.

One of the things we learned from the previous MST is that they felt very unclear about what the board and congregation were charging them to do. So your trustees spent time to create a charge, which you can read here: <https://bit.ly/boardcharge>. This time around we also are presenting a charge to the congregation.

What is the purpose of a charge to the congregation? While the congregation affirms the selection of the search team, the congregation also plays a significant role in the search process itself. As members of Unity Church, we enter this search process with respect for the disciplines that are required of us. The charge to the congregation is the promises we make to one another, as part of this covenantal community, about how we will engage with the ministerial search process for the 2023-2024 church year.

There will be a Wellspring Wednesday program on May 3 led by Rev. Kathleen and a trustee to discuss the charge and receive congregational input on what people feel would be important to include in a charge to the congregation as we engage in the next search process. This will be offered in person and on Zoom, and people can reach out directly to Rev. Kathleen Rolenz or email the board with your thoughts about the congregational charge.

On Sunday, May 14, the new Ministerial Search Team will be installed and the board will offer their charges to the newly elected Ministerial Search Team and to the congregation. We look forward to being together on that Sunday. Please be sure to reach out to any of the trustees if you have questions, comments, or concerns or email board@unityunitarian.org.

Ministerial Search Team Candidates



Meet the 16 candidates for our 2023-2024 Ministerial Search Team (MST)! You can find their pictures and bios online at unityunitarian.org/ministerial-transition.html. Voting for the MST will be conducted online. On Sunday, April 30, voting members of the congregation will receive (via email) voting instructions along with a link to the ballot. Each voting member of the congregation will be allowed to vote for up to five candidates. Voting will remain open until Sunday, May 7, at 3:00 p.m. The top four candidates will be invited onto the MST and the board will finalize the team with another three candidates from the ballot, for a final search team comprised of seven members.

Serve on the Board of Trustees

Unity's Board of Trustees seeks candidates interested in serving as a trustee for the 2024 through 2026 term. We are eager to talk with candidates interested in stepping into a leadership role as we move forward with calling a new settled senior minister. If you have questions about serving as a trustee or would like to receive an application, please contact Clover Earl at 2clover@gmail.com.

June 2023: Applications will be made available to the congregation. Watch for opportunities to connect with trustees to learn more about the work of the board.

July 2023: Applications will be reviewed and interviews scheduled for August.

August 2023: Interviews will take place and the finalists will be notified. The congregation will vote on the slate of candidates at the annual meeting in November.

BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

Anti-Asian Racism: It's Complicated

Lia Rivamonte, Beloved Community Communications Team, and SAM Greene, Guest Writer

When SAM Greene entered a Minnesota health care facility in 2021 for a procedure that would help determine the cause of some uncomfortable symptoms, she hadn't anticipated the unwelcome feelings of exclusion, humiliation, and the sense of victimization that resulted from her visit and subsequent treatment. None of us do. When we are deeply worried about a health issue, we want to trust the wisdom of professionals to let us know what it is we are dealing with and follow up with appropriate treatment.

Yet, there are inequities deeply embedded in the health care system: social status, age, appearance, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, facility with the language, economic status, and other issues play a part in how we are treated. One only has to look at the higher numbers of infant mortality among Black and Brown people than that of the white population to understand this is a field that requires immediate investigation and attention. Health professionals lack training in cultural competency; implicit and explicit biases play a part, as well as unfamiliarity with religious or cultural mores.

And then there is intersectionality: in Sam's story, it is difficult to determine which of SAM's visible identities might have played the larger role in how the doctor and staff behaved towards her. To complicate matters, she is a mature woman of Chinese descent, and the doctor was an Asian man. We are asked to understand and unravel it; to be aware of the complexities of being an Asian woman over sixty, living as a person of color in this white-dominated culture.

Here is SAM Greene's story, "My Experience with Healthcare in Minnesota."

I'm a third-generation Chinese American woman, born and raised in Chicago. I relocated to Saint Paul in 2018 to marry after residing in New York City for thirty years. In 2019, I decided to take action on a medical condition that had plagued me for a year. I made an appointment to have a procedure done at major medical facility in the Twin Cities.

The day of the procedure, preparation went like clockwork: visits from the nurse, the anesthesiologist, and finally the Asian male doctor who would perform the procedure. The doctor said hello, looked at the computer for a couple seconds then left the room. I made a comment or two, hoping he would speak to me about my procedure, but he said only a sentence or two and left the room in roughly 30 seconds.

After the doctor went out, I heard him engaged in lengthy discussion with a male patient on the other side of the curtain, telling the man what to expect during and after his procedure and answering many questions. Listening to their conversation, I wondered why the doctor hadn't spent the same amount of time with me — indeed, why he had hardly spoken to me at all.

When I awoke after my procedure, I saw the doctor standing by the curtain ready to leave the room. He looked at me without saying a word. I asked him a couple of questions, which he answered monosyllabically, and left. And then, once again, I heard the doctor in lengthy conversation on the other side of the curtain with a male patient, going over many details about the man's procedure.

After revisiting these scenes in my mind for several days, I decided to



contact the medical facility to voice my frustration and ire over what had transpired. I worked my way through a couple of patient care coordinators on up to the site director. She, a white woman, attributed all of my concerns to faulty memory due to anesthesia. In other words, what I thought had happened never happened at all.

As the days and weeks went by, I wondered about these experiences over and over again. Why had this doctor virtually ignored me? Conversely, why had he engaged in lengthy discussions with another patient — a male patient — after leaving my room both before and after my procedure? Was it because I was a person of color? Was it because I was Asian? Or was it because I was a woman? I've become aware that, unfortunately, Asians do on occasion, engage in racist behavior toward other Asians. Did this Asian doctor value me less as a patient and as a person because I, like he, was Asian? Or was this an example of intersectionality? Had I been denied equal care because I was both Asian and a woman? I also wondered why the site director had seemed so dismissive of my experiences.

Time has passed, but these questions still weigh on my mind. I know a bit about racial inequity in the health care system in Minnesota from our readings in the Unity Antiracism Literacy Partners program. Many women, both people of color and not, have suffered unequal treatment in medical settings and have not had the assertiveness or the courage to speak up about it. This is one of the issues that have led to a higher death rate among people of color.

By speaking out in this situation rather than burying my feelings, I felt I was doing my part by standing up for all women who have experienced inequity in healthcare.



RIGHT RELATIONS / GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Mark your calendars!

Right Relations Workshop

Saturday, June 3 • Unity Church

9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Register: bit.ly/rightrelationsworkshop

You are cordially invited to attend a collaborative learning experience about Right Relations and Right Relationship teams led by Rev. David Pyle and Rev. Sharon Dittmar.

This workshop will be held at Unity Church and include members of White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church, First Universalist Church, and other Twin Cities UU congregations.

What is Right Relationship?

Right Relationship is an intentional congregational practice of how we engage with one another in a religious community, to support one another and care for each other. Many congregations have Right Relations teams, and create a covenant of congregational practice, which describes how we will be in relationship with one another.

What is a Right Relations team?

Right Relations teams are lay leaders entrusted to help the congregation practice faithful communication and creative conflict based on values of mutuality and consent.

What is the purpose of this workshop?

The training is open to anyone interested in how we build an intentionally supportive religious community. We will explore the meaning of Right Relationship and how Right Relationship covenants and teams support UU congregations, especially during times of conflict and challenge.

Why is it called a collaborative?

Because the three congregations are collaborating together. It is our hope that we can use each other as resources in dealing creatively with and learning from conflict together.

General Assembly Comes to Unity Church

June 21 – 25, 2023

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend; congregations must certify annually to have voting delegates. This year's General Assembly is available both in-person and online. Consider attending in person! It's in Pittsburgh, PA, this year, and it's going to be fantastic!

You must register for General Assembly, either as an in-person or virtual delegate. To be a delegate means that you are eligible to vote on issues before the body. In order to be eligible for delegate status, you must be a member of Unity Church. This year's General Assembly will feature two important votes: the first affirmation of Article II, which, if passed, would go onto GA 2024 for a second vote; and a new President of the Association. To apply to be a delegate, write to kathleen@unityunitarian.org.

Or, consider attending our General Assembly watch parties here at Unity Church, hosted by Interim Senior Minister, Rev. Kathleen Rolenz. All watch parties will take place in Parish Hall with overflow seating in Robbins Parlor. If time and energy allows, we'll have a brief discussion afterwards! Children are of course welcome at all events, with childcare provided as indicated or by one week advance notice to kathleen@unityunitarian.org.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21 • uua.org/ga/program/highlights/banner-parade Banner Parade • 5:00–5:20 p.m. • Parish Hall

General Assembly will begin with a procession of banners from hundreds of Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations and organizations.

Opening Celebration • 5:30–6:30 p.m. • Parish Hall

GA officially begins with a joyful, worshipful opening celebration with inspirational music and speakers. The opening celebration sets the tone for the days ahead.

THURSDAY, JUNE 22 • uua.org/ga/program/highlights/slt

Service of the Living Tradition • 6:30–8:00 p.m. • Parish Hall

Led by The Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group, this service honors fellowshiped and credentialed religious leaders; remembering those who have died, recognizing those who have completed active service, and welcoming those who have received fellowship or credentialed status in the past year. The service includes a collection to benefit the Living Tradition Fund. Child care provided.

SATURDAY, JUNE 24 • uua.org/ga/program/highlights/ware-lecture

Ware Lecture • 6:30–7:30 p.m. • Parish Hall

The UUA President, in consultation with the General Assembly Planning Committee, invites a distinguished guest each year to address the General Assembly as the Ware Lecturer. Child care provided.

SUNDAY, JUNE 25 • uua.org/ga/program/highlights/sunday-morning-worship

Sunday Morning Continental Breakfast • 9:00–9:45 a.m. • Garden Tent

Join together for delicious made-from-scratch muffins, coffee, tea and juice before attending GA virtual worship service in the Parish Hall.

Worship • 10:00–11:30 a.m. • Parish Hall

This Sunday, Unity Church is going to do something different. Instead of gathering for worship in the Sanctuary, we will join thousands of other Unitarian Universalists for the Sunday morning livestream service in Parish Hall. Stay afterwards for some time to reflect on what you've heard and how you feel about the future of our faith. Child care provided.



PASTORAL CARE / GARAGE SALE



Pastoral Ponderings

Rev. Karen Gustafson, Interim Minister of Pastoral Care

Unity Church has a legacy of caring. It shows up in informal ways in the relationships that form as you engage in the life of the church — coffee hours and meetings, Wellspring Wednesdays, singing in the choirs, children’s religious education etc.

There are also formal structures and pathways to giving and receiving care. On the Unity website there is a “connect” tab that will take you to a wide variety of care resources including my phone number, email addresses, a place to request being included in the Embracing Meditation. There are descriptions of support groups for grief and caregivers and for family members of people with mental health challenges.

And there is a group of Congregational Care Associates trained to visit people who are in the hospital or are home bound for a variety of reasons. They offer comfort shawls during illness or after surgery or after the death of a loved one. They have the capacity to help organize care circles for folks with particular needs.

We are ready to care. But we often do not hear about those in need because, well, many of us are reluctant or unable or unwilling to identify our needs for care and when we do, we are reluctant to ask for help.

It is remarkable to think about how much many of us value helping but avoid, at all cost, the idea of being helped. How often I hear from some of the most helpful people I know, “I didn’t want to bother anyone. I don’t want to be dependent.”

“Oh,” I sometimes say, “When you are helping is it a bother? If I ask for help do you consider me as being dependent?” Helping can make us feel valued or useful; can feel like “paying forward.” Being helped is extending the opportunity for another to do likewise.

In his book *Consolations*, Poet David Whyte writes:

Help is strangely something we want to do without, as if the very idea disturbs and blurs the boundaries of our individual endeavors, as if we cannot face how much we need in order to go on. We are born with an absolute necessity for help, grow well only with a continuous succession of extended hands, and as adults depend upon others for our further successes and possibilities in life even as competent individuals... It may be that the ability to know the necessity for help, to know how to look for help, and then, most importantly how to ask for it, is one of the primary transformative dynamics that allows us to emancipate ourselves into each new epic of our lives.

I recall the father in a family of four, new to Unitarian Universalism, speaking to an unchurched friend about his new found faith. “The religious education is great!” he said.” The kids study world religions and ethics and social justice and sex education! We don’t have to do this by ourselves!”

We don’t have to do this by ourselves. We are here to help and be helped; to care and be cared for. Whether it is prayers or visits or a comfort shawl or a mention in the Embracing Meditation, support groups, or encouragement to spiritual practice, there is likely someone who can help.

David Whyte reminds us:

The need for help, our greatest vulnerability, may be the very door through which we must pass in order to open the next horizon of our lives.

Yes!

A Unity Garage Sale!

Mark your calendars! Unity Church is holding a garage sale this summer on July 27, 28, and 29, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., each day. As you’re doing your spring cleaning, set aside the good stuff for our sale. This will benefit Unity Church and you! Won’t it feel good to lighten your load, to pass things along that you no longer need or want to someone who will be delighted with their new treasure? We’re hoping to raise \$10,000 to meet this year’s operating budget goal.

We’ll be accepting donations in the days preceding the sale. We ask that whatever you donate is in good condition. No sets of dishes, clothes, or books, but we will be accepting kitchen and cooking items, furniture, sports and exercise equipment, artwork, toys and kid’s stuff... use your imaginations!

Let us know if you’d like to help. We need volunteers to sort and price items in the days before the sale, particularly on Wednesday, July 26, and volunteer to tend the sale on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. If you’re still in the mood, we need a few hardy folks to help clean up and clear out the left overs on Monday, July 31. Contact Barbara Hubbard at barbara@unityunitarian.org or Heidi Birkholz at heidi@unityunitarian.org to volunteers or with questions.



WELCOME



Welcome Words

Laura Park
Director of Membership and Hospitality

If you're new to Unity Church, May offers the opportunity to participate in one of our most meaningful Unitarian Universalist rituals: Flower Communion. A celebration of the beauty in our diversity, we create an arch of flowers together, a representation of all the ways we come together in generosity and possibility. At the end of the service, we each choose a flower to bring home with us, a reminder to carry the generosity, beauty, and possibility of our diversity with us wherever we go. Bring a flower with you (dandelions anyone?) and we will have flowers available. Want to know more about how to participate in our way of the spirit? 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 or 651-228-1456 x110. I look forward to getting to know you!

Pathway to Membership Classes

These offerings 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 at laura@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110.

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. Drop-ins welcome; childcare in the nursery.

Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time. Attend the sessions in any order, which include Unitarian Universalist History; Faith Formation for Children, Youth, and Adults; Congregational and Pastoral Care; Q & A with a Minister; Worship & the Liturgical Year; Social Justice & Community Outreach; Membership 101 & Congregational Life, and a Building Tour. This month's offerings:

- May 7: Building Tour
- May 14: Membership 101
- May 21: Q&A with the Minister
- May 28: No class (Memorial Day weekend)

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church Tuesday, October 3 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.

This session, for people ready to become members, explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership, generosity, shared ministry. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church.

Welcome New Members



Pictured l-r: Haseeb Ali, Erica Boulay-Ali (holding Rami), Debbie Harvey, Ari Giles, Cathi Taylor, Marcia Hayes, Elizabeth Marsh

Haseeb Ali is a data scientist and PhD student. He enjoys spending time with his kids and playing Ultimate Frisbee with friends. Haseeb is from Pakistan and has also lived in Taiwan, Philippines, Canada, and Worcester, MA.

Erica Boulay-Ali is a middle school teacher and mom of three kids: Adam (5), Lylah (2), and Rami (3 months). Erica is from Maine and enjoys exploring nature with friends and family.

After taking time to explore other areas of the country, **Ari Giles** is thrilled to be back in the Twin Cities. Ari has enjoyed rediscovering old favorites like the Minneapolis Institute of Art and Springbrook Nature Center. Although her membership is recent, Ari's participation in Unity's community has deep roots after being raised in the church.

Debbie Harvey and her husband, Steve Vincent, moved to Minneapolis in July 2020. Unity Church quickly became part of her new community. Since then, Debbie has pursued her passion for music — drumming, singing, and playing Native American flute.

Marcia Hayes and her family moved to St. Paul before the pandemic, and are enthusiastically joining the Unity community. Marcia has been a UU for 15 years, and enjoys gardening in the summer, and learning to ski in the winter.

Elizabeth Marsh was born and raised in Duluth and recently moved back to Minnesota after 20 years living all over the country. Elizabeth has been a UU for 23 years, and is an HR professional by day, and round the clock mom to six-year-old Ezra and wife to Marcia.

Cathi Taylor is a University of Minnesota History major, former pet parent to seven retired racing Greyhounds, a former clown with the Powder Puff Clown Club, and a great-grandmother. Cathi crochets items for unhoused people and pregnancy centers.

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

May 3

Dinner: chana masala, vegetables, rice, dessert

The Congregation's Role in Search
Parish Hall and via Zoom:
bit.ly/search53

On Sunday, May 14, the board and the congregation will officially install the 2023-2024 Ministerial Search Team and charge them with their search task. However, the congregation has a charge as well. Join Rev. Kathleen Rolenz and Unity trustees to co-create a charge to the congregation for the upcoming search process. Kathleen will also invite your questions and comments, and will preview the upcoming June 3 "Right Relations" workshop (see page 6).

Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement

In person, Body Room
Join Suzanne Burr for 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.

Beginner Violin

In person, Choir Room
Join Mayra Mendoza for beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Learn basic violin posture, note reading, and more! Questions? Contact Mayra at mayraquitzia@hotmail.com.

May 10

Dinner: Mediterranean mezze platter with veggies, pita and dips, falafel and rice

Truth Telling and Healing: Indigenous And Environmental Justice Series
Part 7: Our Next Steps as a Congregation

Robbins Parlor and online via Zoom: bit.ly/justiceseriespart7
The final session in the Truth Telling and Healing: Indigenous and Environmental Justice series will provide a brief overview of the previous six topics, spend time processing their impact on us as individuals and as a congregation, and then consider where we go from here. We encourage those who plan to attend to review previous sessions and relevant resources: bit.ly/truthandheal.



Part seven will introduce the Native Governance Center's Beyond Land Acknowledgements suggestions and re-introduce MARCH's: (Multifaith Anti-Racism, Change and Healing / Sacred Reckoning) Reparatory Ecomap. These tools will help us to consider these questions: Are we ready to move from land acknowledgement to action plan? Might the Ecomap be a guide for us to do so? At what entry points of the Ecomap are we as individuals and as a congregation engaging in reparations work? This is but the first leg of our reparations journey. Act for the Earth and Indigenous Justice Community Outreach Ministry Teams will continue to provide opportunities for spiritual growth and action moving forward.

Lectio Divina

Online via Zoom: 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.
Join us for Summer Lectio, which will be offered once a month at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom: June 14, July 12, and August 9. We hope you will continue to join us in our stimulating and uplifting sessions of Lectio Divina!

Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement with Suzanne Burr

In-person, Body Room • See May 3 for details.

Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza

In person, Choir Room • See May 3 for details.

After May 10, Wellspring Wednesday goes on its summer schedule with programming once per month on June 14, July 12, and August 9!

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. 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.

Unity Garden Stewards

We all marvel at the beautiful flowers and vegetables in the children's garden in the summer. Do you wonder who plants it and nurtures it? Well, it could be you! While our children care for the garden on Sundays, it is a touchstone, grounding all of us to the earth and the interconnected web of life. New this year, Unity Garden Stewards will meet every other Wednesday beginning April 26, from 5:00-5:45 p.m., to better tend the children's garden as a whole church community. Families and individuals of all ages are welcome. Bring sturdy shoes, garden gloves, a water bottle, and if you have one, a favorite garden tool (please make sure it's labeled). Join us for intergenerational fellowship as we plant, water, weed, and harvest! Questions or plan to join us? Send an email to Heather Benedict at heathermwells@gmail.com.

Motherhood and Identity

Two Mondays, May 1 and 8 • 6:00–8:30 p.m. • Foote Room
Rev Karen Gustafson • Registration: bit.ly/motheridentity

This is an invitation to anyone who is or has had a mother. This is an opportunity to explore the complicated dynamics that arise from the layers of expectation and disappointment, satisfaction and sacrifice embedded in cultural mythology about mothering across multiple generations. You will be invited to reflect upon the difference between role and relationship and to see the people who birthed you and to whom you have given life through the lens of history and personhood.

The Courtroom with OnStage

Wednesday, June 14 • 5:00-6:00 p.m. • Unity Church

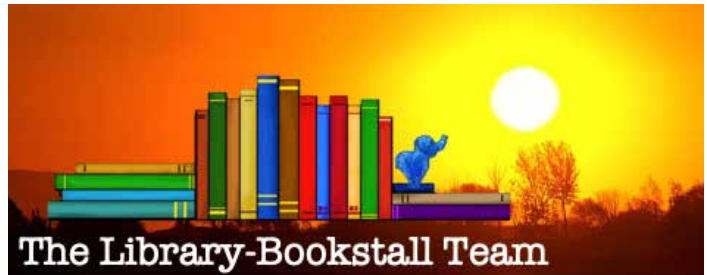
OnStage brings us an interactive experience of *The Courtroom: A Reenactment of One Woman's Deportation Proceedings*, a play showing at Hamline University June 1- June 11, and at the Jungle Theater June 13-July 2. Questions they'll explore with us: What does it mean to be an American? What does it feel like to be "an American" outside the U.S.? Does the judicial system work for you? Participants will receive a ticket discount to see the play.

Interested in seeing *The Courtroom* with other Unity Church congregants? Please complete the interest form: bit.ly/thecourtroomplay.

Take Me Out to the Ball Game!

Thursday, August 17 • 7:00 p.m. • CHS Field

Join Unity Church congregants and friends to enjoy a St. Paul Saints baseball game at CHS Field. We have pre-purchased a block of seats together at \$20 per ticket. You can purchase your ticket(s) at bit.ly/stpsaints23 or by contacting Laura Park at laura@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110. Purchase tickets by July 15. All are welcome!



I Think, Therefore Sunsets Are Beautiful?

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

I was reading an article about beauty recently and a question popped up that I can't seem to stop thinking about: How do you know a sunset is beautiful? Maybe Emily Dickinson is right, "Beauty is not caused. It is." To take a deeper dive into the May worship theme of beauty (as I clearly need to), consider these titles you can find at Unity:

World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments by Aimee Nezhukumatathi. In the Bookstall.

"World of Wonders is about the little things that make life so precious.... beyond the autobiography and the crafted prose, the book is also a plea for us to remember the beauty and wonder of the wild things around us." — James Rebanks, *New York Times*

Everything Beautiful: A Guide to Finding Hidden Beauty in the World by Ella Frances Sanders. In the Bookstall.

"When the world feels unbearable large and largely out of control, what I've found is that there is almost always reassurance and meaning to be found in the smallest of things, in the smallest of beauties."



Finding Beauty in a Broken World by Terry Tempest Williams. In the Anderson Library 814 W

"Beauty is a powerful force. It can heal us, it can inspire us, and it can give us hope. In a world that is often filled with ugliness, beauty is a reminder that there is still good in the world. It is a reminder that we are not alone. It is a reminder that there is still hope for the future."

The Hidden Beauty of Everyday Life by Kent Nerburn.

In the Anderson Library 204.32 N

"The beauty of everyday life is often hidden in the ordinary, the everyday moments that we take for granted. But if we take the time to stop and appreciate them, we can find a deep sense of peace and joy in our lives."

Find more resources in the Anderson Library online catalog at librarycat.org/lib/UnityChurch.

PARISH HALL ARTISTS / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

May Parish Hall Artists

Kelly Ludeking

www.kellyludeking.com

Kelly graduated from Minneapolis College of Art & Design (MCAD) in 1997 with a BFA in sculpture and furniture design. Here he was introduced to the feral fires of iron casting and the precision of fine furniture crafting. Ludeking has participated in, facilitated and hosted hundreds of iron pours since. In 2008 he co-founded Ironhead Sculptural Services, LLC, a traveling iron foundry that shares the art and appreciation of cast iron sculpture and performances with local community members.

KRL metals is his personal artist business where he explores intimate creative processes from mould making to molten mayhem to masterpieces. He also teaches welding to garden sculpture aficionados, hosts aluminum medallion pours for family reunions and corporate events and co-creates with visionaries to usher their ideas into the world.

In recent years, as academic access to iron casting has declined, Ludeking has branched out as a consultant in the cast iron world. He guides artists through the process of building their own furnace, running it for the first time and troubleshooting the fluid nature of coke-operated cupolas and cupolettes. Whether speaking on a panel at colleges and conferences or solo engagements at rotary clubs, art centers and high schools, Ludeking is at home sharing his vast knowledge, experience and passion for the creative life.

His love for sharing cast iron art and processes lead him to begin an annual event on his family farm in northeast Iowa. Since 2004 artists have traveled from all over the world to the Ludeking estate for camping, community and cast iron festivities.



SAM Greene

www.sciencepiction.com

At nineteen I was rejected from Art School. Ouch ... but I remained engaged! I've learned that often career paths are not straight and narrow, especially creative ones. Here's mine...

I earned my B.F.A in Graphic Design at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. I worked in design studios in Japan, San Francisco, and New York City, where I took on editorial illustration for the *New York Times*, *Business Week*, *New York Magazine*, and other publications while working as a corporate art director by day. I especially enjoyed a stint as art director for Skittles and Snickers online presence. All the while, I was hard at work creating a visual chronicle of my experiences in the U.S. and abroad.

Eventually, I went into business on my own. My client list included Nickelodeon, Encyclopedia Britannica, Time Warner, and The American Museum of Natural History. One of my fortes was botanical and nature illustrations for clients such as New York Botanical Garden, Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, and Oxford English Picture Dictionary.

Additionally, I used my skills to teach others as a teaching artist in New York City public schools and library and the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice, at juvenile detention sites in the Bronx and Brooklyn.

Since relocating to the Midwest, I have continued to explore my own 2D art and illustration and have added polymer clay jewelry to my repertoire. I see the images and objects I create as prayers sent out into the world to serve, heal, and empower.



Fellowship Groups

For more conversation about getting connected, contact Laura Park at 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 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, May 1, 15, and 29, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Men's Retirement Circle: Monday, May 8 and 22, 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. May 9: *Owls of the Eastern Ice* 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 for details.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Act for the Earth and Indigenous Justice Teams

Part 7: Our Next Steps as a Congregation

Truth Telling and Healing:

Indigenous And Environmental Justice Series

Wednesday, May 10 • 7:10 - 8:40 p.m.

Robbins Parlor and online via Zoom

Registration: bit.ly/justiceseriespart7

Our program for all our worship services and congregational events include a land acknowledgement:

We stand on the homelands of the Dakota Nation. We honor with gratitude the people who have stewarded the land throughout the generations and their ongoing contributions to this region. We acknowledge the ongoing injustices that we have committed against the Dakota Nation, and we wish to interrupt this legacy, beginning with acts of healing and honest storytelling about this place.

The final session in the Truth Telling and Healing: Indigenous and Environmental Justice series will be May 10. During this program, Truth Telling and Healing: Our Next Steps as a Congregation, we will provide a brief overview of the previous six topics, spend time processing their impact on us as individuals and as a congregation, and then consider where we go from here. We encourage those who plan to attend to review previous sessions and relevant resources. So far we've covered:



- Indigenous History in Minnesota
- Place and Property: Treaties Among the U.S. and Indigenous Nations
- Toward a Pathway of Right Relationship In Light of Indian Boarding Schools
- Indigenous Healing: A Conversation with a Dakota Woman on Reclaiming Stories, Language, Land, and Power
- Land and Reparations
- Honoring the Treaties and Saving the Earth

Part seven will introduce the Native Governance Center's Beyond Land Acknowledgements suggestions and re-introduce MARCH's: (Multifaith Anti-Racism, Change and Healing / Sacred Reckoning) Reparatory Ecomap. These tools will help us to consider these questions: Are we ready to move from land acknowledgement to action plan? Might the Ecomap be a guide for us to do so? At what entry points of the Ecomap are we as individuals and as a congregation engaging in reparations work? This is but the first leg of our reparations journey. Act for the Earth and Indigenous Justice Community Outreach Ministry Teams will continue to provide opportunities for spiritual growth and action moving forward.

Leadership in End-of-Life Legislation

Marty Rossmann, Patricia Ohmans, and Jack Rossmann

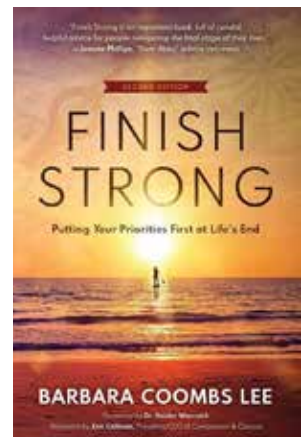
A movement is afoot in end of life care, and Unitarians are being called to be the leaders!

It's been a long call — since July 1, 1988 — when the Unitarian Universalist Association resolved to “inform and petition legislators to support legislation that will create legal protection for the right to die with dignity, in accordance with one’s own choice.” Unitarians in Oregon took up the call in 1998. In a Unitarian church basement, legislation was created that has been copied and passed in eight other states and DC.

The Minnesota End-of-Life Option Act, HF 1930 and SF 1813, did not get the hearings needed to move the legislation forward this year. Both bills allowed a terminally ill, mentally capable adult with a prognosis of six months or less to live, the option to request, obtain and take medication — should they choose — to die peacefully if their suffering becomes unbearable.

Here's what we're called to do:

- Stay engaged. This is worth our long-time effort — social change is tough work!
- Contact (to the point of pestering) Minnesota legislators so they are “informed and petitioned” to pass end of life legislation in the next legislative session. While Twin Cities legislators are important, please volunteer to contact UU congregations in greater Minnesota, to encourage them to reach out to their legislators.
- Be informed — if you did not attend the March 29 meeting with Dr. Rebecca Thoman, Director of Death with Dignity, here's the link to her excellent presentation: bit.ly/thomanddeathdignity
- Join Compassion and Choices Minnesota/Docs4Dignity: compassionandchoices.org/in-your-state/Minnesota or follow them on Facebook for updates.
- Read the book, *Finish Strong: Putting Your Priorities First at Life's End* by Barbara Coombs Lee. Then join the Unity book discussion on June 7.
- For more information or to volunteer, please contact Marty Rossmann at rossm001@umn.edu.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Obama School Team

Staff Appreciation and 100-Year Celebration

This year's Staff Appreciation Week at Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary was very special. Building on the staff's 2022-2023 slogan, "Teamwork Makes the Dream Work," our volunteers provided a "slam dunk" morning coffee and donuts to start the week, a "tailgate" Jimmy Johns Sandwich party, "all-stars" Starburst candy distributed in their mailboxes, and an assortment of peanuts, popcorn, and Cracker Jack "ballpark" snacks one afternoon. The school staff were so happy to see their work celebrated in this way, and we thank the Unity members and friends whose previous contributions funded this. Thanks to Diane Grasse, who put this together for us and to Sandy Burton, Karen Abraham, and Christine Sarkes for their assistance.



Reminder: plan to join with others to enjoy the 100-year celebration of the building which housed Marshall, Webster, and Obama schools on Thursday, June 1, from 4:30–7:30 p.m. Parking may be a challenge with the number of people expected, but the church is allowing the use of our parking lot at St. Albans and Grotto for people attending. The evening will feature a history walk through the halls of the building, musical entertainment by Walker West Music Academy, food trucks, a cake walk, bouncy houses, and more. Watch next month's newsletter for more information.

Affordable Housing Team

Help Build Affordable Housing

Habitat for Humanity Project Dates

Our Affordable Housing Team partners with Habitat for Humanity on an ongoing basis. We are co-sponsoring a Habitat home construction work week once again, June 12-16, in Roseville. *You're invited* to help build a quality affordable home with us! Watch for sign-up tables in Parish Hall and in church communications. You can volunteer for one day or multiple days. You don't have to be an experienced carpenter to volunteer. If you've helped before, we hope you will again. If you haven't, we hope you'll give it a try, while also learning about how a house is built and how Habitat contributes to stable housing in the community. Questions? Please contact Chuck Griggs at griggscb@msn.com.



Gun Sense Team

The Cost of Gun Violence

One source reports gun violence costs America \$229 billion annually — more than \$700 per person every year to pay the tab for first responders, legal proceedings, medical treatment, lost wages, and long-term care for victims. The source suggests that is six times what the U.S. spends annually on foreign aid.

With the state legislature in session another month and Gun Violence Awareness Month fast approaching in June, Unity's Gun Sense Team continues to work to make our members and friends aware of the three gun safety bills moving through the legislative process that would increase gun safety and decrease the misuse and violent use of guns in Minnesota. We are pleased to report more than 50 people have stopped by the team's table in Parish Hall on Sundays to write postcards to their representatives. The team is now encouraging those with friends and family outside the metro area who do not have the same support, to ask those friends how we can help their voices to be heard. Our Gun Sense team is beginning to connect with statewide UU congregations to encourage them to write their representatives on gun issues.

Additionally, we are exploring ways in which we can connect with youth in our congregation to bring them into this work — possibly through a gun safety demonstration — and to listen to our youth about their experiences. It is our goal to help families know how to speak with their students about how to be safe around guns.

For more information about Unity's Gun Sense Team, or to join a meeting, email gun-sense-ministry@googlegroups.com.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH



Aren't they beautiful?

Drew Danielson
Coordinator of Youth and Campus Ministries

In their old age, my parents became more and more sentimental, prone to crying with emotion over the simplest things. They were overcome by treasured memories, and reliably floored by glowing sunsets, springtime, and birdsong. What I remember most fondly is the love and awe they showed to all young people — “Oh, these children are just so beautiful!” they would proclaim, tears welling in their eyes.

“Mom, Dad, you’re showing your age. You just miss your youth!” my sisters and I would say back to them.

Perhaps. I’ve been immersed in the hearts and minds of our young people this past month as they prepared to give their “statements of personal beliefs” at the culmination of the Coming of Age year. I will admit, they bring me to tears. It’s an intense involvement I’m fortunate to have. We’ve been spending time together weekly, getting to know each other, asking big questions, listening to each other, encouraging, arguing. I’ve seen them work through the daunting task of formulating a statement, and preparing to give it to a live audience. I’ve seen them passionate, frightened, obstinate. I’ve also felt their convictions, their efforts, their pride, and their relief. Some of them loved the whole process, but more of them were conflicted throughout. Others absolutely resented most of the whole thing!

And it was absolutely beautiful. *They were, and are, unspeakably beautiful.*

I am not looking for sympathy or thanks when I tell you that it is a lot of work to get all of them to respond to deadlines, to meet with mentors and accept feedback, make revisions, be prepared to willingly step up to the lectern, and say what they believe, to a full sanctuary. I give thanks for the opportunity to do so, because in the end I get to look out at the congregation, who are all looking up at these young people with quivering smiles and moist eyes, all thinking, to a person, “They are all absolutely beautiful!”

“What is beauty?” is a question of rigorous debate every year in Coming of Age. It inevitably comes up several times, in discussion of what it means to be human and alive, in what is sacred in us and in our lives, in how we strive for Beloved Community. The quality of beauty and our desire for it, our recognition of it, our reverence for it, is understood as fundamental to the human experience. Most often, it defies a specific definition. But everyone in the end recognizes that it exists and it motivates us and it hits us squarely in the heart. It exists in our sense of Awe, forcing us to pause, to let it wash over us, to feel its impact.

My aged parents were not becoming soft, rank sentimentalists. They had learned to stop fighting it, to give up maintaining composure, instead allowing themselves to be awed by the promise, and possibility, and heartache, and joy of young people being beautiful.

Religious Education Enrollment for 2023-24

Religious Education Enrollment Sessions for 2023-24 have been scheduled for Saturday, May 6, 10:00-11:30 a.m., in the Foote Room, and Saturday, May 13, 1:00-2:30 p.m., in the Center Room. If you are unable to attend one of these sessions, please contact RE staff for future opportunities: katrina@unityunitarian.org.



Summer in the Garden

Please watch for information about Unity's Summer in the Garden program that will begin Sunday, May 28, during our 10:00 a.m. service! Typically for children ages 4-13, but the whole family is welcome to come out and help!



MUSIC MINISTRY



Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries

*My days, my weeks, my months, my years,
Fly rapid as the whirling spheres
Time, like the tide, its motion keeps,
Till I must launch through boundless deeps.*

These words, taken from a hymn written by Thomas Greene in 1780, are the lyrics to the work *Its Motion Keeps* by contemporary composer Caroline Shaw. The passing of time as a relentless and comforting fact of existence is a theme that unites all of the music and poetry in this year's Foote Music Sunday service. In this service we celebrate music, a spiritual practice that throughout history has been the persistent focus of humanity's creativity and aspiration. Every human society that we have a record of has had some sort of musical expression; we sang before we ever learned to speak.

Time its motion keeps. Through suffering and joy, things happen. Change happens. Time happens. And as we fly through the whirling spheres, launching through time's boundless deeps, we make sense of it the best way we can... we look right at it and find the connection and beauty in this irrefutable fact of existence. To quote Jean-Michel Basquiat, "Art is how we decorate space, music is how we decorate time." Music is how we cope with the fact that we cannot stop the tide of time, how we make the best of it and weave it into our understanding of the world.

This year's service features new choral works by Linda Kachlemeier, Nico Gutiérrez, and Carol Barnett that were commissioned for Unity's Music Ministry to premiere. It also will include selections by the Children's Choir, music by Abbie Betinis, Jonathan Dove, and Ruth Moody of the Wailin' Jennys. The poetry and flow of the service has been curated by our wonderful worship associate Marg Walker. It is our sincere hope that the music we share on that Sunday morning will honor the 70 minutes we will have together in a way that resonates and endures in people's hearts and minds.



Heritage Choir: Community Sing

Saturday, May 6

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

University Baptist Church

1219 University Ave SE, Minneapolis

Heritage Choir is back with their annual spring Community Sing, a chance to gather in community and sing together. This year, we're being joined by the middle school choir students of Achieve Language Academy! Reception to follow!



One Voice Mixed Chorus presents

ONEarth

Saturday, June 10 • 7:00pm

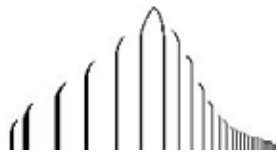
Sunday, June 11 • 3:00pm

Tickets: onevoicemn.org

ONEarth will celebrate our connections to each other and the earth, and what better place to do it than on Raspberry Island in the heart of the Mississippi River. Exciting visual elements, such as life-sized puppets, will help bring the eclectic set of music to life. Grab your lawn chair or blanket (and a few friends) and meet us at ONEarth!

Seating is General Admission and first-come, first-served. One Voice believes strongly in expanding access to the arts, which is why we are letting you pick your price. This is only possible due to our generous donors and supporters — thank you!





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 • unity@unityunitarian.org

REV. KP HONG, MINISTER OF FAITH FORMATION
BARBARA HUBBARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
REV. KATHLEEN ROLENZ, INTERIM SENIOR MINISTER
LOUISE LIVESAY-AL, CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

2023 Chalice Camp at Unity Church

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

We are!

Week 1: July 10-14

Week 2: July 17-21

Chalice Camp is offered Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., for children and youth ages 5-18 (youth in grades 7-12 serve as junior counselors and counselors). Early bird registration discount ends May 1 so register today!

Register online at:
unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp.html

Hey White People!

Committing Time and Energy to Align Values with Action

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



Join the second annual pilgrimage from the Minnesota State Capitol to George Floyd Global Memorial. Members of the planning team will be available in Parish Hall after both services on May 7 and May 14 to answer questions and share information about this unique opportunity to honor the life and mark the death of George Perry Floyd, that his passing may be a catalyst to affirm the worth and dignity of every person. Questions? Contact Clover Earl at 2clover@gmail.com.

In The Justice Database

bit.ly/JusticeData

The Quarry: A Social Justice Poetry Database

Like music, poetry can name injustice and inspire actions, and give voice to justice, resistance, visionaries, and the power of love in ways that can reach the heart more powerfully than speech. A remarkable resource!

