



Community

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.

Community is one of those words which, at first read, seems to be well understood. We tend to think of community as it derives from its Latin roots of *communitas*, meaning “the same,” or a “unified body of individuals.” And yet, we know from our own experience, that rarely are we a member of just one community, nor do we bring only one aspect of ourselves to the communities we participate in. Our lives overlap and intersect with multiple communities, all of which may have diverse foci. You have young children in school and aging parents; two different types of communities. You are part of the social justice community, the yoga community, the Rondo community, the parents of young children who like to dance community. Those relationships can be meaningful and may hold a unique place in your life.

But let’s dig a little deeper, and explore not only the communities which we participate in, but why? Why do we seek out gatherings of people, some of whom we have much in common with, other times, the thread of connection is thin? At the heart of community is a desire to belong and to be known. Brené Brown defines belonging as “the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us.” We have within us this desire, this longing, to be part of something larger, something more.” And then she continues, “... and when we find a place where we feel at home, where we can be ourselves, that feels so good and encouraging and liberating, doesn’t it?” It does!

Of course, this doesn’t just happen by accident. Quaker Douglas Steere wrote about what builds community, “When the members of a fellowship know one

another, care for one another, visit one another in their homes, consult one another, hold one another up in the silence and feel responsibility before [God] for one another, then when they meet together for worship they are truly open as a corporate group for the deepest working of the Spirit.”

This longing to belong requires much of us. It requires showing up in community, even when the sermon is not to your liking, or a child is noisy in the pew behind you or it’s Stewardship Sunday and you’ll be asked to make your gift to the church (again.) It requires patience with that person whom you know will talk your ear off because they are lonely, and Sunday is the only time they get to talk with another human being. And then — perhaps some Sunday — it’s you who needs that lifeline because you’ve had a terrible week and have no one to share it with. Or, it’s you who is wrestling with your family and you find at church just the right words to help you be in relationship with them. We bring both our gifts and our wounds to this place. When we are at our best in community, we make space for gifts and wounds — both our own and those of others. Neither define us, but both influence our understanding of how we could be together.

Community is a concept that feels great when we’re all getting along and loving each other. When it gets hard is when we disagree; when we realize we are not a collection of “like-minded individuals” (as we used to say about Unitarian Universalists) but a gathering of people with radically diverse life experiences, opinions, hopes and dreams. It can be surprising — even shocking — to realize that we don’t all

see the world in the same way.

This is when we get to practice the skills of community building: of listening deeply, of being curious instead of judgmental, of being able to (and I’m borrowing from Christian language now) to see the face of God in every human we encounter. It is not easy. Sometimes it takes time to work through our own resistance, biases, anger or fear. But, in those moments when we can see the other as a manifestation of ourselves and as part of the larger Divine, that is the moment when Beloved Community truly comes alive. That insight — and acceptance — of how we are deeply and intimately interconnected is the mortar that builds a strong, resilient, and loving community.

Unity Church is such a place. It’s been tested and tried — and, will be again! Yet at each testing, the church takes a deep breath, centers itself, and shows up again and again, living into the struggle with grace and gratitude for this wondrous and imperfect collaborative we build together — which we call community.

May we continue to live into this vision — this hope — and this reality.

*Rev. Kathleen Rolenz
with this month’s theme team:
Rev. Andrea LaSonde Anastos,
Ahmed Anzaldúa, Rev. Tom Duke,
Drew Danielson, Rev. KP Hong,
and Nelson Moroukian*

Theme Resources

For further reflection on the theme, see this month’s spiritual practice packet, available online at unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html.

IN THE MEANTIME



Reflections on Interim Ministry

Rev. Kathleen C. Rolenz

“So, where will you go next?” is the question I’m hearing most often these days. First, thank you for your curiosity! Serving as an interim minister since 2016, I’ve had to pull up my tent and move about every two years. I’ve lived in four different cities and apartments, and served four large and mid-sized congregations — and I’ve loved it! I’ve loved the excitement of a new town and getting to know our Unitarian Universalist congregations during a time of transition.

As you may recall, I didn’t expect to move to Saint Paul in 2022. I had planned to return to our home in Charlottesville, VA, and figure out how to build community in my town. As an interim, my job is to help others connect to and deepen with *their* own community. Sometimes long-time members who were faithful attenders during the previous minister’s tenure need some attention. Brand new members are figuring out how to navigate this in-between time. My job is to remind the congregation about the incredible community they already have — and to not take it for granted.

Although every congregation I’ve served has had long-time members, Unity Church stands out as one who has created traditions that extend far beyond any one generation. I’ve been both impressed by the way Unity members can recall their involvement as a child, a parent, a grandparent. I’ve been moved by the ways in which community is built one worship service, one religious education program, one committee meeting at a time. I’ve been touched by the fact that many of you have raised your children together, celebrated and mourned their departure from the home as young adults, delighted to welcome them back for special events. And finally (but not exhaustively), I’ve been inspired by the ways you show up for one another; whether knitting a care shawl, baking cookies and bars for a memorial service, offering a ride or a meal or the dozens of other ways in which you show your care.

This is the way we build community together. As I have watched *this* community in action, I must also confess I’m a little bit envious! Being an itinerant minister means that I get to experience community — but from the outside, knowing that I’ll be leaving it after my tenure is complete. To be honest, it’s been so long since I’ve been in one place, I’m not sure how to begin to build community. What I do know is that I’ll start by attending my local Unitarian Universalist church. Maybe I’ll start by being an usher or greeter or making coffee. Perhaps I’ll sing in the choir. At the moment, I don’t have plans to search for another full-time, interim position that would require me to pull up stakes again and move. I’d really like to plant myself in community, to see where and how I might best serve. Where that will lead me is still to be determined. But what I do know is that I’ve been influenced by the ways in which you create, build, embrace and sustain Beloved Community. You truly put the Unity in community!

Blessings on this month and on the ministry we have shared together,

Rev. Kathleen

Ministerial Transition

The publication of the May *commUNITY* newsletter happened during the middle of candidating week. Please watch for an update from the Ministerial Search Team in the June issue of *commUNITY*.

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Graham Michael DuFoe

Born one more redeemer
March 14, 2024, to parents
Jill (Miller) and Greg DuFoe
and great grandparents
Carol and Denny Miller

In Memoriam

Bruce Behrends

November 26, 1947 –
March 21, 2024

Funding Our Future

Thank You!

We’re so grateful to everyone who participated in the Funding Our Future auction March 3. You:

- Donated and bid on fabulous items and experiences,
- Ate delicious food catered by Will Pflueger and Heidi Birkholtz and a whole food ministry team,
- Played games (Ron Schlatter’s science of guessing was fun!),
- Got a souvenir photo taken by Paul Rogne and printed by Debbie Harvey,
- Enjoyed the beautifully decorated space brought to life by Jennifer Nedry and another whole crew of volunteers.

Many thanks to the dedicated auction planning team who worked tirelessly from December through March: Shelley Butler (auction catalog manager extraordinaire), Barbi Byers (who is fantastic at figuring out items people could donate), Joan Maclin (who expertly proofed and displayed the cards for each item in the catalog), Sara Testen (a most dedicated Sunday tabling presence), Jennifer Nedry and Heidi Birkholz (those two really know how to use space), and Barbara Hubbard (for her deep expertise). Together, after expenses, we raised \$27,000 to support our mission and ends.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Sunday Worship Services

Sunday services are held at 9:00 and 11:15 a.m., except where noted. The 9:00 a.m. service is also offered via livestream. Religious Education programs for children and youth are held Sundays during our service times.

On Sunday, May 26, we switch to our summer worship schedule with one service at 10:00 a.m.

May 5: Arthur Foote Music Sunday

Livestream: youtube.com/watch?v=pkWcCckL-Qk
Arthur Foote Music Sunday will include Baroque selections by Corelli, Bach, and Handel; music of the Krahô indigenous people of Northern Brazil; and contemporary choral works by Ernani Aguiar, Elizabeth Alexander, Jacob Narverud, and Frank Ticheli. The musical selections have been woven together with reflections and poetry by worship associates Lorelee Wederstrom and Marg Walker. The performers include Unity's adult, children, and youth choirs, and a professional Baroque orchestra.

May 12: Mother of a Thousand Orphans

Rev. Lara Cowtan

Livestream: youtube.com/watch?v=WY3nPKHbih8
On this Mother's Day, amidst rising conflicts near and far, let us lean into inspiring stories from our global Unitarian community and ancestors, including Dr. Lotta Hitchmanova, a Jewish journalist from Prague who spoke out against the Nazis and then dedicated her life to humanitarian efforts. Dr. Lotta helped literally thousands of children impacted by the second World War and the decades following it, she worked with the Unitarian Service Committee in Europe and then established a branch in Canada.

May 19: Beauty Crowds Me

Rev. Kathleen Rolenz

Livestream: youtube.com/watch?v=6sW0IQpijWw
Flower Celebration, Dedication of Older Children, and Bridging Ceremony. What do all three of these events have in common? The beauty of community will be in full bloom this Sunday, as we celebrate generational milestones and the cherished Flower Celebration (aka, Flower Communion).

May 26: Mercy Without End

Rev. Kathleen Rolenz

One service only at 10:00 a.m.
Livestream: youtube.com/watch?v=jyEObWg8DcA
Ukraine. Israel and Palestine. Haiti. Eritrea. Ethiopia. There are so many places around the globe where violence and the war that follows results in an endless cycle of retaliation and devastation. On this Memorial Day Sunday, we honor those who have died in past wars, while maintaining the hope that we can learn the things that make for peace.

Offering Recipients

Each week, sixty percent of our Sunday offering is given to a community non-profit and forty percent supports the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church. Donations are gratefully accepted online at bit.ly/sundayoffering.

May 5: Unity Church Music Ministries

This collection will support the vibrant and diverse music ministry of Unity Church, nourishing our outstanding choral singing programs and creating musical connections within, among, and beyond our community.

May 12: Partner Church Ukrainian Relief Effort

Unity's Partner Church Team works with the Hungarian Unitarian Church to collect and distribute funds for Ukrainian refugee relief. The mission of this joint effort is to offer a steady helping hand to all struggling for war-time survival regardless of denominational affiliation. This collection will help cover the ever-increasing costs of getting survival supplies from Transylvania into war-torn Ukraine.

May 19: Faith Builders Habitat for Humanity

For over 15 years Unity Church members and friends have volunteered with Faith Builders, donating two weeks of home construction time to Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity. Faith Builders represent several local churches that together provide about \$9,000 per work week, helping to pay for supplies and professional labor that must be purchased beyond the donated supplies and labor. Chuck Griggs is Unity's Faith Builders captain.

May 26: Unity Church Indigenous Justice Team

The goal of Unity's Indigenous Justice Team is to help amplify indigenous voices in the public square and in state/national policy decision-making and to help generate greater awareness of what needs to be done locally to address the destruction of Dakota/Ojibwe cultures and seizure of their land as part of Minnesota colonization. This collection will support the sponsorship of the national meeting of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery to be held at Unity Church in June, and to continue providing educational opportunities for Unity members to experience and witness indigenous culture and history.

Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday worship service, please contact Suki Sun at sunflowerselflove@gmail.com.



A New Kind of Discernment

Jackie Duffus Boyd (they/she), Trustee

This is a year of firsts for me. I am in my first year of service on Unity's Board of Trustees, my first year of membership at any church, ever, my first experience of candidating week and my first time writing for the *commUNITY* newsletter. I

find myself wondering, in the midst of all these firsts, what I can offer the broader Beloved Community.

I am writing this column in the middle of candidating week, and realize I have been struck by the experience of this week. It is exciting, scary, a little overwhelming. I frequently feel a fluttering in my stomach, pressure at my heart center and a quickening of my thoughts. I am listening with my mind, heart and body, to find what resonates. I am also curious about what resonates for others. I am very attuned to the people around me and the energy in the room. I scan rooms and see other people doing the same, seeking out the collective energy.

We are engaged in the energetic, intellectual and emotional work of listening to ourselves and others. We are in sessions on faith formation, policy governance, and social justice, pillars of our community. Within these sessions we share how Unity Church has brought these concepts to life while also inviting new ideas and perspectives.

We call this discernment. In all my previous religious lives, discernment was the gentler synonym of the word "judgment." And judgment was about division, a separation between the worthy and unworthy, the shoulds and shouldn'ts... It was about determining what should stay and what should go, reducing the options.

Our discernment doesn't have the ethos of reduction. It feels generative. Broadening. Instead of fewer options, I sense more. It feels like the beginning of a new project, as if I am gathering inspiration for a vision board or walking through rows of millworks and paint swatches at the hardware store. This discernment feels downright creative. It feels like potential.

I didn't know what to expect during my first Unitarian Universalist candidating experience. During my first year as a trustee. While I am still navigating my new faith community. I didn't know what to expect, and I am so glad that what I am finding is this new individual and collective, feeling and thinking, expansive, creative discernment.

So, this is what I offer to the broader Beloved Community — the observation that, in the midst of this week with lots of structure and tasks and meetings and big decisions, I sense an opening, expanding and creative energy, and I can't wait to see where it takes us this year and in the many years to come.



A Community of Care

Rev. Lara Cowtan, Minister of Congregational Care

During our Sunday worship services we begin our Embracing Meditation with these words, "Each week, we take a moment to expand the caring ministry of this congregation." Sharing

our celebrations, concerns, joys and sorrows with one another is an important part of being in community, bringing us into deeper relationship with one another and providing opportunities for people to connect. As we reflect on our monthly theme of community, let's think about what it means to be part of "the caring community of this congregation."

In another congregation I served, we often talked about how belonging to the community and sharing in its broader ministry means that *everyone* is part of the membership team, responsible for welcoming people; and *everyone* is part of the stewardship team, encouraging and modeling generosity; and *everyone* is part of the faith formation team, taking opportunities for continued learning and mentoring of spiritual development; *everyone* is part of the hospitality team, helping with coffee hour or receptions occasionally; and *everyone* is part of the congregational care team, providing a listening ear, helping hand and caring messages in times of need. This precious thing called community needs us all to be present in many ways, giving and receiving and being present for one another through the beauty, complexity, joy and heartbreak of our lives.

Unity's Congregational Care Team volunteers provide many different kinds of supportive care to members, ranging from writing cards and knitting comfort shawls or making periodic visits to people needing some extra company or providing more in-depth support during challenging times. There is a place for everyone at Unity Church to see themselves as part of this important element of caring community, as we support and are supported by one another in so many ways. If you would like to learn more about Unity's Congregational Care Team or are interested in how you can be more involved in offering care, please see our webpage at unityunitarian.org/congregational-care.html or contact me at lara@unityunitarian.org.

Do you have a concern or celebration you wish to have shared in the Embracing Meditation during Sunday worship? Would you like to request a call from the minister or a helping hand or listening ear of a care team member? Please send us an email at pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org. If you are experiencing an urgent need for pastoral support, call 651-300-9123.

Introducing the All Our Fullness Project

Marjorie Otto, Beloved Community Communications Team



One of the blessings of our Unity Church community is the number of people that call it a spiritual home. With so many individuals that make up our community, it can also make it hard to get to know everyone at the depth we crave here in our work at Unity. As a way to create a tapestry of Unity voices, the Beloved Community Staff Team, aided by the Beloved Community Communications Team, is starting a new project within the congregation called, "All Our Fullness."

The goal of the project is to provide a way for congregants to introduce themselves in a personal way. Here's how to participate:

1. Fill out the form that includes a prompt or question for your consideration: <https://bit.ly/AllOurFullness>.
2. Respond to a prompt in any way that is meaningful to you: write a story, poem, reflection, or play; offer a watercolor painting, photo, or sculpture; create a video with a song, a dance, or a recorded response or conversation; or a knitted item.
3. Upload images and/or videos via the online form.

The limit of your response is only your imagination. These contributions, as well as a photo and brief biography, will be posted on the Beloved Community News blog.

The idea for the project and its name is pulled from the fourth of the Unity Church ends statements, which guide our work, "Know each other in all our fullness and create an ever-widening circle of belonging for all people."

We hope this project can serve as a starting point for deeper relationships among us. We also hope to create a tapestry, a sampling, a "Unity community quilt" of sorts, of the folks that make up the Beloved Community here.

For this introduction of All Our Fullness, here is the inaugural question and prompt: *What illuminates your commitment to creating an antiracist multicultural community?* Share a story, image, and/or video.

This is just the very beginning of this project. We're exploring many ideas, avenues, and directions for how this project may evolve over time, so we're leaving the future of it open-ended to make space for its growth. Look for more information in upcoming newsletters and a future table in Parish Hall, as this project grows. The evolution is also going to depend on the level of participation, meaning you, yes, you dear reader, are the perfect person to submit a response. Submit to All Our Fullness here: <https://bit.ly/AllOurFullness>.

Lectio Divina

May 8 and 28 | 7:10 p.m.

Zoom: bit.ly/Lectio2023-24

Participate in a centuries-old monastic practice of listening, contemplating, and responding to sacred texts; modified with poetry for Unitarian Universalist small group spiritual practice. Led by Lisa Wersal or Shelley Butler. Held at 7:10 p.m. on the second Wednesday and fourth Tuesday of each month. A different poem at each session. Questions? Contact Shelley at library@unityunitarian.org.

Queer Theology

Tuesday, May 8 | 6:30-8:00 p.m.

In-person, Center Room

Queer Theology is a theological practice that attempts to erase boundaries that exist in religious traditions, to include rather than exclude more voices. Open to adults of all genders and sexual orientations. Contact Mike Huber for access to the readings or if you have any questions: mikehuberece@gmail.com.

Sangha Practice

Tuesdays | 4:30-6:00 p.m.

Ames Chapel

At the heart of Buddhist practice is the commitment to awaken — to step into our doubts and predicaments and hear the roaring of life at the still point of a turning universe. Through weekly practice of meditation, we discover a clarity of mind attentive and accountable to each moment of life's flow, and touch the mystery of our original face. This group is open to anyone interested, no experience is necessary, and instructions will be provided. For more information, please contact Rev. KP Hong at kp@unityunitarian.org.

WELCOME NEWCOMERS | FELLOWSHIP GROUPS



Welcome Words

Philippa Anastos
Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant

This year is flying by and summer is on its way — although I'm sure winter will get at least one more jab in! As a newcomer, I am amazed by this congregation's devotion to building Beloved Community. It shows in so many ways, talents, and gifts. I am excited by the sheer breadth of programming, and encourage all of you to seek out and discover new pieces of the community in the coming months!

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 Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant, philippa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110.

Finding Yourself at Unity: For Visitors and Inquirers

Sundays 10:15 a.m. | Drop-ins welcome; childcare in the nursery.

Gannett Room or online via Zoom: bit.ly/fyuonline

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. Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time.

Weekly church emails include the session topic or find the session schedule at the Welcome Table in the main lobby or in Parish Hall, or email philippa@unityunitarian.org to receive Saturday morning email reminders.

This month's offerings:

May 5: Unitarian Universalist History

May 12: Membership 101

May 19: Worship & the Liturgical Year

May 26: No session (Memorial Day weekend)

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

Tuesday, May 7 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Develop personal practice to help you find and keep your balance.

Develop the skills of intimacy that let you go deep quickly with strangers.

Take the compassion that rises from doing the first two and use it to bless the world.

This is how Unity Church talks about its expectations of membership. Does the invitation into this ongoing work resonate with you? This session, for people ready to become members, explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's need meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church. Let Philippa Anastos know you're interested in participating or to ask questions. She can also arrange a private signing ceremony.

Fellowship Groups

For more information email Philippa at philippa@unityunitarian.org.

Afterthoughts offers time after 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 third Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Kung Fu meets Saturday mornings, 9:00-10:00 a.m., in the Body Room.

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

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

Men's Conversation Group meets on Zoom May 13 and 27, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Men's Retirement Circle: Monday, May 6 and 20, 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 on the first Wednesday 1:00-2:30 p.m., and third Wednesday 7:10-8:00 p.m. of each month. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc.

Unity Book Club meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

May 14: *Walking the Old Road: A People's History of Chippewa City and the Grand Marais Anishinaabe* by Staci Lola Drouillard

June 11: *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks

July 9: *Driving Dad Home* by John Halter

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)
Email kp@unityunitarian.org

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY | CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

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 Parish Hall, a short chapel service begins at 6:40 p.m. in Ames Chapel, and programs begin at 7:10 p.m. Childcare is available. Details including the cost for dinner are online at unityunitarian.org/wellspring-wednesday.html.

May 1

Dinner: Miso glazed root vegetables, quinoa pilaf, chocolate chip oatmeal cookies

The Natural Guitar | Foote Room

Retired guitar professor, classical guitarist and studio guitarist Nick Rath will share his thoughts on the most natural and efficient way of playing the guitar. If you've found it difficult to get from one chord to the next, one note to the next, that pesky bar chord, that you're picking is uneven and your strumming doesn't feel quite right, that your left hand gets tired, this class could be the answer. Playing the guitar can be a joy and not a struggle. Bring your guitar and find out.

UU The Vote | Parish Hall and via Zoom: bit.ly/uuvote424

Join Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance and Rev. Kathleen Rolenz for a session on engaging and mobilizing community for elections big and small. How does this organizing relate to our principles and values as Unitarian Universalists? What are the limitations we must consider as a religious organization? How do we best share and invest in what we all need to thrive?

Bee Bingo and Pollinators 101 | Robbins Parlor

Everybody is abuzz about pollinating birds and insects! Whether you're new to gardening or just a bit rusty, come learn about the endangered native Rusty Patch Bee and other species of pollinators, and how to select native plants to support their lifecycles. We'll play Bee Bingo (with prizes) and discuss Unity's native plant sale (see back cover). Presented by Unity's Act for the Earth Pollinator Team.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Join Mayra Mendoza for beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Learn basic violin posture, note reading, and more! Contact Mayra at mayraquitzia@hotmail.com by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesdays to ensure a lesson.

May 8

Dinner: Bratwurst, hot dogs, not dogs, potato salad, roasted broccoli, rhubarb cake

Dying for Beginners — the End | Parish Hall and via Zoom: bit.ly/dfbucu524

Join Rev. Lara Cowtan, Marti Rossman and Patricia Ohmans for a review and wrap-up of the popular sessions from previous months, and a discussion of what is on the horizon for the question of End of Life Options legislation, as well as future programming and conversations about end of life planning.

Lectio Divina | Online via Zoom: bit.ly/Lectio2023-24

Participate in a centuries-old monastic practice of listening, contemplating, and responding to sacred texts, modified with poetry for UU small group spiritual practice. On Wednesdays, join the Zoom from the Gannett Room at church!

DRUUM Livestream Worship | Robbins Parlor

Join us for a livestream of the annual Diverse Revolutionary UU Ministries (DRUUM) open worship service! The theme is "Choosing Joy! Living with Intentionality and Purpose." The service will explore sustaining joy amidst adversity. Discover how a joyful heart can be your sanctuary, even when spirits are tested. A celebration of resilience, purpose, and the healing power of joy.

Beginner Violin with Mayra Mendoza | Choir Room

Help Our Neighbors

Use the Parking Lot!

Do you know we have a church parking lot just south and east of the church? Our neighbors really appreciate it when you park in our lot at the corner of Portland and St. Albans, instead of on the street. Be a good neighbor: use the lot!

In The Justice Database

UU the Vote

Working on state and local levels for fair elections, voting rights, and against the targeting of BIPOC, UU the Vote depends on Unitarian Universalist volunteers all over the country to help. Opportunities to sign up now.

bit.ly/JusticeData



Support Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf

March was Minnesota Food Share Month and we donated 278 pounds of food to Hallie Q. Brown.



Thank you very much. Almost daily, there is news covering how much the demand has increased for food shelf visits. All of your donations are greatly appreciated. For the month of May they are seeking the following donations: Salsa sauce, dry pinto beans, dry black beans, syrup, pancake mix, boxed macaroni and cheese and canned sardines.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Gun Violence Prevention Team

Unity's Gun Violence Prevention team has for some time partnered with Protect Minnesota, a statewide organization that lobbies to prevent gun violence through engagement, advocacy and community led solutions. Protect Minnesota envisions a state in which the systematic inequities that cause gun violence are eliminated, ending prominent manifestations of gun violence: homicide, suicide, community gun violence, police gun violence.

We know guns need to be kept out of the hands of those who represent a danger to themselves or others. Mental illness is a factor only 4% of the time in interpersonal gun violence; guns are a factor 100% of the time.

Materials provided by Protect Minnesota inform us that 45% of our Minnesota friends and neighbors have at least one gun. We are reminded that in our conversations with those who hold varying points of view — especially during the state legislative session — we need to speak in a way that shows we know most gun owners are safe and responsible and support common sense gun laws. It is a terrible mischaracterization to make all gun owners sound as though they support the extreme mission of the gun lobby.

Protect Minnesota acknowledges that hunters have always understood the importance of gun safety but that of concern is the growing proportion of gun owners who don't have a hunting background and haven't passed gun safety courses.

Join our team in this work! Monthly meetings take place on the third Thursday of each month, 3:30-4:40 p.m. (next meeting is May 16), in person at church and online via Zoom. For more information or to be added to our email list, please contact us at unityunitarian.org/gun-sense.html.

Obama/JJ Hill School Team

We're nearing the end of our first year of volunteering at JJ Hill Montessori Magnet School, the school which will be moving into the Obama School building across the street from church in fall of 2025. We have received an enthusiastic welcome from the principal, staff, and students.

Over the past few months, volunteers have listened to early readers, assisted children with math, shelved books in the library, assembled folders for classrooms, handed out snacks, laminated and cut classroom materials, played games with flash cards, provided refreshments to teachers during their long conference days, and coached beginning knitters.

Recently, we collaborated with the Mano a Mano team who presented a skit, "Charango! The Singing Armadillo" for two classes of first through third graders. The children enjoyed the skit and learned about Mano a Mano's project of providing medical supplies to the villages there. Thank you to Ann Mabbott, Gary Mabbott, Mary Ann McLeod, Ellen Wold, and Segundo Velasquez!

Now that we have become known to the staff, we think that more teachers will ask for volunteers for next year, to start in October. Please be thinking about how you might be involved, whether in the classroom or providing snacks for staff occasionally or in other ways. We hope many will be interested, and we look forward to welcoming the school community to our church neighborhood after building a strong partnership over these two years.



Mano a Mano volunteers prepare for their skit at JJ Hill School

Housing Justice Team

2024 Habitat for Humanity Project

Unity's Housing Justice Outreach Ministry Team is co-sponsoring a Habitat for Humanity work week once again. *You're invited* to help with a deep "remodel" of an existing home for a Habitat for Humanity client the week of June 3-7 in Roseville. Watch for sign-up tables and further details in Parish Hall on Sundays. 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 HFH contributes to stable housing in the community. Questions? Please contact Chuck Griggs at griggscb@msn.com.

Project Home: Weekend Warriors

Participate with the weekend meal teams at Provincial House in Saint Paul. Volunteers assist with serving meals, visiting with guests, and clean up. Sign up for a shift: bit.ly/23phmeals.

Faithful Hospitality

To support asylum-seeking families experiencing homelessness, this new mobile shelter program provides wrap-around services (including mental health services, medical services, etc.). As part of the program, families sleep at area houses of worship. There are three host sites each month and Interfaith Action is looking for volunteers to serve as overnight shelter hosts. To sign up, please contact Elizabeth at ekulus@interfaithaction.org or 651-661-7736.

Where To Begin with the Housing Crisis? (Whew!): Beacon 101

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative is a partner with Unity's Housing Justice Team. They build deeply affordable homes and impact the policies and systems creating homelessness. Beacon hosts an introductory, 30-minute meeting about this complex work on Zoom called "Beacon 101." It's offered twice each month: beaconinterfaith.org/events/.



May is Get Caught Reading Month! Who Knew?

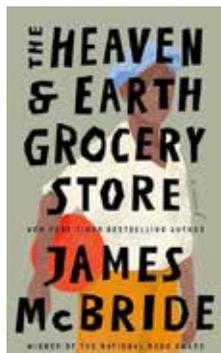
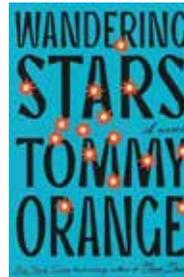
Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

Imagine my surprise to find that there is a whole month dedicated to not just reading, but *getting caught* reading. It comes on the heels of National Reading Month and National Reading Group Month, both in March. All these commemorations may seem like overkill, but YouGov® reports that only 54% of Americans read at least one book in 2023. You know what that means, right? Nearly half of America did not read even one book last year.

We all at Unity Church are quite fortunate; one need only go up one flight (stairs or elevator) from the Parish Hall to find great reading in Anderson Library! For example, recently we have added two of the most highly anticipated books of 2024 and instant bestsellers, and one that's been on the NYTimes bestseller list for over 30 weeks — all three that will feed your soul.

From Pulitzer Prize finalist author Tommy Orange, ***Wandering Stars*** follows three generations of a family impacted by the Sand Creek Massacre and the notorious Carlisle Indian Industrial School. It's been described as "shattering AND wonderful," a story that may blow your heart "into a thousand pieces AND put it all back together again."

Also by a Pulitzer Prize finalist, Percival Everett, ***James: A Novel*** is the retelling of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from the point of view of the enslaved Jim. Called "harrowing and ferociously funny," as well as "genius," *James* has the potential to become an American classic itself.



Despite coming out last September, ***The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*** by National Book Award winning author James McBride, is still on the New York Times bestseller list! While this gem of a book starts in 1972, the heart of the story is of the 1920s and 30s Chicken Hill neighborhood, where Jews and African Americans lived side-by-side in a bit of a ramshackle neighborhood, but where humanity and community outshined everything else.

Find these and more good books upstairs in the Anderson Library; and don't forget to check out the great new titles in the Bookstall.

By the Way, Cairns is still awaiting some fresh, new editors to ensure the publication continues on in 2025 and beyond. Contact us: cairns@unityunitarian.org.

16th Annual Café Unity

A showcase of the literary and musical talent of Unity Church.

Music and singing, poetry and prose, food and fellowship.

The Library-Bookstall Team annual coffeehouse, **Café Unity on Friday, May 3, at 7:00 p.m., in Parish Hall**, is shaping up to be a special one this year, hosted by Rev. Lara Cowtan. We have new poets reading, as well as some Cafe Unity favorites, and much good music, including the trio of Rev. Kathleen, Marg and Mary.



May Parish Hall Exhibit

Natural Consequences

By Maura Williams



"So What Do We Do Now?" from the series *The World Turned Upside Down*.

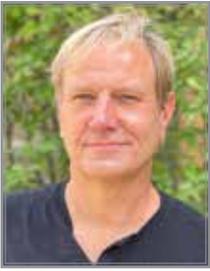
At times, I have engaged with wonder by producing drawings that explore patterns and intricacies observable in nature. I have been making images of trees, plants, animals, and water for over twenty years. An unforeseen frame of reference showed up in my studio, however, in 2020 and infected my work with a shifted context. I didn't recognize it initially, but our collective confinement during the early days of the COVID pandemic, coupled with the unexpected beauty shown by shrimp shells and garlic husks in the compost jar, suggested a new series of drawings featuring various natural subjects *contained*.

Other work produced since 2020 reflect similar uneasiness. The format doesn't deviate from previous nature studies — they still look like paintings of a particular scene featuring trees, plants, animals, or water, but they are informed by our communal realization that a return to "normal" is nowhere in sight. Several pieces are part of a series called "The World Turned Upside Down," in which some images are literally upside-down views of natural scenes; others resonate with other aspects of an increasingly uncertain future.

All pieces shown in *Natural Consequences* are original drawings on paper. The medium is oil pastel.

As a long-time Unity Church member I am always delighted and honored to share my current work within this community. A reception is planned for Friday evening, May 17, 5:30-7:30 p.m. All are invited.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Fear and Loathing

Drew Danielson, Coordinator of Youth and Campus Ministries

As I write this, it is mid-April and I am well aware that somewhere between one and two dozen people in this church community pretty much loathe me around this time. Hopefully by the time you read this that will no longer be true, but in mid-April I am the guy cracking the whip and riding herd on the ninth grade Coming of Age class as they prepare their statements of belief, or credos. I've been nagging them, I've badgered their families and prodded their mentors; I'm the one pushing the deadline, making final edits, asking for revisions.

All in preparation for making them go up and present their statements in front of hundreds of people packing the sanctuary. What fun!

So yeah, a big pain. And to make matters the worst, most ninth graders don't really think this exercise is important enough to justify the time and stress. Don't hear me wrong — I am not saying the youth haven't been thoughtful, or engaged, or honest. They aren't lazy or uncaring or any more cynical than they are supposed to be at 14 and 15. For the most part they are willing to talk about morality, ethics and spirituality, willing to give opinions, even occasionally argue. But I'd say many, maybe most, wonder what's the point?

In one of the last classes before they moved to working on final drafts, several of them admitted the question they felt least clear how to answer was "the one about Beloved Community." It is always this one. How will I, and we, strive to create the Beloved Community? The question stumps them, and it frustrates me. Rob and Janne often said to me, at the end of credo ceremony, "Well they missed that one again!" When we cover this question in class, it's probably the one we come closest to spoon feeding the "answer" and yet it remains a muddle. Partly the difficulty comes from the fact the question has been changed from something a tad more clear like "What is the role of the church, or what does our faith compel us to do?"

I used to think the difficulty came from being really hesitant about allowing that church and faith might demand anything of us. But this year I heard something that honestly hit home. "Beloved Community isn't realistic, it's too big, and my actions don't have that great an impact." Which is not to say they don't want to live a moral, just life, concerned about others, caring for this world. But how can they as individuals be expected to live for an ideal of heaven on earth for all? They can't. So what is the point?

The answer is in the question though, isn't it? "How will we strive for Beloved Community?" I feel we've unintentionally created a trick riddle by letting them struggle with this question as if it's all about them, about what kind of individual they will be, what kind of unassailable personal integrity will guide them, what great accomplishment they will produce to save the world. When it's never been about them alone. A community makes a community. Maybe the answer is in the word itself — community means a unified commitment to... community. The commitment to we, is what makes us Beloved.

I hope they felt it. I hope we all feel beloved in this community, by the very acts of our commitment to it!

To request childcare for a church event, please complete the online form at least one week in advance: unityunitarian.org/childcare-request-form.html. Katrina Nichols, Unity's Nursery Coordinator, will contact you to confirm the reservation.

Chalice Camp

Week 1: July 8-12

Week 2: July 15-19

Chalice Camp at Unity Church 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).

Campers will explore the heritage and history of Unitarian Universalism through varied and engaging activities, everything from puppet shows to field games. Chalice camp offers children a safe, child-friendly environment to be exposed to topics such as racial inequality, gender, social class, and our identities while incorporating the fun and excitement of typical summer camp activities.

Registration and counselor applications: unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp.html.



commUNITY is the monthly newsletter of Unity Church. Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Subscriptions are free to those who make pledges to Unity Church and are available to others for \$30/year.



Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa
Director of Music Ministries

This year's Foote Music Sunday is a reflection on Music as a constant of the universe, music as Divinity itself; capital-M Music, rather than lower-case-m music. In this service we

celebrate music not because it entertains us or because it is therapeutic — not even for its much touted property of bringing people together — but as an enormous, incomprehensible, creative, destructive, and unifying force.

Handel's *Ode to St. Cecilia*, one of the works featured in this service, starts with music as the fundamental creative force of the universe ("From harmony, from heavenly harmony, this universal frame began") and ends with music bringing about the end of days ("The trumpet shall be heard on high, the dead shall live, the living die, and music shall untune the sky."). The worship service includes Baroque selections by Corelli, Bach, and Handel; music of the Krahô indigenous people of Northern Brazil; and contemporary choral works by Ernani Aguiar, Elizabeth Alexander, Jacob Narverud, and Frank Ticheli. The musical selections have been woven together with reflections and poetry by worship associates Lorelee Wederstrom and Marg Walker. The performers include Unity's adult, children, and youth choirs and a professional Baroque orchestra.

Border CrosSing Community Sing: Heritage Choir

Saturday, May 11 | 11:00 a.m. | University Baptist Church
 Share in great singing, community, coffee, and Mexican pastries! ¡Nos vemos pronto! Free and open to the public.

Harmonies Unite

Border CrosSing + Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra
 Sunday, May 12 | 4:00 p.m. | Central Lutheran Church
 Sunday, May 19 | 4:00 p.m. | Augustana Lutheran Church
 Singers from Border CrosSing, the Minnesota Chorale, the local community, and the choirs of Unity Church will come together to perform a program of Latin American music that includes both popular and obscure works by Arturo Márquez, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Osvaldo Golijov, and Silvestre Revueltas. Free and open to the public.

Aquí te amo Album Release Concert

Friday, May 31 | 7:30 p.m. | Unity Church
 Join this live performance of Aquí te amo, Border CrosSing's second album. Tickets: bordercrossingmn.ticketspice.com/aqui-te-amo

One Voice Mixed Chorus: The Art of Joy!

Saturday, June 22 | 7:00 p.m. | Ordway Concert Hall
 Sunday, January 23 | 3:00 p.m. | Ordway Concert Hall
 Tickets: onevoicemn.org/performances/art-joy
 A concert celebrating the 35th anniversary of One Voice.

From the Archives Team

Scrolling Through Unity's Past

Last month the Archives Team examined hundreds of large architectural drawings found rolled in scrolls and stacked in two dusty boxes in the facilities storage room. The drawings were from several architectural renovations of Unity Church. Each renovation had blueprints covering everything from basic structural changes to detailed renderings of wiring and plumbing.

Most of these blueprints were challenging to understand, but not to Facilities Manager, Robert Baker. He came through the basement working area while the team was doing an inventory of the drawings. Robert had an electrical problem he was trying to resolve. If he could find the right blueprint, it might help him solve it.

Using old blueprints to see inside walls to resolve technical issues is just one reason for Unity Church to save these items. They are also helpful when considering future additions to the building. That is why the team gave the inventory of onsite architectural materials to the executive director and facilities manager for their review. Those deemed important to keep onsite will be stored digitally.

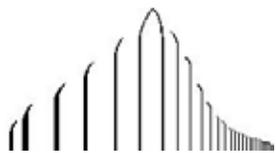
Once this is done, the inventory, along with the boxes of blueprint scrolls, will be forwarded to the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS). Our partner archivists at the MHS have already indicated they would like to have all blueprints we are willing to pass along.

Blueprints are just one form of material that the Archives Team collects, inventories, identifies, and then allocates to onsite or MHS storage. If you would like to volunteer to join this interesting — but sometimes dusty — project, please contact either Louise Merriam at machias1@gmail.com or Pauline Eichten at pfeichten@yahoo.com. If you are a long-time member of Unity, your time and your memory will be much appreciated. If you are a newer church member, this is a great place to learn about our history and the contributions of the congregation to the larger community.

Archives Team: Louise Merriam, Carol Miller, Patt Kelly, Eve Johnson, Pauline Eichten and Susan Foote (emerita).



Facilities Director Robert Baker reviews an electrical blueprint being inventoried by the Archives Team.



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation
Laura Park, Executive Director
Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Interim Senior Minister
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Unity Church Native Plant Sale

Unity's Act for the Earth Pollinator Team is coordinating a group purchase of native plants at wholesale prices from Glacial Ridge Growers (Glenwood, MN). Prices range from \$2 for small to \$7 for jumbo and \$8 for shrubs. Minimum order of three plants. Ordering deadline is May 24. Plant delivery in mid-June. Visit unity-plant-sales.square.site for more information and to place your order. Printed plant lists and order forms will be available at the Act for the Earth table in Parish Hall on Sundays. Questions? Contact Tracy Yue at tkstutu@gmail.com. 

Gardeners Needed

Whether you are an old hand at gardening, or a "newbie" wanting to learn, we need you! There are many opportunities to get involved both at church and in partnership with community organizations. Adults, families and youth are all welcome. Contact Anna Newton at asnewton3@gmail.com and she will connect you to the project lead. 

Our summer-in-the-garden program for kids meets every Sunday between Memorial Day and Labor Day during our 10:00 a.m. service. Perhaps you are a storyteller; or good at planting, weeding and watering; or you like to harvest and cook? Volunteers usually come several times a month to help teach. Someone is also needed to deliver produce to Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf during the week.

Join a group to help with garden maintenance, or work at your own pace and on your own schedule. We have a food garden, pollinator garden and ornamental gardens around the church that all need watering, weeding, harvesting, etc. 

There are also off-site opportunities to do some gardening through our community partnerships with Hallie Q. Brown and Urban Roots. 

Active Hope Empowerment Course

**Thursdays, May 2-June 13
6:00-7:30 p.m. | Unity Church**
Light supper will be served. Details and registration: unityunitarian.org/act-for-the-earth.html.

Would you like to become more engaged, encouraged, enlivened and empowered in the face of concerns about the climate and the world? Join this seven-week class to find insights and practices that will help you face climate change and social challenges and respond with positive action.

Participants will individually watch Chris Johnstone's free online course, with brief readings and videos of 30 to 90 minutes each week, inspired by the book *Active Hope* (co-authored by Johnstone and Joanna Macy). Then come together at Unity Church on for discussion and community building. 