

Covenant

The life of a congregation is a rich community tapestry of people, programs, ministries and worship. We lift up the patterns of this tapestry at Unity Church with the threads of monthly themes woven through our worship and programming. These themes deepen our understanding of our own faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community. We explore each theme in worship and in our newsletter; in covenant groups, and religious education; and in our community outreach ministries, our literary journal and programs, and many other opportunities.

*Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing
and rightdoing, there is a field.*

I'll meet you there.

*When the soul lies down in that grass,
the world is too full to talk about.*

*Ideas, language, even the phrase
"each other"*

doesn't make any sense.

— Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi

Like the field of which Rumi writes, covenant is a living thing. It is the air we breathe into the promises we make. It is the act of choosing to meet one another, again and again, as equals and as allies living out our values.

When we're presented with some of our toughest challenges, our deepest promises shine with the most clarity. In the early years of HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ people showed what community could accomplish despite governmental antipathy. When the *satyagrahis* protested at the Dharasana salt works in colonial India, their commitment to nonviolence transcended the brutality with which they were met. Moments like these show what we—and our relationships—are really made of.

A covenant is different from a contract. With the latter, each party tries to get as much as possible while giving as little as possible. A contract tries to cover every contingency, and if it's broken, there's an expectation of a penalty. When we enter into covenant, though, each of us gives our all, and no one knows where the promises will take us. When we fall short, the subsequent questions center around what kind of people we are and how we handle our failure. Brent Smith, a Unitarian Universalist minister, notes that while contracts are bound by reciprocity, religious covenants are bound by forgiveness. The goal "is not

the satisfaction of self-interest [...] but transformation."

Will all covenants eventually be broken? If we're living into them as fully as possible, then breaches seem almost inevitable. Not because people aren't trying to keep their promises, but because the kind of trust they engender calls us to reach further and further towards our best selves. One example is marriage, which at its best helps the partners heal and develop spiritually. At some point, though, all that stretching and reaching will almost certainly cross into overreach. And when we tip over that edge, it's the hope of forgiveness that we fall into.

Restorative justice grows out of this terrain. Someone passed beyond an agreed-upon boundary, and asks for forgiveness to begin creating a map back into right relationship—a map that will be drawn over time in the colors of respect, openness, honesty, accountability, and healing.

The way UUs conduct religious education is one specific expression of covenant. Rather than teaching particular beliefs, we teach with our behavior. The children see us showing up week after week, and they test our reliability. Can we be counted on? What happens when they step outside the limits we've established? Will they find consequences meant to penalize or to maintain right relationship?

In many ways, the world is utterly reliable: the sun rises and sets, seasons shift, change is constant, and all things eventually pass away. Day to day, though, we might wish its reliability showed up differently. We can recognize that humans are made up of a mix of passions, flaws, nobility, striving, and absurdity, but that may or may not get

us through our disappointment, betrayal, fear, or heartbreak. We need each other to help make sense of our experiences and test what we've learned.

Most people want guarantees that harm will pass us by, but that's not something we can promise each other. In an anxious and dangerous world, covenant becomes a touchstone not of safety, but of trust. Despite our predictable shortcomings, the very process of promise-making strengthens us.

As members of a covenantal tradition, we UUs don't make promises primarily to one other but to the gathered congregation. Not to the you and the me, but to the us—and to that which lies beyond us. For a sacred community to remain vital, it must maintain a connection to Source, the spark of life that enlivens everything. And as part of honoring that divine spark, we in turn honor the particular forms in which the divine spark shows up—in other words, the you and the me.

— Hallman Ministerial Intern

Lindasusan Ulrich with this month's
theme team: Janne Eller-Isaacs,
Rob Eller-Isaacs, Lisa Friedman,
Danny Givens, Karen Hering,
K.P. Hong, and Ruth Palmer

Worship Theme Resources BOOKS

Blue Colonial by David Roderick
(Copper Canyon Press, 2006)

The Color Purple by Alice Walker
(Washington Square, 1983; Mariner,
2003)

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The Promise by Nicola Davies
(Candlewick, 2014)

MOVIES

Departures (2008)

An Affair to Remember (1957)

Just Words



Ministry is grounded in covenant. It is shaped by many living promises. The ordination vows I spoke almost 19 years ago were a living promise to stand by all that is sacred and true, and to uphold the very best of our liberal religious tradition. I have made a living promise to each congregation I have had the privilege to serve—to walk with them in all joys and sorrows, to work toward a shared vision, to serve the greater community. I make living promises to my colleagues in ministry—to support one another's call, to challenge each other to grow, to use our gifts for a larger purpose. Our promises call us into relationships that have the power to transform us.

This fall marks one such transformation that has grown out of my relationship with you, the amazing people of Unity Church-Unitarian. Two years ago, I came on staff as Unity's Director of Congregational Life. With joy and gratitude, I am honored to enter into a new covenant with you, as your first Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement. My ministry has always been grounded in a commitment to build bridges, whether it be among people in the pews on Sunday morning or among congregations of many faiths in a divided city, like Flint, MI, where I was minister for eight years. I was raised in the Universalist conviction that love calls us to radical welcome and to the work of breaking down the walls that divide us. This new ministry embodies two areas of my deepest calling and invites me into the living promise of strengthening community in all its many forms.

In the years to come, know that I promise to work with you to strengthen the life of our community and to deepen our partnerships beyond our walls. I promise to support Rob and Janne's ministry with you, and the call you made to them 15 years ago. I promise to serve you and the larger vision that you have cast into the world to the best of my ability. Thank you for your trust and for your promise to walk with me in this ministry that we share.

Blessings,
Lisa Friedman

CALL TO MEETING

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Saturday, November 15, 2014 • 10:00 a.m.

Come early for a pancake breakfast beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Unity Church will hold its Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Saturday, November 15, at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary. Childcare will be provided.

At this meeting the Board will:

- Report to the congregation and present the operating budget for 2015
- Ask the congregation to elect three new trustees (bios and photos to follow): Angela Newhouse, Stu Alger, and Mark Foster

Details and an agenda will be mailed to eligible voting members. Eligible voting members include those who have signed the membership book and have made an identifiable pledge and a payment on that pledge during the 2014 fiscal year. The annual report, budget information, trustee nominee bios and photos, and meeting agenda will be mailed to members in early November.

Please join us as we reflect on the work of the congregation. All are welcome!

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Soren Samuel Onan

born one more redeemer

September 14, 2014,

to parents

Mariah Levison and Kyle Onan

Henry Gierke O'Konek

born one more redeemer

September 22, 2014,

to parents

Tiana and Nathan O'Konek

Thanksgiving Gatherings

Thanksgiving is a time for families and friends to gather to celebrate the harvest, cook, and converse! It is also a perfect time to open our hearts and homes to new friends. Over the years, many church families have invited Unity guests to join them at their holiday table and found it to be great fun. Everyone brings a favorite dish to share and the conversation flows naturally.

If you would like to join other Unity members for Thanksgiving, either as a guest or a host, please come to the sign-up table in the Parish Hall after services on November 9 and 16, or contact Anna Newton at newtona@comcast.net or 651-295-1524 (text is OK). Thanksgiving is November 27 and we would like to match hosts and guests by November 20 this year—so get your requests in early!

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

Unity Church-Unitarian
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Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-228-1456
www.unityunitarian.org

NOVEMBER WORSHIP CALENDAR / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Worship Calendar

Sunday worship services are held at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. except where noted. Sermon podcasts and archives are available online at www.unityunitarian.org. Religious Education classes for children and youth are offered during all services.

November 2: *Promises to Keep* — Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs

What do we mean when we say ours is a "covenantal faith?" What is the difference between covenant and creed? Rob and worship associate Brian Newhouse will provide a framework for our month-long consideration of how we make and keep our promises. The service will feature the installation of the Rev. Lisa Friedman as our Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement.

November 9: *The Little Boy* — Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed

I was hiking up a mountain when an excruciating moment set me on the path to social activism. Along the way the challenges taught me some hard lessons, including learning to be thankful for the obstacles I encountered.



Mark Morrison-Reed served for 26 years as co-minister, with his wife Donna, in Rochester, New York, and Toronto. During this time he also served as vice-chair of the UUA Commission on Appraisal and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. As a historian of the African-American presence in UUism, he is author of *Black Pioneers in a White Denomination*, *Darkening the Doorways: Black Trailblazers and Missed Opportunities in Unitarian Universalism*, and *The Selma Awakening: How the Civil Rights Movement Tested and Changed Unitarian Universalism*. He is co-editor of meditation manuals *Been in the Storm So Long* and *Voices from the Margin*. A former president of the Canadian Unitarian Council, he is currently an affiliated faculty member at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago and coordinator of its Sankofa Archive—a collection of materials about the people of color who were Unitarian Universalist.

November 16: *The Land In Between* — Rev. Danny Givens

Covenant making has been a magnanimous practice of commitment, dedication, and a way of life in communities of faith for centuries. With such being true, how do we navigate and sustain ourselves during seasons of broken covenant? This service will begin to unearth the narrative facets of the time many of us spend in the land between a broken covenant and our endeavors toward renewal and reception of a new covenant. Please join worship associate Diane Ross and Ministerial Resident Danny Givens, Jr., as we share our collective truths and personal experiences.

November 23: *Thanksgiving Family Sunday*

Once again the whole church family gathers at the table to sing songs of gratitude and give thanks for the bounty of our lives. Rob and Janne will be joined by worship associate Conner McGill and the Rev. K.P. Hong our Director of Religious Education.

On Family Sundays, children experience the entire worship service together with their families in the Sanctuary. A children's message and activity books related to the stories and sermon help children to engage in the experience of worship. Regular religious education programming does not take place on Family Sundays; however, the nursery is open for children under five years of age.

November 30: *Keepers of the Flame* — Lindasusan Ulrich

How and when do we fulfill our promises? Whether personal, political, or prophetic, the way we follow through on our commitments points to our true beliefs. Hallman Ministerial Intern Lindasusan Ulrich and worship associate Joan Velasquez explore the connection between our loyalties and our actions.

Offering Recipients

November 2: ECHO helps bridge the communications gap for immigrants and refugees around issue of health, safety and civic engagement. Their multi-media materials provide essential information for immigrants and refugees adapting to life as new Americans and new Minnesotans. This offering will help ECHO develop materials on voter rights and education. ECHO was nominated by Unity Church member Ray Wiedmeyer.

November 9: The Summit University Planning Council (SUPC) works to inform and engage residents in Saint Paul's District 8 (the planning district that includes Unity Church). This offering will help the SUPC carry out resident facilitated community conversations about race and equity. Unity Church holds an organizational seat on the council and many members have served as representatives including Ken Green, Pauline Eichten, Martha Tilton, and Ginny Martin.

November 16: Volunteer Transport provides financial assistance to individuals who wish to volunteer for charitable or humanitarian projects but are otherwise unable to afford the expense of travel. Unity Church member, Jane Prince is a member of Volunteer Transport's fundraising committee and a supporter of the organization.

November 23: Unity's Partner Church Ministry Team uses this annual offering to subsidize travel expenses for church members and members of our partner church community in Homorodszentpeter, Transylvania, so that our relationships continue to grow. Offerings in past years have helped build a doctor's office and a community room and have purchased a van for the village.

November 30: Sharing Korner Food Shelf has provided emergency food, advocacy and referral services to Frogtown residents for 25 years. Unity's Children's Garden supplies fresh produce during the summer but in the winter the shelves become depleted. This donation will help purchase produce and staples. Unity Church member Denise Desjarlais serves on the Sharing Korner board.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

Looking Back... Looking Forward

From Terry Linskey, Trustee, terrylinskey@gmail.com



In a few weeks, I will complete my three-year term as a trustee. When I accepted the nomination to be a member of the board, I was honored, humbled, and excited. Three years later, I am still honored and humbled, and now a little sad that my term is coming to an end. I have had a wonderful experience serving as a

trustee—better than I could have ever imagined. I was a board member during a time of great change with the renovation of the building and development of new Ends Statements—both projects that gave me greater appreciation for the history of Unity Church, the dedication of the Executive Team and staff, and the commitment and enthusiasm of the congregation.

In a few weeks, a new slate of trustees will be presented to members of Unity Church to begin their three-year terms. Along with the other six trustees, they will focus on (among other things) the implementation of the new Ends Statements that were developed in response to input and feedback from the church community based on the question, “What should the work of the church be for the next five years?” Much of the data for this evaluation comes from the Congregational Survey that was completed last spring.

Unity Consulting’s Laura Park and church member Bill Etter have put in a tremendous amount of work analyzing this data and have prepared a report for review by the Executive Team and congregation.

One opportunity for you to hear more is during the Wellspring Wednesday program (October 22 and 29), *The Spiritual Practice of Data*. Yes, you read that right—understanding data can be a spiritual practice! Bill and Laura are wonderful presenters who really know how to take complicated and detailed data and turn it into valuable insights.

During this program, the presenters will share how you and other Unity Church members and friends assessed the health and spiritual vitality of our church. Bill and Laura will also discuss the information we gained from the new survey sections on spiritual maturity and how the data obtained from the survey can be transformed into actual church programming.

I invite you to join Bill, Laura, trustee Deborah Carter McCoy, and me during Wellspring Wednesday on October 29. You can also view the results online at <http://bit.ly/2014ucusurveyresults>.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving you as a trustee. It has brought me joy and gratification, and I am grateful to have worked with so many of you in making our beloved church a better place now and in the future.

2014 Congregational Survey Results

From Laura Park, Managing Director, Unity Consulting*

In May 2014, 343 people (significantly more than in the last two years) completed the congregational survey, answering questions about the extent to which they saw the Ends being true for our church and about their own sense of spiritual growth and maturity. The survey results document found online at <http://bit.ly/2014ucusurveyresults> summarizes what we discovered about our congregation. Some of the most interesting findings:

- In general, respondents see us doing well on our Ends (see slide 5). This year’s measurements—as the first for our new Ends—establish benchmarks against which measurements in future years can be compared. And, as has been true in the past, *Within* performance is seen as better than *Among* performance which in turn is seen as better than *Beyond* Performance.
- Net loyalty to the church has increased (see slide 7).
- Results on the spiritual maturity portion of the survey encourage us to develop our ability as a congregation to actively integrate spirituality into our lives (see slide 11). In particular, we could focus on (see slide 19):
 - actively practicing our spiritual or religious faith.
 - acting in a spiritual manner.
 - acting in a religious manner.
- “Being able to ask for and accept forgiveness” and “having a clear purpose to one’s life that can be articulated to others” are characteristics that seem to differentiate those with particularly high levels of self-reported spiritual maturity from others (see slide 22).
- People found pilgrimages to be particularly helpful in developing spiritual maturity (see slides 23 and 24).
- Gender and age differences are not large in assessing the Ends, but there are important differences in the spiritual maturity portion of the survey (see slides 26 and 27). Females and older people (over 35) tended to provide higher evaluations on both the Ends statements and the Spiritual Maturity statements. We appreciate the higher participation from men in this year’s survey.

These results were presented at two Wellspring Wednesday sessions in October—our thanks to all who attended. As you review the survey information and results, ask yourself how these results change how you think about Unity Church in the world. Any board member would greatly value hearing your reflections on that question. Find our board members and their contact information on our website at <http://www.unityunitarian.org/board-of-trustees.html>. If you have questions about the structure and content of the congregational survey, please contact Bill Etter at better61@gmail.com.

*Unity Consulting is a wholly owned subsidiary of Unity Church bringing our ministry of governance out to the larger world.

Covenant and Anti-racism Work

From Unity's Anti-Racism Leadership Team

It has been 12 years since the congregation commissioned the Anti-Racism Leadership Team (ARLT) to help lead Unity Church to becoming an actively anti-racist institution. In that time, 31 Unity members have served on the team. This month, the Board of Trustees will appoint two new members to fill open positions on the team.

Over the course of those years, we have had some emotional discussions where feelings were hurt or misunderstandings occurred. Early on, the team acknowledged that this was challenging work. We needed to spell out our shared commitment to the values, goals, and process, so we developed team covenants to help guide and support us in our work together.

We said, racism is a difficult and emotion-filled issue. We said, each of us has to be honest, open and willing to look at our part and share what we understand. We said, we all have something to learn and something to teach. We said, alone we can only do so much, but together we can help to build the world we dream about.

One of the songs we have used as an opening reading at our meetings is based on a quote from Rumi, the 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, theologian, and Sufi mystic:

*Come, come, whoever you are. Wanderer, worshiper,
lover of leaving. It doesn't matter. Ours is not a caravan
of despair. Come, even if you have broken your vows a
thousand times. Come, yet again, come, come.*

We are not perfect, we don't have all the answers, we have made mistakes over the years. But we have made a covenant with each other to show up and do the work. And over the past 12 years, we have seen the beginning of a movement toward becoming actively anti-racist, within Unity Church as an institution and as individual congregational members. We look forward to continuing this work with you.

2014-15 Hallman Ministerial Intern

Lindasusan Ulrich



When Emily and I first talked about getting married—long before the legal option was available to same-sex couples in any state, much less 35 of them—I wanted an affirmative reason why we should take that step. I needed to know it was about more than a sense of plodding along a path labeled What Couples Do Next. Before making such a commitment, I needed to be able to give a mindful, intentional “Yes!” and not just a “Sure—why not?” (If I'd fallen in love with a different-sex partner, I would have required the same conversation.)

I've never made promises lightly. Any time I have to renege, however necessary or innocent the reason, it anguishes me. Even when I head out the door and my son RJ asks me if he'll see me later, I choose my words carefully: “It's always my plan to come back to you.” If something should happen to me while I'm gone, at least I won't have broken my word to him.

The big promises I make are ultimately built out of the small actions that create day-to-day life. If I'm going to live up to my commitments as a parent, then I'll teach RJ to brush his teeth every night. If I'm fulfilling my promise to be a loving partner, then I'll help Emily carry the groceries in from the car. If I want to call myself a good friend, then I'll listen with empathy when someone asks to tell me about a hard day.

And if I'm in covenant with other Unitarian Universalists, then I'll show up, carry a portion of the collective pain, enter into the shared joy of celebration, bear witness to injustice, extend compassion when I want to growl, ask forgiveness when I'm the one who has fallen short, and trust that together we're building a container where the holy can live and breathe.

Please feel free to contact me at lindasusan@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x129.

Meditation: The Generosity of Mindful Presence

A Workshop on Meditation and Mindfulness at Unity Church-Unitarian

Saturday, November 22 • 9:00 a.m.-Noon • Ames Chapel

Sponsored by the Unity Church-Unitarian Sangha and presenter Ken Ford

We have one time to be awake to what this life offers. We have one place to offer the generosity of an open and welcoming response to what arises on our way. The time is each precious moment and the place is wherever we are. Meditation is a path by which we can learn to turn from our tendency to rehash past moments and worry about what the moments ahead will bring, to a clear presence with what is immediately before us.

This workshop will provide basic training in silent meditation, exploration of the place of meditation as an anchor for our spiritual life, and consideration of the practical possibilities for meditation in our daily lives.

A \$20 donation is suggested. Please register by email to Rev. Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org and contact Ken Ford with any questions at 612-701-0841 or kenfaure@gmail.com.

The Unity Church Sangha meets Tuesdays, from 5:30-6:30 p.m., in the Ames Chapel for meditation in the Zen Buddhist tradition.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



Welcome Words

What does it mean to promise to support each other's spiritual growth? Sometimes it means opening a conversation—what struck you about worship today? What did you explore in religious education class? How do you find and keep your balance? How does it go with your spirit? Sometimes it means showing up—at a hospital bedside, at a rally or the state house, at choir practice or a team meeting. Sometimes it means marking sacred times together, to remind each other of the places and moments when the holy and the good appear in our lives. This is the covenant of religious community: to walk together into the mystery and to make real the promise that no one need walk alone.

Rev. Lisa Friedman

Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement

Pathway to Membership Classes

Sign up at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x 107. Lisa is also happy to meet with you personally to answer questions and to welcome you into the congregation. Childcare is available by request at least one week in advance.

Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

Sunday, November 16: 5:45–7:00 p.m. ~also offered ~

Sunday, December 14: 12:15–1:30 p.m.

If you have been visiting and would like to find out more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation, we invite you to join us for a *Welcome to Unity* class.

Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Exploration

Three Tuesdays, January 13, 20, and 27: 6:30–8:30 p.m.

(light dinner provided each night) ~also offered ~

Saturday, March 7: 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

(includes potluck lunch)

In this class, we will have an opportunity to share part of our religious journey, to take a more in depth look at the history of Unity Church, to discuss the expectations and benefits of membership, and get to know the programs and ministries of the congregation.

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

Wednesday, January 21: 7:15–8:30 p.m. ~also offered ~

Wednesday, April 8: 7:15 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's needs meet the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class will conclude with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church!

Ongoing Groups at Unity Church

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

A New Look at the Bible: Second Thursday of the month (November 13) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

Afterthoughts: This group meets after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (November 20) from Noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Evergreen Quilters: Second Tuesday of the month (November 11) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (November 22) from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760

Living With Grief Group: A group for people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (November 18) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, November 3 and 17, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

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

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month (October 14) from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne at jack.hawthorne@comcast.net.

November 11: *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey* by Candice Millard

December 9: *The Language of Flowers* by Vanessa Diffenbaugh

January 13: *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity* by Katherine Boo

Unity Bridge Club: Friday, November 7, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209.

Women's Retirement Group: Second and Fourth Thursday of the month (November 13 / No meeting on Thanksgiving) from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Leah Doherty at doher001@umn.edu

Young Adult Group: Potluck supper in the Center Room on the fourth Tuesday of each month (November 25) at 6:30 p.m. Contact: Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org

Zen Meditation: Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. Contact Ken Ford at kford5@comcast.net

The Black Friday team needs to hear from you!



Black Friday at Church

Feeding the Spirit on the Feast Day of Consumption

The Promise of Shared Renewal

Friday, November 28 • 10:00 a.m. • Sanctuary

Guest speaker: Leslie Pitt Schneider • Musical guest: Light of the Moon

Marketers call the Friday after Thanksgiving “Black Friday” because it is often the day that retailers first “go into the black” for the year as holiday shopping gets under way.

Unity Church’s seventh annual “Black Friday at Church” celebration offers you an opportunity to launch the holiday season with spiritual renewal, fellowship, and good cheer, an alternative to the habitual consumerism on display in the broader culture.

Join fellow Unity Church members, families, friends, neighbors, and colleagues on the Friday morning after Thanksgiving Day for a joyous, intergenerational worship service. Activities for children and families, as well as child care, will be provided.

This year we welcome guest speaker Leslie Pitt Schneider. Leslie has lived with limb loss since the age of six when she was involved in a traumatic accident which resulted in the amputation of her left leg, above the knee. Challenged, tempered, and inspired by her own limb loss, she has nurtured her focus on healthcare accessibility and become a passionate advocate for people living with limb loss, with a particular interest in helping women and girls retain a positive self image despite their limb differences. Leslie is the Manager for Clinical and Regulatory Affairs for Otto Bock Healthcare and works within the General Counsel’s office, as well as providing lobbying support at both the Federal and State levels. Her community involvement includes serving on the Board of Directors for the Amputee Coalition, Wiggle Your Toes, ACES for Students, the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board, and the Minnesota Timberwolves Fan Advisory Board.

Musical guest, Light of the Moon, performs a wide variety of songs and dance music rooted in the old time string band tradition, as well as dipping into the musical melting pot of traditional music from the American South to serve up blues, gospel, and bluegrass.

The service will feature a Collage of Voices reflecting on its abundance theme, “The Promise of Shared Renewal.” If this theme evokes a response for you, or if it brings to mind a time when you worked with another person to mend something, tell us about it. Please email your thoughts in writing to service planning team member Paul Brazelton at paul@brazelton.net by Monday, November 10.

Do people confide in you?

Take Marital First Responders Training

Saturday, December 13

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. • Foote Room

Unity Church has been the national launching pad for Marital First Responders. It’s a training workshop for people who others open up to about troubles in their marriages and intimate partnerships. Marital First Responders are natural confidants, but they are sometimes unsure about how to be helpful, how to avoid taking sides, and how to steer friends and family members to the right resources.

Marital First Responder Training will help you be more intentional, skilled, and confident when a friend, coworker, or family member confides about relationship struggles. It’s not about being a counselor but being a good friend to a person and a marriage.

The trainer is Bill Doherty, Unity member, University of Minnesota Professor, marriage therapist, and Director of the Minnesota Couples on the Brink Project. He is now spreading this training around the U.S., Great Britain, and Australia.

Training topics will include:

- Listening and empathizing without taking sides
- Offering helpful perspectives on relationships
- Challenging when needed
- Keeping good boundaries
- Helping people find the right kind of help

Our goal is 10% of Unity members trained as Marital First Responders, and we are nearly half way there!

An informal group of trained Marital First Responders at Unity Church meets quarterly, and you will be welcome to join it.

For information and to register, <http://maritalfirstresponders.com/classes>. The fee is \$10 to cover lunch and refreshments.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun. Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., followed by worship at 6:45 p.m., and an evening of rich programming beginning at 7:10 p.m. All are welcome. Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance.

Dinner: The cost for dinner is: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family, and can be paid by cash or check. (Children under the age of 24 months are free.) Reservations for dinner are not required. Financial assistance is available to cover the cost of dinners; contact Lisa Friedman by e-mail at lisa@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x107.

NOVEMBER 5

Steadfast Witness with Daoud Nassar and the Tent of Nations

Daoud Nassar is a Palestinian Christian farmer whose family works its 100-acre farm and orchard just outside the town of Bethlehem. It is on this farm that the family members strive to maintain a haven of peace and brotherhood/sisterhood through activities at the Tent of Nations.

Tent of Nations is a dynamic peace and local education center established by the Nassar family in 2000. International visitors, including many Israelis, join together to plant trees, harvest olives and fruit, teach at the Women's Education Center, lead activities in youth summer camps, and come together in solidarity and shared goals in the pursuit of a just peace through non-violent activities. In the last seven years, Daoud has traveled to the U.S. on 13 occasions, and spoken at nearly 350 sites in cities and universities. His message is a call to both justice and reconciliation.

Minnesota Mental Health Reform Part I: Finding Engla Schey - Catalyst for Change with Susan Bartlett Foote

In 1946, the Minnesota Unitarian Conference voted to study the need for change in the seven mental asylums in the state. The history leading up to that critical decision and the role the Unitarians played to turn around Governor Youngdahl, support successful legislative and administrative reforms, and educate the public about mental health issues is a fascinating study in effective social change. Susan Bartlett Foote is a member of Unity Church, trained in history and law, and Professor Emerita in Health Policy, University of Minnesota. She has a forthcoming article in *Minnesota History* (journal of Minnesota History Society) and is working on a book on this issue.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Gentle Meditative Yoga with Elen Bahr

This class truly is for every body. Come as you are and experience non-judgmental, non-competitive, lovely yoga. Youth ages 10 and up are welcome to come with an adult family member. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat, towel and water bottle. A few mats will be available for loan. Elen Bahr is a 200-hour RYT certified yoga instructor. You can find out more about Elen at EveryYogi.com or EveryYogi on Facebook.

New Family Orientation with Rev. K.P. Hong ***Overstuffed: Seven Weeks to More Joy and Less Stuff*** (Pre-registration required)

Everyday Enjoyable Parenting (Pre-registration required)

Tween Group: "Spirits, Stories, Faith, and Me"

Saint Paul Performance Project

NOVEMBER 12

Can a Picture Paint a Thousand Words? with Sandra Brick and Fred Amram, November Parish Hall Artists

Sandra will discuss how she uses the language of textiles to translate literary art to visual art, playing with the cliché, "Can a picture paint a thousand words?" The words belong to her husband Fred who explores his experiences as a Jew in Nazi Germany and his adaptation to a new culture in the United States as an outsider. Fred will read from his work and discuss how he translates his experiences and feelings into literature. With slides and stories Sandra and Fred will, together, explore how they discover each other by working as a team.

Minnesota Mental Health Reform Part II: Arthur Foote, Unity Church and Minnesota Unitarians and Their Successful Strategy for Mental Health Reform with Susan Bartlett Foote (See November 5 description)

Covenant: The Promises We Make, Break, and Renew **Open Page Writing Session with Rev. Karen Hering** **Free; RSVP required to karen@unityunitarian.org**

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, Open Page writing participants use stories, poetry, and images to reflect on the month's theme in their own words.

We "become human beings by making commitments, by making promises," said James Luther Adams. Quoting fellow theologian Martin Buber, he called humans the "promise-making, promise-keeping, promise-breaking, promise-renewing creature." What does our capacity for promise-making and covenant mean and how does it shape our human identity, our communities of faith and our role in creating new realities in the world?

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Gentle Meditative Yoga **Everyday Enjoyable Parenting** (Pre-registration required)

Tween Group: "Spirits, Stories, Faith, and Me"

Saint Paul Performance Project

NOVEMBER 19

A Mighty Voice! Melanie DeMore

Join vocal activist Melanie DeMore and One Voice Mixed Chorus for an evening of inspiration, music-making, and sing-along spirituals. Melanie is a Grammy-nominated singer and activist from Oakland, CA. One Voice is the Minnesota's LGBTQA chorus and Unity's resident community chorus! Together they are performing a powerful and inspiring program including music from One Voice's upcoming concert "Eat, Drink & Be Married" as well as stick-pounding from the Gullah South Sea Islands. All ages are welcome!

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Gentle Meditative Yoga

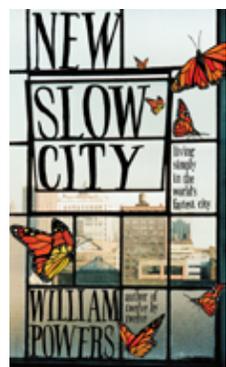
Tween Group: "Spirits, Stories, Faith, and Me"

Saint Paul Performance Project

The Simpler Life, North and South of the Equator

A Book Talk with Writer Bill Powers

Sunday, November 2 • 10:00-11:00 a.m. • Unity Church



Best-selling author (and friend of Unity Church) William Powers talks about the challenges of our total work culture and the quest to find joy and calm in an ever-growing and ever-urbanizing world.

Also author of books on Liberia and Bolivia, Powers will lead a lively discussion based on personal strategies and real-life experience from his time in Latin America, West Africa, and the heart of New York City.

Free and open to the public! Sponsored by Unity's Mano a Mano Outreach Team and Sustainable Agriculture Group.

Make Winter Warmer for Those Seeking Second Chances

From the Racial and Restorative Justice Team

Men and women released from prison face huge challenges on their way to rejoining society. Challenges start with finding a bed and enough to eat on the first day out—nothing compared to finding an employer and/or a landlord who will hire or rent to an ex-offender. Doing either is difficult without transportation, especially during the winter, and who would want to apply for a job or an apartment without the basics for personal grooming?

These little things mean a lot to those trying to make good after doing their time. That's why Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice Team asks you to help provide the following items for its community partner, Amicus, who assists those leaving prison in a time of need:

- Hygiene items such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, body lotion, deodorant, and shaving cream (all items should be unopened)
- New gloves, hats, scarves, and socks suitable for the job site
- Hand and foot warmers
- Bus passes or the cash to buy bus passes

The Racial and Restorative Justice Team will collect these items starting on the second Sunday in November and continuing through January. On Sundays, please bring donations to the Racial and Restorative Justice table in the Parish Hall. Donations delivered during the week should be brought to Lisa Friedman's office.

November Parish Hall Artists

Fred Amram

When I write, I manipulate words in order to explore ideas, to evoke feeling and to "paint" mental pictures. I'm successful when the reader is moved to joy or tears, enlightenment or confusion, or to join me in a struggle for meaning—when the reader's heart beats a little faster. My website, designed by Sandra, provides an opportunity to read some of my published works.

In this exhibit, Sandra "translates" some of my stories about life in Nazi Germany and about adapting to a new country and culture. She translates from the written word to the visual image. We worked as a team, often envying the others talent with a medium not our own. We did not always agree thus learning a great deal about communication—verbal and visual.

This exhibition is about real events in my life and about real pain—often pain long repressed and drawn out by Sandra. However, I do not intend this collection to be a personal catharsis or a "poor me" solicitation for sympathy. I write these stories, and Sandra translates them, so that we can help build a world that welcomes diversity, a world with utmost inclusion, a world without genocide.

Sandra Brick

As a textile artist I dye and manipulate fabric to explore color, space and texture. Traditionally my work is abstract, often technically experimental. Occasionally I use art to communicate a concept. This collection sets a new direction for me. I use the language of textiles to translate literary art to visual art. I'm playing with the cliché, "A picture can paint a thousand words."

In this exhibit, the words belong to my husband Fred Amram who, in these story excerpts, explores his experiences as a Jew in Nazi Germany and his adapting to a new language and a new culture in the United States.

While working with Fred, through questions and discussion, I learned more about his history and how he feels about those memories. My questions forced Fred to rediscover the details of his experiences and to remember the colors, shapes, and textures of his youth. In the collaborating process, Fred pushed me to dare, to risk, to see new possibilities—new ways to express.

These creations are just the beginning. Our shared goal is to sharpen the viewer's awareness of racism. We hope to make our contribution to a world without genocide.

Thank you for your 2015 pledges to Unity Church!

If you haven't yet pledged, PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO RESPOND TODAY! Our 2015 operating and capital budgets will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting on November 15.

Pledging is easy!

Online pledging and forms for download are available at www.unityunitarian.org.

We hope to hear from you. **Thank you!**



Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer Director of Music Ministry



... there is a field. I'll meet you there. — Rumi
Like the field of which Rumi writes, covenant is a living thing. It is the air we breathe into the promises we make. It is the act of choosing to meet one another, again and again, as equals and as allies living out our values.
— Lindasusan Ulrich

Well now, this is unusual. Yes, I deliberately borrowed these quotes from Lindasusan's cover article! Why? Because the minute the theme topic of "covenant" was listed, I thought immediately of our choirs. Each choir is in covenant with its membership and, as a group, with this congregation.

It is an astonishing dynamic that joins together so many complex lives in order to offer a singular entity. As you, the congregation, listen to one piece of choral music, it may also be interesting to realize these sounds are an act of covenant. Each individual comes to their choral community with that promise to contribute their individual best in order to find the greater realization that the whole offers to each one within, among and beyond. Every individual step and effort is of equal importance. We are in relationship with each other to experience, contribute, create and share something of value, something that contributes to the whole.

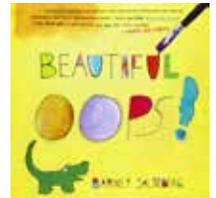
I am continually amazed at the individual life scenarios that our members live and work through in order to be part of these groups: parents with children of all ages working out childcare and activity coordination, professionals with work-related trips, family obligations, the delight of grandchildren and opportunities to visit, just plain life details. Yet somehow, and always with great integrity, each member finds a way to incorporate the active promise of this covenantal gathering into their lives.

It is the voice of many lives that sings to you when each choir stands before you. It is the demonstration of covenant in action. The "field" we meet in is a piece of music and the working together that enables its presentation. It is community. It is our love of each other and the deep sharing of values felt as a result of covenant.

What's New in the Library and Bookstall!

From Louise Merriam, Library and Bookstall Team

Every month, the Library and Bookstall Team review the worship resources that support the month's theme to identify items that should be purchased, either for the libraries or to sell in the Bookstall. Last month, for example, the Anderson Adult Library acquired *The Longing for Home* by Frederick Buechner to support the worship theme of Longing. To support the March theme of Brokenness, the Whitman Children's Library purchased *Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Stutzburg.



In many instances, the library already has some or all of the worship resources listed in *commUNITY*. The Anderson Adult Library has had the May worship theme title, *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl since March of 2011, supporting that month's theme of Hope.

Checking the worship theme resources is just one of the ways that the Library and Bookstall Team identifies titles to purchase. We also look at the catalogs of publishers such as Skinner House, the Unitarian Universalist Association and Beacon Press. We review suggestions from library users. We receive donations from members. We look at other church libraries in our denomination. And sometimes, we just buy titles we like on the assumption that other members will like them, too.

To see if the libraries own what you're looking for, visit the online catalog at www.librarything.com/catalog/UnityChurch. Enter the title or author in the Search This Library box and find out about the wonderful resources available to adults and children.

Peter Mayer CD Release Concert

Saturday, November 22 • 7:30 p.m.
Unity Church—Unitarian

Tickets: \$24.00

www.brownbagtickets.com

This concert is general admission seating and doors open at 6:45 p.m.



Music Ministry

Mark your calendar!

Saturday, December 20

Carol Sing (6:30)

Holiday Concert (7:00)

Dessert Buffet (8:00)

Children's Choir, Women's Ensemble,
Unity Choir, Unity Singers

December 21

10:00 - 11:00

Pageant Choir Rehearsal (Children's
and Adult's)

Sunday, December 14 and 21

12:15-1:15 p.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Choir
(10:00 p.m. service)

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

We Need Each Other

From Drew Danielson, Coordinator of Youth and Campus Ministries



As parents, teachers, counselors, and other caring adults, we talk to our kids quite a bit. We tell them what we believe, how to act, what we think is right.

We talk a lot.

And they hear us. They remember the main parts and repeat what we have said. I'm amazed how my son, who looks to be totally absorbed in something a million miles away from my lecturing, can, when I stop and bark "What did I just say?" repeat what I'd been saying verbatim. Which doesn't mean he was thoughtfully engaged with any of it.

I've seen this often as a teacher, how they know all the key words to answer, "How are we going to work together, how will we conduct ourselves for the best possible results?"

"Team work."

"Cooperation."

Yes. Right. So I ask them to tell me what that means, and with no hesitancy they respond, "Respect, fairness, be open, include others, cooperate."

When pressed, they start to repeat themselves as they run out of the words they have heard us use countless times, words they know are correct, and words they may even believe in. As do we—but do we know how to put these ideals into meaningful action in our lives?

In Coming of Age (COA) we begin the year introducing the idea of—and need for—a covenant that will guide the group. I like to remind them COA is the best thing we do at Unity Church because the entire church community is committed to nurturing, supporting, and informing this process which is designed to prepare them to Come of Age as spiritual adults. Dang, that sounds great!

We tell them they have to build the covenant they, the leaders, the mentors

and others involved with the class will live by throughout the year. They have heard the word, they get that it is a contract, a promise, guidelines for how they will act and how they will show their commitment. That sounds right. But then it happens again—

"Teamwork."

"Cooperation."

"Respect."

They have to unlearn the buzzwords so they can delve into it. What is cooperation and how does that fit what you need from this class? How will respect serve you as you write that speech you have to deliver next April? More important, what do you need from this community? What can these peers and leaders ask of you, and what commitments can you absolutely hold to? Why?

I am happy to report that the agers did a fine job, after spitting out those terms we've hammered them with, of defining a set of expectations. They got specific about what they wanted and what they want to give. Then, as often happens, they were able to come back around to a few simple, meaningful words that now mean something to them:

We will share, we will listen, we will learn.

They took that deceptively simple promise to the opening retreat, and presented it to their mentors. Together they discussed what these words mean, and how they would be lived out in class, in the mentor/mentee relationship, and in the development of a personal credo. The pairs brought their ideas and directives back to the entire group, and at the end of each set of promises the group responded, "We will share, we will listen, we will learn." I believe they have a sense of how this covenant will serve them and enrich their entire COA experience.

KP and I have gotten smarter this year by realizing the High School Tower Club can also really flourish if the youth

feel and embrace a covenant as part of their involvement. We and they have talked about "needing each other" and being committed to being, growing, and working together. Which face it, makes hanging at church a lot more compelling than just coming to play ping-pong or to delve into social issues.

My work is made richer when in covenant with other staff members, church members, community members, and now—gratefully—our youth too.

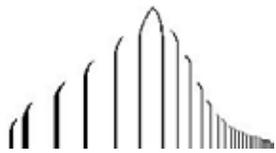


Unity's 2015 Children's Musical is coming!

For the past 25 years, talented members of the Unity Church community have come together each year to write, compose, direct, choreograph, and perform a unique show for Unity Church. Participating in the Unity Children's Musical has been a rite of passage and transformative experience for many of our young people. If you have a 6th, 7th or 8th grader, consider whether this creative, fun, teambuilding experience might be right for them.

To find out more, come to **one** of the parent informational meetings which will be held on Sunday, November 16, and Sunday, December 14. Both meetings will be held from 10:15-11:00 a.m. (room to be announced later). Auditions and parent meeting for this year's musical are Sunday, January 4, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Performance dates will be February 26, 27, and 28, 2015.

Questions? Contact co-producers Kim Klose at klose001@msn.com or Dave Smith at dave.smith52@yahoo.com.



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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Food Collection for



SHARING KORNER

Unity's Evergreen Quilters coordinate an on-going food drive for the Sharing Korner food shelf. Collection baskets are stationed in the main lobby and by the Holly Avenue doors. Do you ever wonder what kinds of food donations are most popular and most needed? Here is Sharing Korner's most recent top 10 list. Thank you for your generosity!

Top 10 Needed Food Donations

- Small jars of jelly
- Small jars of mayonnaise
- Bar (bath) soap
- Diced tomatoes
- Canned small potatoes
- Hamburger Helper
- Canned Fruit
- Salt
- Pepper
- Soup (chicken noodle/tomato)

The Samuel Morgan Forum and Beloved Conversations presents

Step by Step: The Selma Awakening

Saturday, November 8 • 9:00 a.m. -Noon • Unity Church

This coming March will mark the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday and the march from Selma to Montgomery—a turning point in the Civil Rights movement and the struggle for the right to vote. With voting rights once again under attack in many states and with racialized mass incarceration continuing to undermine communities of color, the time is right to recover the story of Selma and in particular of Unitarian Universalism's response to Dr. King's call. The Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed is the preeminent scholar of race and racism within the Unitarian Universalist movement. His newly published book, *The Selma Awakening*, is a deeply moving, troubling, and inspiring glimpse into one of the defining moments of the 20th century for us and for the nation.



This forum will feature a lecture by Dr. Morrison-Reed, small group conversations about how the Selma story informs and invigorates present day anti-racist activism, and a presentation on the possibility of a Beloved Conversations pilgrimage to Birmingham and Selma to join Unitarian Universalists, and many others from across the nation, on the anniversary weekend. Please plan to be with us. Child care requests are due by November 1 to michelle@unityunitarian.org.

This Beloved Conversation is sponsored in part by Unity's Library and Bookstall Team.