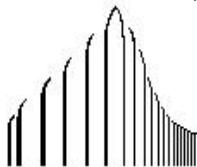


commUNITY



The mission of Unity Church
is to engage people
in a free and inclusive
religious community
that encourages lives of
integrity, service and joy.

Vol. 36, No. 3

Unity Church–Unitarian

November 2012

Gratitude

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. The November theme is Gratitude.

When I was a kid, one of the stores in my hometown put a bright sticker on every cash register. The stickers faced the cashiers and had capital letters that said "TYFSAK." The word might sound like something from Dr. Seuss, but it was really an acronym, one made up to remind clerks to tell each customer "Thank You For Shopping At Kmart."

It's hard to imagine a less spontaneous, less spiritual approach to gratitude. And yet, even those of us seeking a more organic gratitude, one not enforced by an employee handbook, may find that thankfulness does not always come without some kind of prompting. We may need reminders, in the form of a national holiday such as Thanksgiving, or church rituals, or personal spiritual practices.

How do we learn gratitude? For some, lack or absence can be a powerful teacher. Before the days of widespread refrigeration, the taste of a fresh orange at Christmas was a miracle. And would Minnesotans be as grateful for spring if we had not survived January? We might think of the story of the life-long prisoner who knows his bare feet will never again brush a blade of grass, and feel gratitude for what we do have. Or we ourselves might go without something for so long that when it finally arrives – a job, a partner, a cure – the gratitude washes over us without any summoning at all.

Sometimes, though, a lack or loss can be only that, and there can be no way to "should" ourselves into gratitude. Asking someone to be grateful for

depression or grief or a fatal diagnosis is a road to a kind of theological hell. For gratitude to be real, it must come about honestly, not from shame or a sticker on a cash register.

When bad things do happen, we might be able to live with rage or betrayal for a time before the pain can be salved in some way by some blessing. What we are grateful for in hard times helps the music of the universe ring out. But moving too quickly toward gratitude as a means to get away from grief is like a silver maple that grows fast but isn't strong. Such gratitude may lack the spiritual integrity we need when the wind kicks up again.

And people do find ways to be grateful for things for which they would never ask. Kevin Kling, in his marvelous talk at last month's church gala, spoke movingly about his disabilities, the many bonds he has formed with other disabled people, and his long road to reach the point where he wouldn't wish his disability away. Kevin exuded gratitude for the very fact of life.

Gratitude can be a presence of truth that takes us beyond the angst of the moment, and there are many ways to find it at the level of the everyday and ordinary. No blessing may be too small to be praised. Pablo Neruda has a poem called "Ode to My Socks," and we might dash off our own mental odes to this day, to the toilet that isn't broken, to eyes that open and see. Appreciating as much as we can – even the tiny, tiny things – can lead to a persistent state of gratitude.

And in this often-dreary month, this month of elections of great import, we may find ourselves grateful for the longer arc of humanity, for the other generations and connections to the past. These remind us that we in this time are not alone, that there were exemplars and ordinary people who struggled through. For many of them, and many of us, gratitude is a matter of faith – that if you have faith, you will connect with God and creation and mystery, and you will find much for which to give thanks.

— Jim Foti on behalf of this month's cover article theme team:

Janne Eller-Isaacs, Kerri Meyer,
Lisa Friedman, Mae Gibson Wall,
Rob Eller-Isaacs, and Ruth Palmer

Gratitude Resources

BOOKS

Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer: An Approach to Life in Fullness, by David Steindl-Rast. A monk reflects on living spiritually with the basic attitude of gratefulness.

The Grateful Heart: Daily Blessings for the Evening Meal from the Buddha to the Beatles, M.J. Ryan, editor. This book contains 365 readings for pausing in gratitude.

FILMS

Babette's Feast. This 1987 Danish drama tells the story of a French woman whose gratitude leads her to create the meal of a lifetime.

Pay it Forward. This 2000 family film shows the transforming power of gratitude. Appropriate for children age 8 and over.

Just Words

This is an article about gratitude. As I watched the Olympics this summer, which were so dominated by impressive women athletes, my heart filled with gratitude. As I watch the strong women play for the Lynx basketball team, I am filled with gratitude for those people who supported women athletes and pushed for the passage of Title Nine. It didn't used to be this way and I am old enough to remember the world before Title Nine. There weren't many options for a young girl who wanted to be involved in sports. Every resource went to the boys who "were more serious and capable." We watched as they got the coaching and the equipment. We were usually an afterthought. It made me mad as I watched those "stupid boys" waste the precious resources with such nonchalance.

For one year out of my life it wasn't that way. When I was in sixth grade the elementary school I attended hired a new physical education teacher. His name was Mr. Tchakalian. He thought athletic instruction was wasted on boys who were too preoccupied by their changing bodies. He focused on training a group of girls to play volleyball. In California it was possible to play outside all year long and we did. We worked and we worked until we honed our skills. We ran. We grew in strength, confidence and ability. I know I practiced almost every night throwing a volleyball against the roof. It's true that he ignored the boys more than he should have, but he encouraged a group of girls to push themselves and excel. I got into a lot of trouble that year, but I had one safe place and that was the volleyball court. He taught us sportsmanship. He taught us about team work. He taught us about the agony of defeat and the exhilaration of triumph. He showed us that sports can offer an opportunity to bridge differences of class and race. We were so different from one another, but we were joined in our efforts to be our best. We trained together encouraging one another.

I left sixth grade determined to become a volleyball player. But of course when I entered junior high there was nothing for girls. Back to the status quo. I pursued other interests, but I wonder what my life would be like if there had been more opportunities available to me and the other girls.

So, it may seem strange to focus on Title Nine as we move into the season of gratitude, but without it so many girls would not have found the opportunities they have found in subsequent generations. What a blessing to those girls who came after who may not even know what Title Nine means. I can still say my thank you because I do know.

— Janne Eller-Isaacs

2012 Thanksgiving Gatherings

Thanksgiving is a time for families and friends to gather to celebrate the harvest and cook and converse! It is also a perfect time to open our hearts and homes to new friends. If you are among those without family nearby and would like to join other Unity Church members for Thanksgiving, or if you have extra space at your table and would like to host a Unity Church guest or two, please come to the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall after services on November 11 and 18, or contact Anna Newton at newtona@comcast.net or 651-483-2986.



The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Elizabeth "Betty" Grace Bloyer
June 11, 1946–October 10, 2012

Endowment Gift Gratefully Received

The Executive Team is pleased to announce that \$500,000 has been placed with the St. Paul Community Foundation to the exclusive benefit of Unity Church. Interest from the fund is designated to support the maintenance of our church facilities.

As we near completion of the restoration and expansion currently underway this generous endowment gift is especially welcome. If you would like to consider a gift to help build the maintenance endowment please contact Executive Director Barbara Hubbard at 651-228-1456 x116 or barbarah@unityunitarian.org.

Daylight Saving Time Ends

Sunday, November 4
2:00 a.m.

Set your clocks back one hour.



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NOVEMBER WORSHIP

Sunday 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.

November 4

Healing the Heart of Democracy

Taking their title from Parker Palmer's latest book, Janne, Rob and worship associate Mary Margaret Zindren will refresh and renew the old New England Election Sunday tradition. What do we need to remember most as we head to the polls? What do Church and State have to say to each other? How do we hold ourselves and each other true to our highest values as we enter in to the most contentious and, perhaps, the most significant election in recent memory.

November 11

From Grief to Gratitude — Rob Eller-Isaacs

"Whatever happens, whatever, we say, and hold hard and let go and go on," writes poet Marge Piercy. We don't know how things will turn out. Both history and faith point toward the realities of human resilience. Rob and worship associate Ray Wiedmeyer will help us recall the Armistice which ended World War One, and provide a time to breathe and heal in the wake of the election.

November 18

Family Sunday: The Feast Laid Out Before Us

The whole church family will come together to celebrate Thanksgiving. Come praise the ordinary, the everyday miracle, the feast we gladly see laid out before us when we finally manage to open our eyes. Grateful for an abundant harvest home we turn toward the holidays with gratitude, humility and bright anticipation.

November 25

The Humble, Grateful Heart – Jim Foti

Sometimes our gratitude flows freely. Other times, it's harder to acknowledge that there are things we cannot give ourselves or do for ourselves. Join Ministerial Intern Jim Foti and worship associate Bailey Webster for stories and reflections on the humility of gratitude and cultivating the humble, grateful, and ultimately joyful heart.

Election Night Vespers

By the People, For the People

Tuesday, November 6 • 8:00-9:00 p.m. • Sanctuary

In these anxious and divisive political times, let us turn to each other for hope and comfort. Please join us after the polls close as we gather together in ritual, song, and prayer. Come to celebrate voters new and old, and to pay homage to our democratic values. Childcare is available. Please direct any questions and/or childcare requests to Mae Gibson Wall at mae@unityunitarian.org.

Offering Recipients

Each Sunday, thirty percent of the offering goes to support the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church and seventy percent is given to the chosen community non-profit recipient. **Please make checks payable to Unity Church.**

November 4: Growth and Justice

Growth and Justice is a non-partisan, non-profit "think tank" focused on Minnesota economic policy, toward a mission of expanding prosperity and equity. It seeks to improve the well-being of low-and middle-income Minnesotans and communities of color. Most of the organization work focuses on prescribing the most effective ways to invest publicly human capital and infrastructure to achieve its goals through education improvements, health care, transportation and public works, a cleaner environment, and tax policy. Unity Church member Dane Smith is president of Growth and Justice.

November 11: ECSE—Birth To Three

Early Childhood Special Education Birth to Three is a program provided through the St. Paul Public Schools. Federal law mandates these services for infants and toddlers who are determined to be eligible due to a delay in play and learning, communication, motor or sensory, social/emotional skills or through a condition known to hinder school success such as prematurity. This offering would allow the Birth to Three teams to provide toys, equipment and supplies to use in delivery of services to low-income families. Unity Church member Donna Blaney Johnson works as a Birth to Three social worker.

November 18: Prior Crossing Youth Housing Project

In the next two years, PORTICO Interfaith Housing Collaborative (previously Plymouth Congregational Neighborhood Foundation) will create and operate a 44-unit supportive housing development at 1949 University Avenue for youth transitioning out of homelessness in Ramsey County. Through a partnership with House of Hope Presbyterian Church, PORTICO, the Wilder Foundation, and other area faith communities, this project will provide young adults with a place to begin healing from past traumas, create community and healthy relationships, and build the skills they need to live stable, independent lives. The Unity Church Affordable Housing Outreach Ministry team is working in collaboration with the community partners in the development of Prior Crossing.

November 25: Artability

The People Incorporated Artability program involves a summer-long series of art and writing workshops, culminating in a three-day show in October as a means of celebrating the creativity of people with mental illness and the contributions they make to society. People Incorporated provides help and support for men and women living in halfway houses and shelters in the Twin Cities. It is recognized by the mental health community for its "firsts" in the delivery of state-of-the-art, one-of-a-kind mental health services. Unity Church member Elias LaVelle nominated Artability.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / ANNUAL PLEDGE DRIVE

On the Way Out

From Craig Allen Trustee

Next month marks the end of my three-year term on the Unity Board of Trustees. Beverly Heydinger and Rob Fulton are "rolling off," too, and—although I can't speak for them—it has been a fast and thrilling three years! I began my term at the very beginning of the planning for the Unity Tomorrow process and am leaving as the newly remodeled building opens. Much happened in the interim—the congregation decided to focus on the current site, architects were hired, requirements were gathered, building plans were presented, consenting votes were taken, capital commitments were gathered, project staff was hired, financing was secured, transition tactics were implemented, and building commenced.

All this happened... but the Board can take credit for only a little of it. The nine of us meet two-to-four hours every month, with occasional committee meetings on the side, and we hardly have the time, let alone the expertise, to play a big part in all this. To be on the Board while this was happening was to have an informed but mostly hands-off perspective. Our limited roles were to ensure whatever plans were developed fit our ends, to incur only prudent financial obligations, to authorize contracts, and, most of all, to inform Unity Church members of the direction and status of the project and to enlist their explicit commitment to it in accordance with our rules of governance. The successful completion of Unity Tomorrow is due mostly to the energy and skills of our Executive Team and staff and the outstanding people they have brought in to see the project through.

Of course the Board has had other work too. In the three years we have facilitated the congregation to a formal stance on the (anti-)marriage amendment, continued to explore the relationship between governance and our anti-racism work, managed a transition on the Executive Team, approved three budgets, and started planning for the next congregational review of Unity's ends statements. Through this long agenda I have been struck both by the honest, trusting, good-faith relationship the Board has with the Executive team and the commitment to proceed mostly out of consensus as decisions are made. Very few were the times when votes were not unanimous and, when they were not, disagreements were always about approach, not goals.

As I leave, I want to encourage anyone who wants a deeper and satisfying relationship with Unity Church to consider serving on the Board and to thank all of you for your shared commitment to Unity that has made it so for me. I hope to serve again in the future.

Our church, our home. Carry It Forward

2013 Unity Church Annual Pledge Drive

From Mary Baremore, Pledge Team

We're off to a great start, after a very successful gala. The company, the food, and the storytelling were outstanding! Thank you to all our volunteers who helped to make the evening so enjoyable!

Pledging is an important part of our life in the church. We pledge ourselves to worship, to the programs and to the operations. The church thrives by healthy pledging and is sustained by our resources. As of this writing, we have pledges from 388 households for a total of \$825,819.

But pledging is more than just committing financial resources. We covenant with one another to provide for our present life in the church, for our future and for the future of our children and grandchildren. Pledging is a promise. It is what binds us to each other. It builds our community. We commit this holy act together.

Pledge forms are available online at www.unityunitarian.org or by contacting Song Thao at song@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x115.

Please give generously.

"We have a future yet unseen, but so full of promise."

Call to Meeting Annual Meeting of the Congregation Saturday, November 17, 2012

10:00 a.m.

Unity Church will hold its Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Saturday, November 17, 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 2013
- ask the congregation to elect three new trustees

All annual meeting information including the annual report, budget information, trustee nominee bios and photos, and meeting agenda will be available online at www.unityunitarian.org.

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

2013 Budget Information Meeting Sunday, November 4, after the 11:00 a.m. service.

MINISTERIAL INTERNS

Mae Gibson Wall

2012-13 Hallman Ministerial Intern



I grew up unchurched, so when I first joined a church as an adult I had little idea what was expected of me. I thought that joining a committee was optional, something to do if I had the time and the inclination. Similarly, I thought that giving financially was optional, assuming that people gave when they had extra money.

But as it turns out, it is my responsibility to join a committee, and it is also my responsibility to give financially, because I am a steward of the church and the church is a vital part of my life. It is not something on the fringes of my life; it is at the heart of my life. It is not something to give to when and if I happen to have extra time or extra money; it is something to plan my schedule and my spending around.

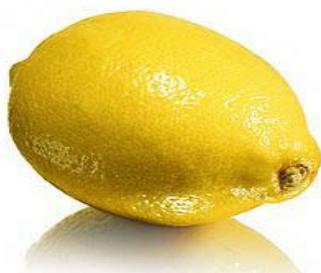
As I see it, our Unitarian Universalist church is not optional in these times of deep spiritual need. How about you? Is this church optional for you? If it is not, then it is on your shoulders to nurture and grow this church the way it nurtures and grows you. It can only sustain us if we sustain it.

I believe this is just as it should be. Whatever anyone believes the Divine to be, surely it does not feed and sustain us in one direction only. Surely, for our relationship with the Divine to be deep and true and valid, we must give back. And while church itself is not the Divine, it is where many of us come to seek and commune with the Divine. Church is the mountain we build together so that we have something to support us when we reach up our fingertips and try to get as close as possible to the wonder that is bigger than all of us.

How glorious is this responsibility, and how glorious are the effects of your efforts to support this church. If you look around at all that you have built together here, you will see that what those efforts can create is nothing short of magic.

May we each and every one of us continue this vital work with a spirit of joyful generosity, and may we give thanks for this magical, life-sustaining place.

Mae Gibson Wall can be reached by email at mae@unityunitarian.org and by phone at 651-228-1456 x129.



Black Friday at Church

Details on page 7

Jim Foti

2012-13 Ministerial Intern



After I officiated at a backyard wedding this fall, a few of the guests inquired about my ministerial formation. As I was explaining my internship and my educational journey, a man who was quietly listening looked at me with searching eyes and asked: "How can I get my partner back to church?"

The partner had been so scarred by hellfire from some long-ago minister that he was not interested in any church. The guest who asked me the question had found a wonderful, welcoming congregation for himself and his mother. People need spiritual sustenance, he said, and he thought his partner's life would be better with church in it. (It was my own partner who had gotten me to return to religion after a period of disillusionment, so I very much appreciated this man's concern.)

Another wedding guest credited his wife for "dragging" him back to church. He had grown up in a conservative Catholic family and was now a very involved liberal Lutheran, even taking on a role as a reader at church. He said he appreciated that his minister was an ordinary human, not a being somehow more divine than his congregants, and he was intrigued when I told him that readings at Unitarian Universalist churches come from a wide range of sources.

These conversations reminded once again that there are so many people who have left their churches of origin, or who never had a religious anchor to begin with, and who still have not found a safe harbor in which to grow their spirits. Only a tiny fraction of such people ever find their way to Unitarian Universalism, and we are poorer for it. With Unity's welcoming new front door poised to open onto the neighborhood and beyond, now is our chance to shine more brightly than ever to all those who yearn.

Jim Foti can be reached by email at jim@unityunitarian.org and by phone at 651-228-1456 x109.

Difficulty getting to church?

Does your access to transportation limit your ability to participate in the life of Unity Church? If you are an elder who no longer drives, a college student without a car, or someone who has taken (or attempted to take) the bus to church on Sundays, Ministerial Intern Jim Foti would like to hear from you. He's doing a review of church access issues and welcomes your perspective. Contact him at jim@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x109.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Welcome Words

It is a gift to hear one another's stories. This past month, I have shared stories with many wonderful people, including new friends who are exploring Unity Church as their spiritual home for the first time and longtime members who have been a part of this congregation for decades. What is amazing is the thread of connection that runs through them. To hear about the joy of discovering a community which embodies freedom, respect, and dignity. To talk about the powerful moments of worship and connection which transform our lives. To share in the struggle to live lives of integrity, service and joy, even when it is not easy. I am grateful for the gift of these stories, for they remind us that we are not alone in our journeys and help us to build the beloved community each time we share them. May we continue to both give and receive. See you in church!

Blessings,
Lisa



Lisa Friedman
Director of Congregational Life

Pathway to Membership

Unity Church offers classes for visitors who would like to get to know our congregation as a spiritual home. You can sign up for the classes at the Welcome Table on Sundays or by contacting Julie Handberg at 651-228-1456 x110 or julieh@unityunitarian.org. With one week advance request, childcare can be provided by contacting Christy Randall at christy@unityunitarian.org to arrange. Rev. Lisa Friedman is also happy to meet with you to answer any questions you may have and to help you get connected to our community. She can be reached at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x107.

Welcome to Unity: A Class for Newcomers

Sunday, November 11 • 12:15–1:30 p.m. ~or~

Wednesday, November 28 • 7:15–8:30 p.m.

If you have been visiting Unity Church 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

Thursday, November 1, 8, 15 • 6:30–8:30 p.m.

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

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

Saturday, November 3 • 9:30–11:30 a.m.

This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. The class will conclude with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church! There will be a special New Member recognition ceremony on Sunday, November 4.

Ongoing Groups at Unity Church

All Unity Church groups have been asked to find alternative meeting spaces throughout the Unity Tomorrow construction schedule. If you are a group leader and are holding meetings off-site, please contact the Church Office with the date, time, and location of the meeting. If you are looking to connect with a group, please contact the person listed below, or 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 8) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528 for meeting locations during construction.

Afterthoughts: Sundays after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528 for meeting locations.

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (November 15) from Noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Iсаacs at janne@unityunitarian.org. Watch for details about meeting locations.

Evergreen Quilters: Second Tuesday of the month (November 13) from 7:00–9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (November 24) from 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760 for meeting locations during construction.

Grandparent Unitots!: This group is not meeting during construction.

Lectio Divina (Spiritual Reading): Sundays at 10:15 a.m.

Living With Grief Group: A group for people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (November 20) from 7:00–9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Iсаacs at janne@unityunitarian.org. Watch for details about meeting locations.

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, November 5 and 19, from 1:00–3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578 for meeting locations during construction.

Unitots!: A playgroup for families with kids through preschool age. Unitots is not meeting during construction.

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month (November 13) from 7:00–8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne at jack.hawthorne@comcast.net for meeting locations during construction. The book they will be discussing is *The Long Fall* by Walter Mosley.

Unity Bridge Club: Friday, November 2, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209 for meeting locations during construction.

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

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE / BLACK FRIDAY AT CHURCH

Elders Circle Group

Wednesday, November 7 • 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Home of Priscilla MacDougall

This month's topic: House and Home

Thanks to all who came to last month's big gathering! This month we'll be exploring a topic suggested by one of our elders: moving from your longtime home to a senior community. How do we make the transition emotionally, socially, and spiritually? We'll have an expert on hand and share the wisdom and experience of our group members on both sides of this life event. All are welcome, and refreshments will be served. The monthly elders postcard will contain the address and directions. To offer a ride or inquire about receiving one, please contact Ministerial Intern Jim Foti at jim@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x109. Priscilla's home has a sloped sidewalk with a railing and five steps near the front door. We will return to our fully accessible church building next month after renovations are complete!



The Elders Group met with Director of Congregational Life, Lisa Friedman, during their October meeting.

Dine with Nine

Dine with Nine suppers have begun! Dine with Nine groups gather in each other homes monthly for food and fellowship and offer a wonderful opportunity to get to know other Unitarian Universalists. If you are interested in participating but feel that hosting is too difficult, please let us know. There are several alternatives, including co-hosting in another person's home. We are continuing to take sign ups and will create new groups of 9-10 people from those lists. To sign up, please email Teresa Wernecke at teresa475@gmail.com or fill out the form on our website. Include your contact information and if you would like to sign up for a family or adult only group.

Save the Date! The Gathering

Fifth Annual Unity Church Women's Retreat

Saturday, January 26

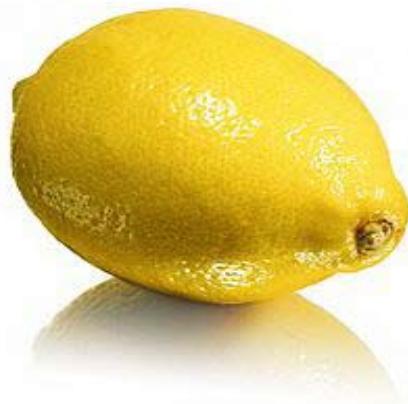
The Gathering is a one-day women's spiritual retreat celebrating each woman's voice with invitations for expression and being heard, and for deep listening through art, movement, writing, conversation, and contemplation. If you would like to be part of the planning team for the 2013 women's retreat, please contact Barbara Hubbard at barbarah@unityunitarian.org.

Black Friday at Church

Feeding the Spirit on the
Feast Day of Consumption: Living into our Gifts

Friday, November 23 • 10:00 a.m.

Service followed by optional reflection discussion.



Unity Church's fifth annual "Black Friday at Church" offers an opportunity to launch the Advent and Christmas season with spiritual renewal, fellowship, and good cheer, instead of habitual consumerism. Sometimes called "the holiest of shopping days," Black Friday is no longer just a feast day of consumption. This year we explore meanings of abundance and doing more with what we have with our theme *Living into our Gifts*.

Join fellow Unity Church members, families, and neighbors on the Friday morning after Thanksgiving (Black Friday in the consumer world) in a worship service featuring cultural critique, spiritual depth, conversation, children's participation, wonderful music, and some fun. Our service will include musical guests Light of the Moon and special guest speaker, James Farrell, Professor of History, American Studies, Environmental Studies and American Conversations at St. Olaf College. Professor Farrell is an interdisciplinary scholar whose teaching has included courses on Environmental History, the Mall of America, Nuclear Weapons and American Culture, Walt Disney's America, Consuming College Culture, and Campus Ecology.

After the service, we'll share fellowship in the Parish Hall and, for those who would like, an opportunity to join in a reflective conversation about the service, what Advent might look like from a Unitarian Universalist perspective, the opportunities to be found in the Christmas season, and how we might make changes in our own lives. Activities for children and families will be provided, as well as childcare.

UNITY TOMORROW

Unity Tomorrow Update: It's not done yet!

From Lorelee Wederstrom, Unity's Owner Representative

I don't know about you but when Thanksgiving day arrives, I love it when the house begins to fill with all sorts of wonderful smells and the table is prepared and waiting for guests. I always worry that the turkey won't be done in time so I am forever checking on it... covering, uncovering, taking its temperature, making sure it is browned to perfection, etc. And, even after it is "done" I have to let it rest, then carve it, then plate it and THEN, finally, we get to eat!

That's about where we are with the *Unity Tomorrow* project. There is still so much underway and some parts are "done" or substantially complete. But the fact that our much beloved church home still remains a construction site for several more weeks makes even the done parts not yet as welcoming and wonderful as we know they will be by Thanksgiving.

Our contractor, McGough, has issued an updated schedule for the project which shows "substantial completion" for a number of areas such as:

New entry gallery	November 17
Kitchen	November 17
Eliot Wing offices and meetings rooms	November 19

Substantial completion means that the major portion of construction will be done; however, there may be finishing details or delayed deliveries that will still need to be completed. For example, production of the new windows for the Eliot Wing were delayed until late October and the stone repair for the narthex entry cannot be completed until mid-December, even though the new entry will be open by then. The project delivery team is routinely monitoring these schedule fluctuations as we realize they impact Unity's ability to provide programming. Even substantially complete areas will require construction worker access during the work day.

In late November we will also go through a period of commissioning, balancing and testing all our new mechanical, electrical and life safety systems. This cannot be done until construction is 100% complete. Bill Lowell, Unity's Facilities Manager, and his staff along with a small team of volunteer facility stewards will be trained by qualified personnel. This training will include use of the digital control systems installed that allow Unity Church to meet its goals in sustainable design and energy management.

It is important for all of us to remember that the *Unity Tomorrow* project originally required a one-year construction schedule. We compressed it by agreeing to move out of the contractor's way so that they could deliver the project in half the time. That is both a financial savings to us and an extraordinary inconvenience this fall while trying to resume church programming.

Thank you all for your patience and flexibility!
It will get done!



Painting at the upper level Eliot Wing.



New entrance addition.



The flue is installed and the boilers have been started.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

UUSC News

From Marty Rossman,
Unity Church
Unitarian Universalist
Service Committee Representative



BIG UUSC Events!

William Schulz* is coming to Unity Church for **two special events on December 8:**

A Morgan Forum

Human Rights: For UUs and You

9:00 a.m.-noon.

Beverages and pastries will be available. This event is free and reservations are not required.

Dinner and Presentation

Personal Odysseys: Mine and Yours

6:00-9:00 p.m.

Tickets for dinner (tastes of India menu) and presentation are \$20 per person. Childcare will be available. Space is limited, reserve by contacting Martha Tilton at 651-228-1456 or martha@unityunitarian.org.

*William Schulz is the President and CEO of the UUSC. He was President of the Unitarian Universalist Association from 1985 to 1993 and served as Executive Director of Amnesty International from 1994 to 2006. Bill is an internationally recognized human rights activist, scholar and passionate advocate for social justice.

Guest at Your Table!

UUSC's annual tradition will begin on November 18! The celebration of Guest at Your Table helps participants to nurture a spirit of gratitude and "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations." Guest at Your Table fosters understanding and awareness of UUSC's human-rights work.

Join the UUSC today!

Please join today! You will be part of an organization working to eliminate human rights violations in the world. Become a member online at www.uusc.org.

Voter ID: Remembering Selma

From Carol Bauer on behalf of the members of the Anti-racism Leadership Team and Racial Justice Outreach Team

Forty-seven years ago, people died in Selma, Alabama, because they demanded their full rights as citizens... especially the right to vote. The Voting Rights Act was passed. That was 1965. Now, in 2012, thousands of registered voters across the country are being purged from the voting rolls, disqualified because they can't afford a picture ID, or are finding voting rules tightened. The fact is, for a lot of poor folks—students, people with disabilities, seniors and people of color—it's getting harder and harder to vote.

This November, Minnesotans are asked to decide whether to amend our state constitution by requiring Voter ID at the polls. This legislation will make it harder for poor Minnesotans to vote and add unnecessary bureaucracy to a state with virtually no evidence of voter fraud. It is a solution in search of a problem.

If you long for beloved community, I urge you stand on the side of love and opportunity for all. Vote No to defeat the Voter ID Amendment in November.

Every conversation counts and every vote counts!

A recent letter to the editor in the *Star Tribune* described a person overhearing a conversation in which a Catholic woman who said she was voting in favor of the anti-marriage-equality amendment listened to a person describe the long process that the other person's church went through deciding to perform gay marriages. The second person concluded that, while she would never suggest that the Catholic Church should marry same-sex couples, why should the Catholic church not allow her church to follow their beliefs? After that discussion, the first woman said she had changed her mind and would be voting no. This is so close—you can be the difference!

Report Your Conversations! Keep having marriage equality conversations, and let us know how many, so we can see if we can make our goal of 4,000! As a church, we have committed to defeating the amendment, so we encourage you to talk to others about it, to report how many conversations you've had, then to go out and vote! Save November 17 on your calendar when we will gather for a Souper Celebration to celebrate all of the hard work, the conversations—long and short, serious and funny, loving and difficult—that we have had in the past months. Details to follow!

A New Beginning

The Unity Church Affordable Housing Outreach Ministry Team is beginning a partnership with PORTICO, an interfaith Twin Cities housing collaborative with extensive experience in affordable housing development for vulnerable people.

The Affordable Housing team will be working together with House of Hope Presbyterian Church (the lead church in this effort) and other nearby faith communities, to plan, fund, and build a high-quality supportive housing facility for youth near University and Prior, to be known as Prior Crossing. Providing housing for homeless youth is a recognized top priority in Ramsey County. Currently there are more than 400 homeless youth in Ramsey County on any given night—sleeping in shelters, on someone's couch, in cars, or riding the buses. There are fewer than 150 shelter beds to offer them. This new building will provide stable housing for 44 youth along with support services to help them get started in adult life. Supportive services for this new facility will be provided by Wilder Foundation, another partner in this broad coalition.

Advocacy, fund-raising, planning, and volunteer services will be needed to move this housing from concept to actuality. Please join us to help make a difference in the lives of these at-risk youth, who need temporary support to become fully rooted and growing in our community. Our November meeting will be held on Monday, November 12, at 5:30 p.m. at Unity Church. Please contact Priscilla Morton at prismorton@comcast.net to be added to our mailing list and for more information.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Tower Club Fall 2012: Schedule of Intentions

Tower Club is Unity's High School Youth Group, a gathering place for 10th-12th graders to enjoy one another's company, gain insights into the world and our faith, cultivate compassion, have fun and eat tasty food. Tower Club meets from 6:00 until 8:00 on Sunday evenings, some holiday weeks excepted. Youth are expected to remain with us until 8:00. We communicate mostly through Facebook, but try to be intentional about calling or emailing youth who choose not to use social media. This year, we're inviting Tower Club families to consider contributing \$25 toward a "Food and Fun Fund" so that we can offer more of both food and fun this program year. This contribution is not a requirement for participation.

Youth and parents who wish to receive email copies of our Facebook announcements should let Drew Danielson know by emailing drew@unityunitarian.org.



Pictured above: Unity's High School youth came out in full-force for marriage equality where they took up "three whole rows" at the Statewide Standing on the Side of Love for Marriage Equality Worship Service that was held on September 30 at First Universalist Church in Minneapolis.

November 4 – What will happen if Voter ID passes?

Come learn about this issue that will affect your generation of voters. What consequences can we expect if Voter ID is passed? Is there work to be done by liberal religious youth in the future? All of our snacks will be red, white and blue as we celebrate the great exercise that is popular rule.

November 11 – Election Recovery and Celebration: What's next?

Whew! It'll all be over by now... Come celebrate and grieve with your friends of faith, eat comfort foods and talk about what's next. We'll learn a little about the roles that Unitarianism and Universalism have played in the history of our democracy.

November 18 – Compassionate Consumption and The Story of Stuff

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee encourages us to lead lives of compassionate consumption. What does that mean? In this season of gratitude and gifts, how do we know when "enough is enough"? Join us for a fabulous documentary, good discussion and freshly-baked chocolate chip cookies.

December 2 – The Story of Change (and Party Planning)

After an intense election season, our citizen muscle may seem as though it's not quite strong enough to move the world. What about our consumer muscle, which proves time and again to move and shake things when we flex it? We'll talk more about compassionate consumption. We'll also plan a winter party that will double – in some interesting way – as a service learning project. We'll have SIX different kinds of popcorn and home-made soda.

December 9 – Art Scrapaganza!

In conjunction with our hope-filled fall themes of democracy and personal and global change, we're hosting a creative art party with the help of ArtStart. Come turn the scraps of our consumer lifestyle into something new and unique and useful. Must be able to wield a glue gun without harming anyone. Hot cocoa and donuts for everyone!

December 16 – Holiday Service Project-Party-Event

By this point, we will have chosen, planned for and publicized some kind of cool holiday event, perhaps in conjunction with one of Unity's community outreach partners like Jeremiah Program or Mano a Mano. Whatever it is, it'll be fun for all the generations and will have the stamp of Tower Club youth all over it. Lots and lots of snacks.

Family Sharing and Consultation Group

Saturday, November 3

10:00 a.m.-noon

This group will meet at the church-owned duplex at 722 Holly Avenue.

Did you ever...

... wish you had more ideas about how to raise your kids religiously in the Unitarian Universalist tradition?

... have a family-centered religious experience that you'd love to share with other parents?

All parents are invited to share experiences, struggles and wisdom in a facilitated conversation on raising our children religiously in the Unitarian Universalist tradition. Childcare will be provided. Please contact Louise Livesay at louiselivesay@yahoo.com to RSVP including the number of children for childcare.

MUSIC MINISTRY

Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministry

"To make eminently liveable
our Yard of Space
in our
Inch of Time."

— Robert Shaw, choral conductor

Few American musicians have touched more people in more ways than has Robert Shaw. In his book *Dear People*, Shaw speaks of his vision that music be continuously and systematically engaged in all conceivable types of performance, education and outreach. In his final words from a speech after returning from Greece, he presents an enticing challenge to the people of his community as seen in the quote above.

It has always struck me that music is in some way the essence of *time* expressing gratitude for its very *being* in suspended sound. Music offers us the opportunity to enlarge our inner experience by drawing out moments of expression. The suspension of a musical phrase gives one 'slow motion' revelation of any single thought. For me, gratitude takes that time, that extended moment which allows me to go into my very middle in order to realize a truth in my personal "Yard of Space" and "Inch of Time."

Shaw also speaks with insistence that "we have a chance if we work hard enough and care enough to become our own Knossos, or Acropolis, or Delphi. One of his foremost visions which he often spoke of was that "to be an artist is not the privilege of a few but the necessity of us all." Somehow, a vision like this speaks to me of continual gratitude for life, for opportunity, for challenges that evoke the personal artistry found in each and all of us.

I am so grateful that Unity Church and all of you are part of my "Yard of Space" and "Inch of Time."

The Women's Ensemble Begins in December

The Women's Ensemble originates with the group of women who worked with Ruth Palmer at the Women's Retreat in January 2011. Our hopes this year are to rehearse regularly every other week from 10:15 to 10:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings, with Ruth Palmer, director.

The first rehearsal will be held on Sunday, December 2, at 10:15 in the Choir Room (previously the Children's Library). Please plan to attend this initial rehearsal if you are intending to be part of this new, regularly rehearsing group! Contact Ruth Palmer at ruth@unityunitarian.org for more information or if you would like to participate.

Music Support Team

Please consider supporting the many associated needs for our singers, musicians and entire music program area. We need your help as greeters, kitchen assistance, music filing, upkeep of musical supplies, and more! Events and areas of need such as the Holiday Carol Sing/Concert/Dessert Buffet, Foote Music Sunday choir receptions and Choir/Storage Room need your unique abilities. And, SPECIAL this year only.... unpacking and organizing music program areas in mid-November. Please feel free to contact Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministry, with your interest and questions at ruth@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x118.

Unity Church Welcomes Rev. Jason Shelton



We are delighted to welcome the Reverend Jason Shelton to Unity Church on November 10 and 11. You may have noticed his name as composer of our current Children's Recessional and various choral musical selections. Rev. Shelton is a composer, arranger, conductor, singer, multi-instrumentalist, workshop and retreat leader, and Associate Minister for Music at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, where he has served since 1998. His compositions have been performed in churches and concert halls throughout North America, and his workshops for choirs, musicians and ministers are helping to redefine music ministry in the liberal religious tradition.

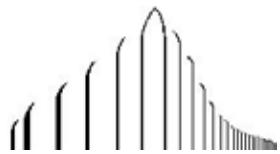
**Rev. Shelton will present the following
Samuel Morgan Community Forum
at Unity Church:**

**The Civil Rights Era:
A Movement with a Soundtrack
Saturday, November 10**

9:00 a.m.-noon

This workshop was designed to kickoff the UU Civil Rights Legacy tours of the American South by grounding participants in the songs and sounds of the movement. Through recordings and group singing, participants will engage in deepening their understanding of the cultural, theological and social elements which combined in music that has changed – and continues to change – the world.

Rev. Shelton will also be with us in all services on Sunday, November 11.



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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CALL TO MEETING

Annual Meeting of the Congregation Saturday, November 17, 2012 • 10:00 a.m.

Unity Church will hold its Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Saturday, November 17, 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 2013
- ask the congregation to elect three new trustees

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 2012 fiscal year. For information on your voting status, please contact Barbara Hubbard by email at barbarah@unityunitarian.org or by phone at 651-228-1456 x116. All annual meeting information including the annual report, budget information, trustee nominee bios and photos, and meeting agenda will be available online at www.unityunitarian.org.

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

2013 Budget Information Meeting

Sunday, November 4, following the 11:00 a.m. service.

The Board of Trustees is offering this meeting as an opportunity for the congregation to better understand the 2013 budget.

A Samuel Morgan Community Forum

*The Civil Rights Era:
A Movement with a Soundtrack*

**With Rev. Jason Shelton
Saturday, November 10**

**9:00 a.m. to noon
Unity Church–Unitarian**

This workshop was designed to kickoff the UU Civil Rights Legacy tours of the American South by grounding participants in the songs and sounds of the movement. Through recordings and group singing, participants will engage in deepening their understanding of the cultural, theological and social elements which combined in music that has changed – and continues to change – the world.

For more information about Rev. Jason Shelton, please turn to page 11.