

## Faith

Each month, we gather to reflect on and discuss the monthly theme. The November theme of faith provoked much generative conversation. This article includes both theological and personal reflections on the theme of faith, with the hope that it inspires and stimulates your own. Enjoy.

It is said that a visitor once came to the home of Nobel Prize — winning physicist Niels Bohr and, having noticed a horseshoe hung above the entrance, asked incredulously if the professor believed horseshoes brought good luck. “No,” Bohr replied, “but I am told that they bring luck even to those who do not believe in them.”

Is what Bohr expressing “blind faith” or “naïve faith?” Or perhaps “ironic faith?” Faith is not one thing — it has many facets. Consider some of the many expressions commonly used in conjunction with faith. We are asked to “keep the faith!” when we’re having a “crisis of faith.” Sometimes we have to take a “leap of faith” or simply “take it on faith.” Or, as Oliver Cromwell was quoted as saying “Put your faith in God and keep your powder dry,” understood as both a statement of both piety and practicality.

Is faith primarily about what one believes? In Islam, the belief that “there is no god but God and Muhammed is the Messenger of God,” is a central to ones understanding of Islam. As one Islamic scholar writes: “Faith in Islam means to believe in Allah, to affirm His truth, and to submit to His commands. True faith, then, must manifest itself in the heart as sincerity, on the tongue as affirmation, and on the limbs as action.” In many Christian traditions, the recitation of the Nicene or the Athanasian Creed is the way a believer professes a faith.

What then, is “faith?” The English word “faith” derives from the Latin word *fides*, which means fidelity or loyalty. In Pali, the language of original Buddhist texts, the word for faith is *saddha*, which can also mean trust, confidence, clarity, and even devotion. We all have faith in something,

whether we name it as faith or call it something else. Faith is intimately linked to trust. When we say “we light this chalice for the light of truth and the warmth of love,” we are saying that we put our trust in those qualities and that we wish to embody them.

When we ask our Coming of Age youth to write a credo, we are essentially asking them for a statement of faith. But we don’t ask them to simply reflect back whatever teachings they have absorbed, we insist that they do their own thinking about essential questions of life. We ask them to consider “in what do they place their trust” and how do they practice it. Faith then becomes not a description of an idea, but an invitation into something we practice, even when we don’t have clarity about the ultimate outcome.

*“Faith is...How I personally relate to the infinite mystery of life and the universe and the world and our relationships. It’s a matter of surrender and trust...which includes doubt and uncertainty...some giving of myself to trust in life.”*

A journey of faith isn’t about having a determined big picture with an outcome in mind. Almost always, there is no “end,” no final, right answer. But faith helps us see beyond the immediate moment, offers flashes of insight that give us the courage to keep going, the ability to leap into the unknown. Sometimes, having faith means letting go and believing in a power beyond our own. For some of us, the word faith brings up challenging memories — harsh

expectations about following creedal rules, of having faith in “the right way” with no space for questions or empirical tests. So often faith has been wielded as a cudgel, as a way to silence opposition even in the face of facts. We sometimes recoil from the language of faith because it has been used to wound our minds, souls, and bodies.

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, to be a person of faith *includes* questioning the very nature of faith itself. We don’t profess blind faith in creeds without interrogation. Indeed, while the nature of faith is a mystery, it must be examined. But what is also important is the nature of that questioning. How do we examine ours and other’s faith not in a way as to prove rightness or wrongness, but with curiosity and openness to the mystery that is also at the heart of faith?

One of the members of our conversation group put it this way:

*“Faith is not something I have...It’s something I practice; In other words: “it’s ‘faithing in...’ I don’t see faith as anything I can possess...and, it doesn’t fall apart until I stop practicing... Sometimes, when I lose my faith, I may need to hand it over to other people... people who can hold me in place... So for me, faith is a relationship and a practice.”*

When we approach the question of faith not as a system of beliefs, but as a community of relationships that

{continued on page 2}

# IN THE MEANTIME / WHEEL OF LIFE



“So, what’s the plan?” a church member asked me recently. The question arose from our conversation about the lingering feelings of concern regarding the 2022 ministerial search process and the May 22 congregational meeting. The question was important and timely, as I’ve been listening carefully to many of your concerns and working with Interim Minister of Pastoral Care, Rev. Karen Gustafson, with the executive team, and the board in thinking about how Unity Church moves forward and prepares, eventually, for another search.

Most interim ministers will engage a congregation in something called a Congregational Life Review or History Wall. It’s a Friday night – Saturday noon exercise of hearing stories about a congregation’s history. Everyone gets a chance to participate and tell stories; while listening and learning from one another. It’s both an illuminating — and generally — enjoyable exercise. I had scheduled that for the first weekend in November 4–5.

However, after more discernment, I realized that there are many stories about Unity’s past which need to be heard, but that should be shared in an environment that is well prepared to receive them. To be honest, I don’t think we are ready to dive into a weekend of storytelling just yet. So, I’m postponing that weekend.

Instead, I’m inviting you to a conversation entitled **Forward Together: Next Steps**, scheduled for **Saturday, November 5, from 9:30-11:30 a.m.** The executive and ministry teams, as well as the board have been in conversation about what are the next steps in the process of personal and institutional healing? From these conversations, a plan for moving forward is being created, but for this to be successful, it will require your input and your participation.

The broad strokes of this presentation will include a plan to support individual members who want to be in better relationship with one another; information about creating a Healthy Congregations Team that assists with conflict; a reminder about Team Dynamics workshop on January 21 on Change, Conflict, and Complexity: Antidotes and Spiritual Practices; ideas for sermons and Wellspring Wednesday programs; and an update on the board’s work on their next steps. Finally, it is my personal hope that Unity Church will plan to celebrate its 150th anniversary this spring; acknowledging that the church has weathered many storms in its 150 years and continues to stand firm and fast in this faith.

As an interim minister, I’ve both witnessed and walked with congregations through hard times. The good news is that all of them have come through these times stronger and clearer about who they are and what they need as a congregation to carry them forward into the future. The theme for November is faith. And Unity Church Unitarian — I have absolute *faith in you*. All of us will move forward — together.

Love and gratitude for this one, wild, precious life we share,  
Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Interim Senior Minister

## The Wheel of Life

### In Memoriam

**Bill E. Webb**

September 23, 1950 –  
September 26, 2022

**Faith** {continued from front cover} informs a committed spiritual practice, we are in a better position to live into the statement by Universalist minister Olympia Brown. “Stand by this faith,” Brown proclaimed from the pulpit. “Work for it and sacrifice for it.” Brown promised that “there is nothing in all the world so important as to be loyal to this faith which has placed before us the loftiest ideals, which has comforted us in sorrow, strengthened us for noble duty and made the world beautiful. Do not demand immediate results but rejoice that we are worthy to be entrusted with this great message, that you are strong enough to work for a great true principle without counting the cost.”

Stand by this faith. That is a hard charge from the first female Universalist minister, but it is a journey we can share together, knowing we will be living out our faith in a community of love.

*By Rev. Kathleen Rolenz  
and this month's theme team:  
Andrea Anastos, Drew Danielson,  
Tom Duke, Karen Gustafson,  
Ray Ann Hommeyer, and KP Hong*

## Forward Together: Next Steps

**Saturday, November 5 • 9:30-11:30 a.m. • Parish Hall**

Watch for information about online participation.

A presentation and conversation about a plan for congregational health and healing, offered by Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Rev. Karen Gustafson, and Unity’s Board of Trustees. This is an opportunity for you to hear about insights we’ve gleaned from last year’s ministerial search process as well as insights from your interim ministers about how we might forge a path ahead — together.

## Faith Theme Resources

For further reflection on this theme please see this month’s Spiritual Practice Packet available online at [bit.ly/faithpacket](https://bit.ly/faithpacket).

# NOVEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES AND OFFERING RECIPIENTS

## Worship Services

Unity Church offers two in-person services each Sunday at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. (except where noted). The 9:00 a.m. service is offered via livestream. Religious Education for children and youth is also offered during both services.

### November 6: *The Job of Faith*

**Rev. Kathleen Rolenz**

Livestream at 9:00 a.m.: [youtu.be/5fkynCdBQP4](https://youtu.be/5fkynCdBQP4)

Why do bad things happen to good people? This question is at the center of the Book of Job in the Bible. We'll explore the story of Job and the many answers the characters in the story provide as a way of finding our own answers.

### November 13: *Shadow Boxing the Apocalypse*

**Rev. Kathleen Rolenz**

Livestream at 9:00 a.m.: [youtu.be/i4dQc5ckQB4](https://youtu.be/i4dQc5ckQB4)

The mid-term elections have occurred — did the apocalypse happen? Are we living in the aftermath of significant change? Or, did we wind up shadow boxing our own fears? This sermon will look at one of our biggest fears — the end of all we hold dear — while reminding us of the one thing which can never be taken for granted.

### Family Sunday, November 20: *The Welcome Table*

**Rev. Kathleen Rolenz and Rev. KP Hong**

Livestream at 9:00 a.m.: [youtu.be/VNC84sh4SH0](https://youtu.be/VNC84sh4SH0)

"We're gonna sit at the Welcome Table...one of these days!" On this Family Sunday, we'll reflect on what it means to gather, how to meet one another across differences, and what a true welcome looks and feels like.

### November 27: *Good for Nothing: Living with Faith in Human Goodness*

**Rev. Karen Gustafson**

One service only including livestream at 10:00 a.m.: [youtu.be/j\\_hZuYFeID0](https://youtu.be/j_hZuYFeID0)

So much bad news. It is tempting to believe that there is no potential for systemic goodness to break through the bleakness of this troubled world. And yet, how are we served by dismissing this possibility out of hand and lose our back to a belief in "inherent worth and dignity?"

## 2022 Christmas Services

### Christmas Eve

10:00 a.m. • Finding a Stillness, Ames Chapel  
4:30 and 5:30 p.m. • Christmas Pageant, Sanctuary  
8:00 p.m. • Christmas Eve Family Service, Sanctuary

### Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. • Sunday Service, Sanctuary

## Offering Recipients

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

### November 6

#### **Creating Opportunities for Post- Secondary Education**

(COPE) assists underrepresented students in the community in obtaining educational opportunities, financial support, and other resources they need to reach their highest academic, professional, and personal goals. COPE provides after school mentoring, college preparation, ACT/SAT college prep classes, college tours and fairs, financial planning, and an annual fundraising scholarship event. This collection will support after school mentoring. [minnesotacopeprogram.org](https://minnesotacopeprogram.org)

### November 13

**Project Home** has provided overnight shelter for area families facing homelessness for more than 23 years. They partner with dozens of area churches, synagogues and schools. This 24/7 support helps families achieve both housing and economic stability through assistance in finding permanent, affordable housing and employment. This collection will purchase school supplies, diapers, and other basic needs for daily living. [interfaithaction.org/what-we-do/projecthome](https://interfaithaction.org/what-we-do/projecthome)

### November 20

The Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, the lighthouse of the Selby-Dale/Rondo community since 1929, operates a food shelf and clothing closet serving families in the neighborhood. **The Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf** offers a client-choice model where community members can pick food items they will use instead of being handed a stock bag which may contain items that do not meet their dietary or cultural needs. This collection will support the purchase of food and emergency services. [hallieqbrown.org/site/index.php/basic-needs](https://hallieqbrown.org/site/index.php/basic-needs)

### November 27

**The Face It Foundation** provides services to help men deal with depression. The primary way of doing this is through bi-weekly peer group meetings as well as various social activities. All services are free of charge. Over 250 men are currently being served. Unity's Steve Harper has been attending meetings at Face It for five years and facilitates one group of 25 men. [faceitfoundation.org](https://faceitfoundation.org)

Nominate an organization to receive the offering:  
[unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html](https://unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html).

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES



## What the Ministerial Search Revealed and Next Steps

Clover Earl, Trustee

*Conflict transformation is not about wrestling order out of chaos. It is certainly not about returning to the time and state we knew before the conflict. It is about forming ourselves and shaping our congregations so that faith can bring meaning to the differences and changes that are unavoidably constant and deep in our lives.*

— Teresa Cooley, from *Transforming Conflict: The Blessings of Congregational Turmoil*

It has been just over five months since the May 22, 2022, congregational meeting, the first in over 20+ years at Unity Church, to call a settled minister. There are multiple opinions and perspectives about “what happened” and myriad stories and interpretations about the meeting. Many felt moved by witnessing democracy in action, and others felt angered by the barriers to voting that seemed to be in place. The “perfect storm” metaphor resonates with many.

The board agrees that there is no single story or narrative that can adequately answer the “what happened” question, and it took us considerable discussion to get there. There is an enlightening Ted Talk video watched over 11 million times called “The Danger of the Single Story,” by novelist Chimamanda Adichie; it is well worth 20-minutes (<http://bit.ly/916unity>).

Many congregants have referred to the outcome of the meeting as a “failure” and some chose to leave the church. Many members, even those wishing there had been a different outcome chose to stay. In mid-October, I attended Reverend Kathleen Rolenz’s program at Wellspring Wednesday about interim ministry and was encouraged by her use of the word “reveal” to characterize what occurred in the sanctuary that Sunday in May.

So how has the board been working to prepare for our next search?

At the time of this writing, the board, and the executive team recently met with a goal to come to a shared understanding about what the key lessons and takeaways are from the search process, and more importantly, how those lessons ought to inform

our work moving forward. Laura Park facilitated the conversation and here is a small sample of the ideas that emerged from the five sources of information mentioned in the email from the board on September 15, 2022:

Key takeaways:

- The congregation has work to do on how to be in healthy and constructive conflict with one another; there are boundaries and discipline involved in participating as members of a covenanted community in search, particularly in conflict.
- Unity's relationship with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has been unclear and, at times, strained.
- There is a lack of common understanding about the purpose of candidating week, the congregational vote, and the task of congregational discernment.

Key action items:

- Review and revise by-laws as they relate to timing and access to voting.
- Identify solid and reliable methods of communication between the board, executive team, and ministerial search team during the search process to identify areas of challenge and support the ministerial search team while balancing what needs confidentiality.
- Develop depth of practice in conflict and discernment.
- Build a relationship with the UUA and ensure we are accessing all the support available.

There are more takeaways and action items than are mentioned above and there will be opportunities for congregational engagement. The board’s next task is to distill the list of key takeaways and action items into digestible and actionable steps forward on our journey. Trustee Debbie Cushman will report on some of these items in the December column.

## CALL TO MEETING

### Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Unity Church will hold its Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Saturday, November 19, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. Please watch for details about how to participate (in-person and online).

The annual meeting packet, including an agenda, will be sent by email to eligible voting members in early November. All are welcome to attend; only eligible voting members can vote. Eligible voting members include those who have signed the membership book and have made an identifiable pledge in the current or upcoming year and made a payment on that pledge. If you wish to become a voting member before the annual meeting, please contact Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) to arrange a private ceremony.

## Walking the Antiracist Multicultural Journey with Rev. Karen Gustafson

Rebecca Gonzalez-Campoy, Beloved Community Communications Team

Interim Minister of Pastoral Care Rev. Karen Gustafson professes to be a “keeper of the center,” someone who is not leading us in our antiracist multicultural work at Unity Church-Unitarian, rather she’s walking along side us, doing the work together.

“I am regularly examining my white privilege and my own whiteness,” says Gustafson. What this means can best be explained by a story. She recounts driving home from work to her home on the North Shore. She hit a deer which caused significant damage to her small car, but she was unhurt. Her friends exclaimed how terrible! But Gustafson uses this story to illustrate white privilege (emphasis is hers). “I was driving home from my *job* along the *North Shore of Lake Superior* in my *car*. I called AAA who said I would pay less for towing if I used my *car insurance* to cover towing fees since I was out of AAA service range. My husband came to get me in *another car*. I went home and slept while my car was collected and repaired.” She didn’t miss any work and if she had needed to do so, her employer would have allowed it.



“I was aware of how different the experience would have been if any of these things had not been in place,” Gustafson says. She recounts other similar moments of awareness that reveal entitlement and ignorance. “I am mindful of asking myself, am I expressing white fragility?”

Her mindset is to notice her reactions, motivations, and reluctance in any given situation. “Being truly multicultural is demanding us (white people) to look deeply at what we take for granted. Consider how people discuss fairness. It’s from the perspective of what they *don’t* have. It’s seldom aimed at what they *do* have.”

Gustafson calls this awareness of historical white privilege. “If you want to really upset me, tell me ‘you deserve that!’ I can’t live long enough to make this true. So much of what people receive comes from circumstance beyond our control.”

She’s learned to examine her own racism from a place of curiosity, not judgment. She comes from a background which included little racial diversity but exposed her to a wide range of socio-economic differences. Part of this work requires accountability to others. She plans to participate in Unity’s Antiracism Literacy Partners to explore the works of those on the margins and then engage in group conversation about the spiritual impact and possible next right actions to take. As she gets settled into her home in the Twin Cities, where there is greater opportunity to interact with many cultures, she plans to look for ways to get out of her comfort zone, “to question my own assumptions.”

This making space for the stories of others is what pastoral care is all about. “I describe my theology as God of the Gaps,” says Gustafson. “Healing and grace happen in the space we create between us, when we make space to hold someone’s story. As (author) Parker Palmer puts it, “to allow for the inner teacher to make itself known.”

Antiracism Literacy Partners will meet on Wednesday, November 16. See the description in Wellspring Wednesday offerings on page 9 and register online at [bit.ly/ALPnov1622](https://bit.ly/ALPnov1622).



## November Parish Hall Artist

### Reynaldo Diaz *Ancestral Faces*

This exhibit features work inspired by music, emotions, history, and my ancestral roots of Central America. I am influenced by Mayan, Aztec, African, and Spanish cultures, and my ethnic background is a melting pot of all these.

While I am self-taught, I have studied the work of many masters, particularly Kandinsky. My art has a strong connection to my love for music and nature. I’ve never been one to just “paint a pretty picture.” My work comes with many layers, which reveal themselves to the viewer, especially those who take time to absorb these intricacies.

It’s hard for me to put words to what I actually create. In a sense, my paintings are my language. You will find hints of faces, eyes, movement, nature and other forms coming through my newest works.

As I move forward in my creative life, I want to find ways to more effectively meld my visual creations with music. I believe paintings include rhythm, timbre and tones.



# WELCOME NEWCOMERS



## Welcome Words

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

So many newcomers to Unity Church come seeking a new understanding of faith. The faith of their childhood no longer fits, or they did not have a faith formation experience as a child, and

they're asking questions about what religious life can look like in the absence of that faith.

Janne Eller-Isaacs, Minister Emerita, used to call Unitarian Universalism the hardest faith in the world because it doesn't give pat answers to our religious questions. What does it mean to be human and alive? How should we live our lives, knowing that someday we will die? What is the nature of God or the holy? Unitarian Universalism asks us to connect with the sources of our living faith tradition ([uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/sources](http://uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/sources)), including our direct experience of the holy, to wrestle with and discern our way toward our answers to these questions. Unitarian Universalism also asks us to hold those answers lightly, to get comfortable with the ambiguity inherent in a living faith, as new information and insights can change what we thought was settled.

Looking for ways to shape your journey toward a new faith understanding? I'm here to help answer your questions about congregational life and the pathways you might explore to know the church better and deepen your spiritual life.

Need more information about our abbreviations or puzzling reactions? I'm here to help answer your questions about congregational life and the pathways you might explore to know the church better and deepen your spiritual life. Contact me at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110. I look forward to getting to know you!

**commUNITY** is the newsletter of Unity Church–Unitarian. It is published monthly. 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  
733 Portland Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-228-1456 | [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org)



## Pathway to Membership Classes

Explore a deeper connection to Unity Church and the commitments and opportunities of membership. Contact Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110 with questions or to participate.

### Finding Yourself at Unity

**Sundays • 10:15 a.m.**

**Gannett Room in-person and online at [bit.ly/fyonline](http://bit.ly/fyonline)**

Finding Yourself at Unity includes eight classes that you can attend in any order to better understand how Unity Church supports our faith journeys, our work to build Beloved Community, and our efforts to bless the world. Topics include: UU History; Faith Formation for Children, Youth, and Adults; Congregational and Pastoral Care; Q & A with a Minister; Worship & the Liturgical Year; Social Justice & Community Outreach; Membership 101 & Congregational Life, and a Building Tour. This month's offerings:

November 6: Worship and the Liturgical year

November 13: Religious Education for Children, Youth, & Adults

November 20: Building Tour

November 27: No class (Thanksgiving weekend)

### Committing to Unity

**Tuesday, January 17 • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • Unity Church**

- *Develop personal practice to help you find and keep your balance.*
- *Develop the skills of intimacy that let you go deep quickly with strangers.*
- *Take the compassion that rises from doing the first two and use it to bless the world.*

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

## Shifting Unity's Mentoring Program

We have realized it is time to try something different with mentoring at Unity Church, to incorporate it into a new offering between Finding Yourself at Unity and Committing to Unity. Stay tuned for more information. In the meantime, please email Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) if you're interested in a conversation or two with Unity Church members on a particular topic.

# PASTORAL AND CONGREGATIONAL CARE



## Pastoral Ponderings

Rev. Karen Gustafson, Interim Minister of Pastoral Care

"Everything must change." This opening line to the song by the same name by George Benson, released in 1974 on recording by Quincy Jones ([youtu.be/zoLFxzNK4Lk](https://youtu.be/zoLFxzNK4Lk)), is a lyric that has woven its way through my life for nearly four decades. Everything but... I have found this to be part of my own spiritual reality as I practice disarming judgment and accessing curiosity

about the amazing variety of life over which I can exercise such limited control and the amazing shifting constancy of the natural world. I think about what it is to have faith in the power and presence of change.

Everything must change,  
Nothing stays the same.

Everyone must change  
Nothing stays the same.

The young become the old,  
Mysteries do unfold.

'Cause that's the way of time

Nothing and no one goes unchanged.

There are not many things  
In life you can be sure of.

Except

Rain comes from the clouds,  
And sun lights up the sky,  
And humming birds do fly.

Winter turns to spring.

Wounded heart will heal.

Never much too soon

Everything must change

The young become the old,

Mysteries do unfold.

'Cause that's the way of time

Nothing and no one goes unchanged.

There are not many things

In life you can be sure of.

Except

Rain comes from the clouds,  
And sun lights up the sky,  
And humming birds do fly.

Today I muse about my changing body, the inevitable stiffness from too much sitting and the onset of true autumn temperature. I notice the turning of the leaves and the gathering stillness as outdoor activity seems to shift from leisure patio dining to the pre-winter scurry to get indoors where it is warm. So much changes as the tilting of Earth's axis demands adaptation and acceptance; so much simultaneous grief and anticipation.

In the two months since my arrival at Unity Church I have felt the tilting axis of congregational life asking for adaptation and acceptance, holding both grief and anticipation. We have gathered the water, we have named many losses, we have begun again to lean into the changes that will affect the future, a future that will reflect a collective relationship to change itself.

Each of us in one way or another is shaped by our relationship to change. Openness and embrace, resignation, willingness to lean in; resistance, struggle or denial are all reactions to the changes within, among and beyond us. Each of these responses has its own kind of impact. For me, remaining open and curious, even in spite of doubt, becomes a source spiritual energy. The greatest energy drain comes from unacknowledged or unclaimed change... the exhaustion I feel when I deny how much I miss my family or minimize the impact of unexpressed grief or find I am not dressed against the new cold of autumn.

In the months ahead, may you feel encouraged to notice and speak of what is changing, to share your curiosity and your observations, your reservations and your grief in ways that tap into the integrity, service, and joy at the heart of Unity.

## Through the Gates to Grief with Rev. Karen Gustafson



**Tuesday, November 8, 22 and 29,  
and December 6, from 6:30 to 8:30  
p.m., online via Zoom**

Registration: [bit.ly/griefconvos](https://bit.ly/griefconvos)

As a follow-up to the Wellspring Wednesday program Everyone Grieves, Rev. Karen Gustafson is offering four Tuesday evening sessions on Frances Weller's "Five Gates to Grief."

The sessions will be free standing so the registration will ask you to designate the ones you think you will attend. You do not need to have attended the original session.

Unity's Bookstall and Anderson Library will have a few copies of *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* by Frances Weller available. Rev. Gustafson strongly recommends reading the "Introduction" and the chapter "Gates to Grief." It is also recommended that you Google "Francis Weller YouTube" and watch the videos in which he discusses his work, specifically the video "An Apprenticeship with Sorrow: Tending to the Losses of Everyday Life," Weller's address to the Jung Institute: [youtu.be/d7-nE\\_07NiY](https://youtu.be/d7-nE_07NiY). And finally, please read "Apprentice to Sorrow" at [francisweller.net/writings.html](https://francisweller.net/writings.html) (scroll down page).

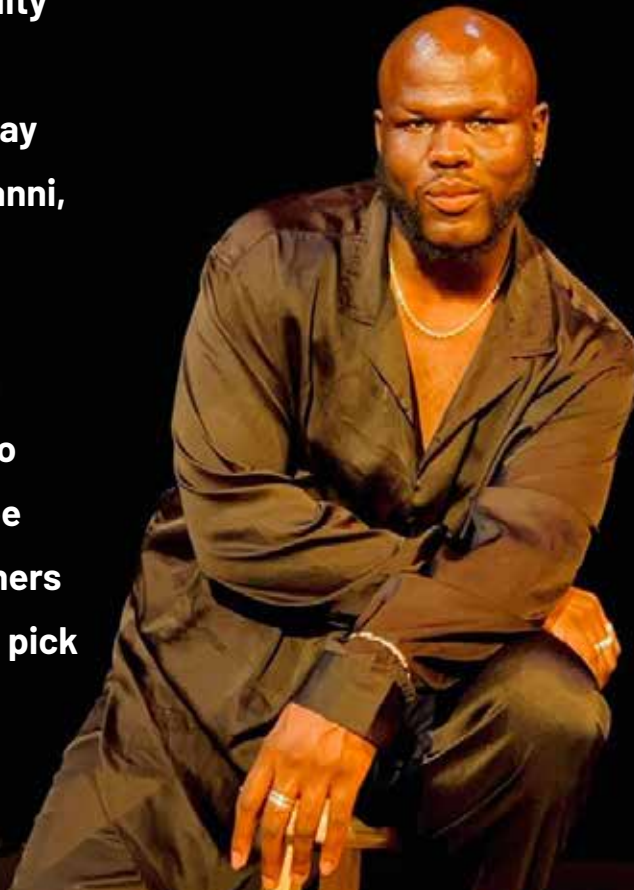
# This Little Light of Mine; Is Mine

Saturday, November 12

7:00 PM

Sanctuary at Unity Church

**Storyteller Lester Mayers crafts a one-night-only soul-shaking poetry gospel concert. With his original poetry, Mayers intends to blur the lines of spiritual reconciliation and the validity of vanity within the uncertainty of living. In addition, Mayers will also pay tribute to Maya Angelou, Nikki Giovanni, Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, and Aretha Franklin, with the support of live instrumentation and vocals. Mayers hopes that every person who experiences this concert will escape the judgment of themselves and others while rebirthing their confidence to pick up on their dreams and purpose.**





# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

---

Wellspring Wednesday gathers a multigenerational church community to nourish right and holy relationship among us and deepen our life of faith, grounded in spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural work.

5:45 p.m.: Dinner is \$8/adult, \$4/child, \$20 max/family (financial support is available by email to [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org)).

6:40 p.m.: Multigenerational chapel service in the Ames Chapel

7:10-8:30 p.m.: Weekly programs with childcare provided. **No programming on November 23 — Happy Thanksgiving!**

## November 2

*Dinner: Lasagne and chopped salad*

### **Introduction to the Double Helix**

Parish Hall

We've been using the double helix metaphor at Unity Church to map how our faith formation and antiracist multicultural practices form the strong bonds that support our religious life together: within, among, and beyond. But what possibilities does this metaphor suggest for our real lives? Join Laura Park and Angela Wilcox to experience how this metaphor illuminates pathways to a deeper, more integrated life of faith.

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

Gannett Room

Are you a new or visiting family interested in learning more about Unity Church's religious education programs? Come to our Religious Education New Family Orientation offered the first Wednesday of every month at 7:15 p.m. Questions? Email Ray at [ray@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ray@unityunitarian.org).

### **Beginner Violin**

Choir Room

Join Mayra Mendoza for beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Learn basic violin posture, note reading, and more! Contact Mayra at [mayraquitzia@hotmail.com](mailto:mayraquitzia@hotmail.com) with questions. All ages are welcome!

## November 9

*Dinner: Tomato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches*

### **Practice on the Double Helix**

Parish Hall

Laura Park and Angela Wilcox will begin with a short overview of the double helix metaphor used at Unity Church and then break into groups to try several practices on both the faith formation and antiracist multicultural sides of the helix. Come explore practices that can transform the ordinary experiences of life into an integrated life of faith.

### **Lectio Divina**

Online via Zoom, registration: [bit.ly/lectio22-23](https://bit.ly/lectio22-23)

Following a centuries-old Benedictine spiritual practice of contemplative reading, a chosen poem is read aloud, as attendees are encouraged to lift up what they heard and how the poem spoke to them. A different poem at each session. A rich way to receive poetry's gifts in a small group setting. Led by Lisa Wersal or Shelley Butler. Also offered November 22. Register once to attend any or all sessions.

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

Choir Room (see November 2 for details)

## November 16

*Dinner: Chili*

### **State of the Church: Reflections with Team Dynamics**

Parish Hall

Two groups of congregants will reflect on the state of the church. What are we observing in our life of faith together? What is resonating in church life? What is challenging? Between the groups, Alfonso Wenker from Team Dynamics and KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation, will offer observations and reflections from both the faith formation and antiracist multicultural sides of the double helix metaphor. How can this scaffold help us understand and respond to our experiences?

### **Antiracism Literacy Partners**

Online by Zoom, registration: [bit.ly/ALPnov1622](https://bit.ly/ALPnov1622)

This program, offered each quarter, will highlight useful books, podcasts, and videos in our ongoing practice of learning about systemic racism and the work of dismantling it. Participants report that their understanding of a resource increases exponentially when explored with a partner or a group. Come to choose a resource, sign up for a buddy or small group and make plans for your discussions. Resource/discussion guides provided.

### **Board Game Night**

Center Room

Open to everyone; kids are welcome with their adult(s)! We'll have a variety of board games available for ages 10 and up that are easy to learn, or bring a favorite board game that you would like to play.

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

Choir Room (see November 2 for details)

## November 30

*Dinner: Pulled pork or Huli Huli tofu sandwich*

### **Antidotes to White Supremacy Culture on the Double Helix**

Parish Hall

Tema Okun identified several characteristics of White Supremacy Culture. Read her updated article at [bit.ly/wscstillhere](https://bit.ly/wscstillhere) and explore her website at [whitesupremacyculture.info](https://whitesupremacyculture.info). In this session with Laura Park and Angela Wilcox, we'll explore and practice the antidotes to three of these characteristics including perfectionism, urgency, and right to comfort. How could the antidotes to these characteristics help us build the life of faith envisioned by the double helix?

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

Choir Room (see November 2 for details)

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## Openings in Chalice Circles

Chalice Circles offer a way to connect with a small group of Unity Church members through the spiritual practice of guided conversation. The circles are designed to nurture spiritual growth through deep sharing, disciplined listening, and heartfelt appreciation for what each participant has to share. Details are available at [unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html](http://unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html). Email Madeline Summers at [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org) to sign up. The deadline to email Madeline is November 15.

Groups hoping for one more member:

- Fourth Tuesday, 1:00-2:30 p.m., in-person
- Fourth Thursday, 1:00-2:30 p.m., in-person
- Fourth Friday, 1:00-2:30 p.m., in-person
- Couples Group, fourth Thursday, 7:00-8:30 p.m., in-person

## Serve on a Welcome Team

Join the hospitality ministry and help the congregation nurture mutual belonging on Sunday mornings. We currently have space for three Welcome Team members at the 9:00 service, and five Welcome Team members at the 11:00 service. Volunteers serve one service per month with their team, and the commitment is 2-2.5 hours per month. If interested please contact Madeline Summers at [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org).

## New Medical Aid In Dying Group

Following their Unitarian Universalist values, a group at Unity Church is working to get Medical Aid In Dying (MAID) legislation passed in Minnesota.

Nine states and the District of Columbia currently authorize medical aid in dying, which allows terminally ill, mentally capable adults to request and receive medication they can self-administer to bring about a peaceful death should their suffering become unbearable.

The group worked on getting out the vote, and, after the election, will contact legislators to ask for their support to authorize medical aid in dying.

For more information and to join the group, come to the MAID table in the Parish Hall on Sundays, or contact Jack or Marty Rossmann at [rossm001@umn.edu](mailto:rossm001@umn.edu).

## Donate to the Food Shelf

During the month of September we donated 255 lbs of food to Hallie Q. Brown. Let's keep up the good work! Please continue to bring corn bread mix, canned corn, canned green beans, cake mix, frosting, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie filling and other holiday foods. If you would like to donate money to purchase ham, turkey, or other perishable food items please visit [hallieqbrown.org](http://hallieqbrown.org) and click on donate.



## Fellowship Groups

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Men's Breakfast Group** meets monthly on the first Saturday for breakfast from 8:30-10:00 a.m.

**Men's Coffee Group** meets every other Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. for light-hearted conversation.

**Men's Conversation Group** meets Monday, November 14 and 28, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Men's Retirement Circle:** Monday, November 7 and 21, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

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

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

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

**Unity Book Club** meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. November 8: *A Promised Land*, by Barack Obama (chapters 16-end).

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

**Young Adult Group** (ages 18-35) is a fun, reflective group of people working to build multi-faith and multi-cultural community. They come together to ask the questions that are consuming us, to practice sharing what is sacred, and to try to live consequential lives as we navigate the complexity of being an adult. All are welcome. To be added to the Young Adults email list, please email [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org).

# LIBRARY-BOOKSTALL



## Faith in the Library and Bookstall

As I'm sure everyone knows by now, the Unity Library and Bookstall are your go-to places for books on all our worship themes and on all sources UU. This month we have a great selection on the November theme, faith. To be a faithful or faith-filled Unitarian Universalist is to embrace that, "We are people of all ages, people of many backgrounds, and people of many beliefs. We are brave, curious and compassionate thinkers and doers." (UUA) In addition to the above, we on the Library-Bookstall Team know for an absolute fact that Unity is a congregation of readers.

Two of the new "Faith" titles in the Bookstall:

***A Curious Faith: The Questions God Asks, We Ask, and We Wish Someone Would Ask Us*** by Lore Ferguson Wilbert. Brazos, 2022.

Growing up Christian, the author was discouraged from asking questions but now has a more expansive faith in which curiosity is an essential component. Having all the answers is not the hallmark of faith, but since God created us curious, asking questions is a way to deepen our understanding and connections with each other. No pat answers included.

***Wholehearted Faith*** by Rachel Held Evans. Harper One, 2021.

At the time Evans died in 2019, she was working on this book. Picked up and completed by friend, author Jeff Chu, it is a collection of her original writings. "Rachel Held Evans is widely recognized for her theologically astute, profoundly honest, and beautifully personal books. ... This book is for the doubter and the dreamer, the seeker and the sojourner, those who long for a sense of spiritual wholeness," according to her publisher.



*Among the many sources to help you explore faith in the Anderson Library:*

Our very own Interim Senior Minister Kathleen Rolenz edited ***Sources of Our Faith: Inspirational Readings***. Anderson Library: 289.1 R

This wide-ranging collection of poetry and prose draws from many traditions in the service of deepening our own Unitarian Universalist faith.

***Faith for the Unbeliever*** by Daniel Chesney Kanter. Anderson Library: 202 K  
According to John Buehrens, "With rational analysis and poignant stories, pilgrim and pastor Daniel Kanter looks at faith through four frames: belief and doubt, trust and distrust, loyalty and betrayal, plus our lifelong efforts to form a coherent worldview amidst constant change. Read, discuss, and you will find yourself wiser and more faithful than you were before."

And if you want to get historical about it, the library also contains sermons and pamphlets on faith by past ministers, William Channing Gannett, Samuel Crothers, Frederick May Eliot, Arthur Foote, and more. In the Anderson Library Historical Collection.

For more books on faith and Unitarian Universalism, visit the Unity Bookstall and the Unity Anderson Library on Sunday mornings. Browse the library catalog online at [librarycat.org/lib/UnityChurch](http://librarycat.org/lib/UnityChurch).

## A Spiritual Practice to Feed Your Soul: Lectio Divina



**Second Wednesday (November 9)  
and**

**Fourth Tuesday (November 22)**

**7:00-8:30 p.m.**

**Online via Zoom, register:**

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

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

## In The Justice Database: Faith Based Justice

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

Of the many topics in the database, this one includes sources by Unitarian Universalists and other religious traditions working for justice. For example, The Kairos Center for Religion, Rights, and Social Justice has created a network that works across thousands of communities on issues such as poverty, racism, immigration, LGBTQ+ rights, and more.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

---

## *Evergreen Quilters*

### **Gather the Stars**

The Evergreen Quilters are raffling off a quilt entitled "Gather the Stars" which is dedicated in memory of Martha Eaves, a founder of the Evergreen Quilters. "Gather the Stars" by Carl Sandburg was read at Martha's Celebration of Life service.

The quilt was lovingly designed, machine pieced and quilted by the Evergreen Quilters. The quilt is queen size (80x96"). Raffle tickets will be sold at church on Sunday, November 20, and December 4 and 11. You may also purchase raffle tickets any time from members of the Evergreen Quilters. Tickets are just \$2.00 each and all the money supports non-profits serving families in our community. The drawing will be held December 11 at 12:30 p.m. and you need not be present to win. Thank you for your support!

## *Gun Sense Team*

### **Join Our Work for Sensible Gun Laws**

Unity's Gun Sense team continues to keep the need for gun sense legislation in the fore, especially as Election Day approaches. All candidates on the ballot can be questioned on their position regarding gun laws. Talk to your neighbors and family to increase your own awareness and the awareness of others on this issue. We can't give up especially with the growing ownership of guns. Visit the Gun Sense table in Parish Hall after Sunday services to share your ideas and pick up a free gun lock to share with gun owners.

## *Obama School Team*

### **100th Anniversary Celebration**

#### **June 1, 2023: Save the Date**

Join the community for the 100th anniversary celebration of the school across the street from Unity Church. Formerly known as Marshall Junior High (west side, built in 1923) and Webster Elementary School (east side, built in 1926), and renamed Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary School shortly after his election as President, the building is set to close in June 2023 to undergo a big remodel. But before then, all are invited to a big anniversary celebration on June 1, 2023. If you or your family members attended the school, please plan to attend the open house and do a walk-through to reminisce about your days there. More details will be forthcoming but go ahead and save the date now!

**Volunteering at Obama School:** thanks to everyone who has volunteered to serve at the school this fall. If you are still considering volunteering, please contact Karen Abraham at [kabe1260@gmail.com](mailto:kabe1260@gmail.com) or Nancy Heege at [nancyheege672@gmail.com](mailto:nancyheege672@gmail.com). We have most of the volunteers we need but could probably find a spot for you, if you are interested.

## *Affordable Housing Team*

### **Project Home Operates at Provincial House**



Looking for a hands-on way to help families who are unsheltered? New opportunities to support Project Home are now available throughout the year! Last year, Interfaith Action was able to secure a permit to rent Provincial House (on St. Catherine University's campus, 1880 Randolph Avenue). Now, up to 30 families have rooms to move into where they can keep their belongings and make a temporary "home." And, Interfaith Action's rapid exit support team is on site at Provincial House to help families find permanent, affordable housing and connect them to employment and educational opportunities. Project Home is reaching out to Unity and other area churches with volunteer and donation opportunities at Provincial House:

**Overnight Support:** Two overnight support volunteers join a Project Home staff person from 8:00 p.m.-8:00 a.m. Tasks include handing out diapers, linens; putting out a continental breakfast and walking through the building for safety checks. And volunteers no longer sleep on cots; there are actual beds! Sign up: [tinyurl.com/OvernightHelp](https://tinyurl.com/OvernightHelp)

**Weekend Daytime Support:** With staff, help monitor the playground, computer lab and other communal spaces. Volunteers can bring games or crafts as you create community with the families. Sign up: [tinyurl.com/PHwkdvoll](https://tinyurl.com/PHwkdvoll)

**Weekend and Holiday Meal Teams:** Every Saturday and Sunday (and some holidays), teams of volunteers assist at lunch and dinner at Provincial House. Teams can supply a menu and ingredients and cook onsite in their newly remodeled kitchen. Or, prepare/warm up and serve a meal prepared by Chef Carlos. Meal teams will be composed of 3-6 adults (supervised older children are welcome). Sign up: [tinyurl.com/PHMealTeams](https://tinyurl.com/PHMealTeams)

**Winter Clothing Donations:** Contact Donna Franklin at [dfranklin@interfaithaction.org](mailto:dfranklin@interfaithaction.org) for information on needed winter coats, boots, hats, etc.

**Questions?** Please contact Unity Church members Justine Nelson at [justine.nelson@state.mn.us](mailto:justine.nelson@state.mn.us) or Janice Gestner at [janicemgg@comcast.net](mailto:janicemgg@comcast.net) or Provincial House shelter manager, Donna Franklin, at [dfranklin@interfaithaction.org](mailto:dfranklin@interfaithaction.org).

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Act for the Earth and Indigenous Justice Teams

Truth Telling and Healing:  
Indigenous and Environmental  
Justice Series

### PART 2 Place and Property: Treaties Among the U.S. and Indigenous Nations

Tuesday, November 1 • 7:00 p.m.  
In-person and online via Zoom  
Registration: [bit.ly/justiceseriestwo](https://bit.ly/justiceseriestwo)

Part 2 of our seven-part monthly series will focus on the treaties that were made with indigenous people of Minnesota. Please plan to join us for a presentation by Martin Case, author of *The Relentless Business of Treaties: How Indigenous Land Became U.S. Property*.

Case was the project lead for the U.S. Treaty Signers Project done by the Indian Land Tenure Foundation and on the design team for the development of "Why Treaties Matter," an exhibit collaboration of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, the Minnesota Humanities Center and the Smithsonian Institute.

In this presentation, Case will discuss "U.S. Indian" treaties, especially those in which Dakota people ceded land to the U.S. Topics will include how treaties created property titles (part of the famous Doctrine of Discovery); how treaty making sought to change the way people relate to the places where they live; and how stories shape our sense of who belongs here — historically, today, and in the future. The session will include some time for reflection and sharing emotionally and spiritually about what it means to live on land that was taken, stolen, and tricked away from the original owners.

## Act for the Earth Team

### My First Apartment

Anna Newton, Act for the Earth Team

It was a small efficiency along busy Poplar Avenue in Memphis. Brightly patterned 70s fabric freshened the sparse hand-me-down furnishings. An aquarium bubbled along one wall, a candlestick to remind me of my family on the small table. I had much to learn. It quickly became apparent that dirty dishes would still be there when I returned. Floors and laundry did not clean themselves. Astonishingly, however, it was not until I went home to visit my family that the magnitude of my mother's housekeeping efforts sank in. How did we all take this for granted? With newfound understanding, I joined my mother in clearing the table.

Today we live in a busy world. We buy food and cleaning products, entertainment and recreation items, much of it packaged for convenience. It all feels so normal ...until we spot the plastic bag caught in a tree, the Dasani bottle along the trail. So much of our garbage is plastic packaging, and much of it ends up in the environment. We have forgotten to help our mother clean the kitchen.

To stem the plastic waste tide, our church's facilities team has implemented steps to reduce waste:

- Reusable, washable serveware is used whenever possible
- For outdoor functions, where broken glass would be problematic, compostable serveware is used
- Organics (food scraps, paper towels and compostable serveware) are collected and composted
- Glass, paper, and cardboard are recycled
- Cleaning products are purchased in bulk



Our facilities team approaches this as part of their spiritual practice, honoring the earth and our connection to it. All of us have a role to play. We can bring reusable water bottles to fill at the fountain off the kitchen, mugs for coffee. When arranging hospitality for events, we can plan ahead and work with facilities to avoid disposable plastic packaging. May this become our spiritual practice too, as we help our mother clean up the kitchen.

Stop by Unity's Act For The Earth table after services to learn more about the **Plastic Crisis Challenge** ([unityunitarian.org/plastic-crisis-challenge.html](https://unityunitarian.org/plastic-crisis-challenge.html)), and for tips to reduce plastic in your home!

## Act for the Earth

### Climate Change and the Military

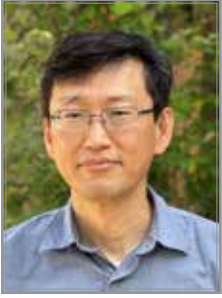
Friday, November 11 • 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Online via Zoom, register: [bit.ly/climatemilitary](https://bit.ly/climatemilitary)

Act for the Earth invites you to a presentation by Vince Dijanich, a Vietnam veteran, long-time nuclear activist, and climate change activist with Veterans for Peace. Vince will describe the environmental and climate impact that our military imposes on the earth — as much destruction and greenhouse gas emissions as some whole countries produce. The presentation will be followed by a discussion on solutions. Please join us on Veterans Day for discussion of a topic that is not usually addressed in other climate forums.



# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH



## Pitter-pattering Questions

*[...like raindrops on the window, and little feet running through the house]*

**Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation**

In what form can faith exist at the heart of empire, except as prophetic faith? A faith that renders us resilient to the disappointments and disorientation of an exhausted humanity that would otherwise bury us. A faith that sees the nascent holy in the absurd and mundane and imagines what is yet possible. A faith that moves beyond armchair critique and opens up the world through costly love. Pondering his fourteen-year-old nephew's future in a world wrestling with racism, James Baldwin gave voice to prophetic faith:

*Any upheaval in the universe is terrifying because it so profoundly attacks one's sense of one's own reality. Well, the black man has functioned in the white man's world as a fixed star, as an immovable pillar, and as he moves out of his place, heaven and earth are shaken to their foundations... It will be hard, James, but you come from [those] who picked cotton, dammed rivers, built railroads, and in the teeth of the most terrifying odds, achieved an unassailable and monumental dignity. ("A Letter to My Nephew," 1962)*

For those caught in the teeth of empire, the risks of faith have always been a daily reality. Faith as disciplined attention that hazards a way between hope and despair, between overwhelming reality and trembling possibility. Faith not as an accessory after the fact but as provocateur, never letting us forget that the history of Black asphyxiation dates back from the Middle Passage, that we are still in the middle of that passage, and that any claim to white innocence is a crime. For prophetic faith summons us to undoing whiteness — to the practice of kenosis or self-emptying of whiteness of its privilege, power, and innocence — until what is emancipated is a form of humanity long-held captive by whiteness. "Any real change implies the breakup of the world as one has always known it, the loss of all that gave one an identity, the end of safety." Prophetic faith is for the crumbling of white world-making, Baldwin asserts, and it will insist on the courage to risk gazing into that mirror called Black critique. And where there is no risk, there is no faith.

In the upheaval everywhere about us, moving between worlds and trying to orient our lives, prophetic faith has always risked the fissure and suspension of our self-certainty, arrogance, fear, and other-blaming. Prophetic faith has always risked vulnerability to disorientation, to training in one's own incoherence where complexity and contradiction is never resolved by the political but new forms of love, to the reorganization of our lives around a claim so radiant and intrusive that it sifts through our lesser commitments and summons us to a greater clarity of purpose. Pondering our fourteen-year-old nephews and the children of the church, in what other form can faith truly exist?

*Sharing questions that pitter-patter across our sacred journeys...*

## Unity Church Christmas Pageant Returns

After a two year pandemic hiatus, we are excited to invite families back to participate in Unity's Christmas pageant. Whether you are new to our pageant, or you have been part of it for years, we look forward to gathering again in the Sanctuary on Christmas Eve.

This rich tradition dates to 1919, when Unity Church minister Frederick May Eliot compiled the script and music for our retelling of the Christmas story. The script and the music have changed very little since the first pageant. Until the mid-1920s, actors spoke the story; an angel with stage fright led to the silent tableau that is today's pageant.

The pageant cast is open to all children and youth in grades kindergarten through second, and seventh through twelfth. Children in grades three through six are invited to participate in the children's pageant choir. Parents are needed to volunteer for various roles including costumes, room chaperones, and prompting.

Please mark your calendar for the following dates and times:

- A link to registration will be sent to all families by November 20. Registration is due December 4.
- Costume fitting and children's pageant choir rehearsal is Sunday, December 18.
- Pageant rehearsal is Friday, December 23, from 1:00-4:00 p.m.
- The pageant will be held twice on Christmas Eve, at 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. (each last approximately 40 minutes and cast and choirs must attend both).

Watch for additional information and registration. Questions? Contact Kelley Loughrey, Pageant Director, at [kelleyloughrey@comcast.net](mailto:kelleyloughrey@comcast.net) or text/call 763-607-7520.

# MUSIC MINISTRY



## Music Notes

**Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries**

This coming month I have the enormous privilege of leading The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Border CrosSing in a program that begins with movements from Bach's cantata *Herz un Mund und Tat und Leben* BWV 147 (Heart and mouth and deed and life.) This cantata was used for the Visitation, when Mary visits her relative Elizabeth. They are both pregnant: Mary with Jesus, and Elizabeth with John the Baptist. In the gospel of Luke, John becomes aware of the presence of Christ and leaps for joy while still in his mother's womb. Even though Bach originally wrote the cantata for Advent and expanded it for the Visitation at a later date, it is difficult for me not to hear John's somersaults in the leaping bass line and vocal acrobatics of the first movement of Bach's cantata. The choir sings that they will bear witness to Christ with heart, mouth, deed, and life while a clear solo trumpet line rings throughout the movement, leading the way.

I was raised in a Muslim household and do not necessarily relate directly to the theological aspects of this cantata. However, I immediately recognize John's leap of joy and feeling the conviction to devote ones entire life to the pursuit of that which caused that joyful leap. I felt that leap in my soul the first times I played Bach's music for keyboard and the first time I heard his concertos, even if then I was not old enough to recognize what exactly I was reacting to. I feel that leap for joy every time I uncover a new layer of connection between words, theology, and music in Bach's vocal music. Every time I witness incredible feats of counterpoint, such as in the two fugues that make up the Sanctus BWV 238, or moments of transcendent beauty, such as the second movement of the Oboe and Violin Concerto BWV 1060, I feel that inner somersault. This is music that I believe is worth devoting ones heart, mouth, deeds, and life to; there is enough here to fill several lifetimes.

I can remember another moment in my life when I experienced John's leap for joy: the first time I heard music from the Mexican Baroque. As much as I loved Bach's music, I had always felt like a foreigner when approaching it, that I could never truly connect to it because it was from a culture that was alien to my own... and then I heard Zumaya. Music replete with wonderful counterpoint, playful intermingling of dance and text and the spirit, music drawing from numerous styles and sources of inspiration — many of them the same as Bach — familiar and yet completely original. Most importantly, this was music that was written and performed in spaces I knew; not somewhere off in Europe, but in the cathedral downtown, in the convent that later became the conservatory where I studied piano, music created by a composer born in the same city where I was born! This Baroque music that I have always loved so much had always been part of my cultural heritage, and we have barely scratched the surface of the plethora of riches of Latin American Baroque music that exists out there. The second half of the program is devoted to three major works by Zumaya, three responsories from his Matins for the Virgin of Guadalupe, followed by two villancicos, one from Cuba by composer Esteban Salas, and one from Bolivia, an adaptation for large ensemble by Manuel de Mesa of a work by the Mexican composer Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

Leading The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra is a hugely significant moment for me and I hope that my friends at Unity Church will be there for the four concerts November 4-7.

The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra

## Border CrosSing Sings Bach and Zumaya

Thursday, November 3 • 7:00 p.m.  
Humboldt High School Auditorium

Friday, November 4 • 8:00 p.m.  
Ordway Concert Hall

Saturday, November 5 • 8:00 p.m.  
Ordway Concert Hall

Sunday, November 6 • 2:00 p.m.  
Benson Great Hall, Arden Hills

Tickets: [thespco.org](http://thespco.org)

## One Voice performs at Choirs Alive

with Great Northern Union  
Barbershop Chorus

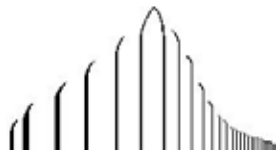
Saturday, November 12 • 2:00 p.m.  
O'Shaughnessy Auditorium, St. Paul

Tickets: [oshag.stkate.edu/event/great-northern-union-choirs-alive](http://oshag.stkate.edu/event/great-northern-union-choirs-alive)

ChoirsAlive! is a choral singing festival celebrating the resilience and common humanity of choirs as a vital part of the resilience of communities.

The goal of ChoirsAlive! is to bring a community of choirs together to lift voices in celebration of their resilience and common purpose, welcoming singers of all gender identities.





# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
Business Entrance: 732 Holly Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-228-1456 • fax: 651-228-0927 • [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) • [unity@unityunitarian.org](mailto:unity@unityunitarian.org)

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

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO. 1141

**TIME SENSITIVE  
MATERIAL**



**GATHER THE STARS**  
**Evergreen Quilters 2022 Quilt Raffle**  
Details on page 12



Truth Telling and Healing:  
Indigenous and Environmental  
Justice Series

**PART 2! DETAILS ON PAGE 13**

## **This Little Light of Mine; Is Mine**

Artist-in-Residence Lester Mayers  
crafts a one-night-only soul-shaking  
poetry gospel concert.

Details on page 8

## **Annual Meeting of the Congregation**

Saturday, November 19, 2022

**10:00 a.m.**

Details on page 4