

Forgiveness

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.

Forgiveness is one of those words spoken more often than it is genuinely understood, perhaps because it involves much more than we want to admit. We say “forgive and forget” as if amnesia could be a key to the healing we desire, but we are wise to remember that forgiveness is no simple act of erasure. It is a challenging and transformative practice aimed more at the future than it is at an unchangeable past.

In Biblical teachings, no fewer than six words are employed to signify the healing work of forgiveness. In Hebrew, *nasa* refers to the lifting of a burden, *salach*, to sparing, as of a prisoner’s life, and *kaphar* to the theologically intricate constellation of atonement. In Greek, two words, *aphiemi* and *apolo*, both refer to letting go, while *charizomai* suggests an interaction leavened by grace that makes way for renewed relationship.

What do we mean when we use the word *forgive*? Can one word actually be spacious, agile, and strong enough to carry all of the above meanings?

We might begin by noticing that our English word, like its counterparts in Spanish and French, is built on what is *given*. Forgiveness cannot be demanded or even negotiated, but rather is granted or given by the one harmed. (Yes, we sometimes need to forgive ourselves, but mainly when the harm we’ve inflicted has been on *us*.)

It can also be helpful to note that forgiveness does not change anything in the past but truthfully acknowledges what has occurred in a way that opens the possibility for something new to unfold in the future. If it lifts a burden, it does so not by denying its heft but by shifting how the weight of the past is carried forward. If it is about letting go,

it is not about releasing the past beyond reach of recall, but rather releasing the future from repeating the patterns of the past. True forgiveness honors past suffering while offering a pivot point from which we might move on in an entirely new direction.

Finally, as the Greek word *charizomai* notes, forgiveness is relational and a tool of liberation. As we work to address and heal the world’s injustices, oppressive systems, and violence, forgiveness offers a way to remain engaged with one another *despite our failings* and the injuries they cause. Certainly, not every relationship can be healed. What then might free our relationship with the future from the patterns of oppression that have shaped us all, if not forgiveness and the compassion it springs from?

“Forgiveness,” the saying goes, “means giving up all hope of a better past.” By doing that, it creates a new hope for a different and better future.

No single path or act or five-step program makes this deep work possible. Forgiveness is a posture more than a gesture, an orientation more than a deed, a practice rather than a creed.

The Buddhist teacher Sharon Salzberg was leading a guided meditation on forgiveness in Israel, when she noticed a participant shifting frequently during the meditation, unable to hold still. Afterwards, he approached her and confessed he was overwhelmed by the forgiveness practice. He explained that he had recently survived a terrorist attack and was still in pain from buckshot that could not be removed from his body. He was not sure he could learn to forgive, he told her. But, he added, he believed it was both possible and necessary to learn to stop hating.

Each of us is likely living with the pain of some emotional shrapnel that cannot be removed. For any number of reasons, it may not be the right time to forgive. But what shifting might lift our burden? What spiritual practices might release our future from the patterns of a painful past, and what renewed relationships might be possible when we engage those practices? What postures might open the possibility of forgiveness, or at the very least an end to hatred or resentment?

“What we are developing,” writes adrienne maree brown, “is not a more perfect way of walking, but a more forgiving and compassionate way of dancing.” Will we join that dance, as transformative and revolutionary as it might be?

From Associate Minister Karen Hering on behalf of this month's theme team:

Ahmed Anzaldúa, Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs, Lisa Friedman, KP Hong

Forgiveness Theme Resources

BOOKS

No Future without Forgiveness by Desmond Tutu

Four Ways to Forgiveness, short stories by Ursula K. Le Guin

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince by J.K. Rowling

I'm Sorry, children’s book by Sam McBratney, illustrated by Jennifer Eachus

"A Case for Reparations," article by Ta Nehisi-Coates

MOVIES

Lady Bird (2017)

The Tale of Despereaux (2008), based on the children's book by Kate DiCamillo

Just Words



Forty years ago I wrote "A Litany for Atonement," a responsive ritual to be read during the time Jews call "The Days of Awe," the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. These days are set aside (though any day will do) for confessing our shortcomings and making amends with those we have harmed. The litany was included among the readings in *Singing the Living Tradition* and is used each year by many Unitarian Universalist congregations.

In 1984, the litany was used at a gathering of 500 of our ministers. We had come together to craft a new covenant for our collegial community. The litany consists of a series of confessions followed by a congregational response; I forgive myself. I forgive you. We begin again in love. Following the service, I was cornered in an elevator by the great activist preacher William Sloan Coffin who was with us as one of the keynote speakers. "Brother Isaacs," he growled at me, "What makes you think you can forgive yourself?"

I have always assumed his question was an expression of his Calvinist theology. I think he was making a point about his understanding of the nature of God. I've pondered his question for many years and wish he was still with us so that we might deepen the conversation. I would start by reminding him that God is a mystery at best and that forgiveness is not only an existential challenge but an interpersonal one as well. But what I've learned that matters most is that the ritual is not an endpoint but instead it is a place for starting over. It is not primarily about forgiveness. It is an opportunity for confession and for turning toward the need to make amends. To focus on forgiveness is to confuse atonement with absolution.

Our pulpit guest on Sunday, October 13, the Rev. Nancy MacDonald Ladd, in her brilliant and highly recommended book *After the Good News: Progressive Faith Beyond Optimism*, writes:

I was not called to pursue absolution centered on my own internal state of anxiety and external search for validation. Rather, to assume a humble state of atonement in which I was asked to do my own work. Authentic absolutions imply a willingness not just to be forgiven, but to make amends and to be changed so completely that our actions and reactions can bring us into right relationship with the world and those we share it with... Indeed, whether other people choose to forgive us or not is none of our damn business. Whether or not we are willing to live differently is.

Our new Ends call us to interpersonal and cultural humility. "Only," Jean Piaget reminds us, "by decentering ourselves on ourselves" will we be able to grown into more mature, more capable, and more loving human beings. Shall we?

As always,
Rob Eller-Isaacs

EVERYBODY IN

October is pledge drive month! Turn to page 5 for details!

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Hazel Clausen

born one more redeemer

September 3, 2019

to parents

Stephanie Clausen and Bill Stout

Jenavieve Jacqueline Mehr

born one more redeemer

September 11, 2019

to parents

Brie and Andrew Mehr

Marathon Alert

The Twin Cities Marathon will wind its way along Summit Avenue the morning of Sunday, October 6. Many roads will be closed from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please plan alternate routes and allow extra time to reach Unity Church that morning.

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

OCTOBER SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday Worship

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 online at www.unityunitarian.org.

October 6: Atonement and Forgiveness

How do we find it within ourselves to make room for the possibility of forgiveness? Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Kara Younkin Viswanathan will explore what steps we might take to increase the likelihood of real forgiveness occurring between people. The Litany of Atonement will be shared.

Musicians: Unity Choir (9:00/11:00); The Mirandola Ensemble (4:30)

Soup supper: Chicken wild rice / veggie wild rice

October 13: Pledge Drive Celebration Sunday

All In — Nancy MacDonald Ladd

Let me confess something — at times, I tend to keep my cards pretty close to the vest. I assess institutions and initiatives carefully, trying to decide how much of myself to lay out on the table. And yet — these are times, in this faith, in this country, and in this world, that call for us to be all in. These are times when we must be both committed to the power of community and humble in the face of what that commitment asks of us. Using the story of a miracle that happened a long time ago, we'll look at what wonders we can create when we bring everything we are to the common table.



Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd serves as Senior Minister of the River Road Unitarian Universalist congregation in Bethesda, Maryland, where she lives with her spouse, two kids and one badly-behaved cat. She is also on the faculty of Meadville Lombard Theological School, serves as a local and national leader in congregation based community organizing, and recently published her first book, *After the Good News; Progressive Faith Beyond Optimism*.

Musicians: Unity Choir, Unity Singers, Women's Ensemble, Children's Choir (9:00/11:00); Matthew Valverde, tenor (4:30)

Soup supper: Chili Sunday

October 20: A Fresh Act, a New Chapter

Forgiveness cannot alter the past. But what happens — in our bodies and in the future unfolding — when, as Douglas Steere puts it, forgiveness adds “a fresh act” to a wrong that has occurred? Rev. Karen Hering and worship associate Kevin Harris will consider how forgiveness creates a turning point in the stories of our lives and our world, making possible a new chapter moving in a new direction and, possibly, in new and renewed relationships.

Musicians: Jeffrey Van, guitar; Nick Chalmers, tenor

Soup supper: Cuban black bean

October 27: Forgive Our Debts

Some say Jesus came to Jerusalem to declare the Jubilee, the year of starting over. In the year of Jubilee, those in slavery will be set free, the land will be redistributed, and all debts will be forgiven. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Bob Peskin will wrestle with the question of reparations and how best to move toward a just and lasting peace.

Musicians: Children's Choir, Unity Singers (9:00/11:00); Women's Ensemble (4:30)

Soup supper: Avelgmono

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 a chosen community non-profit recipient.

October 6: Little Kitchen Foodshelf

Little Kitchen Foodshelf seeks to increase access to healthy food by organizing food distributions of free groceries to students and families at Pillsbury School. Last year 80 families were served an average of 60 pounds of food per month. Unity Church member Rebecca Stewart works at Pillsbury Elementary School.

October 13: Voices of Hope

Voices of Hope is a women's prison choir at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Shakopee, MN. The choir fosters individual growth and bridges unlikely communities through song, serving communities both inside and outside of the prison. It empowers women to find their voice, build connections, and brings a positive message of hope and healing. Unity Church member Peter Heege sings with Voices of Hope Summer Jam, where community members join in singing with the choir.

October 20: Canine Inspired Change

Canine Inspired Change (CIC) is a nonprofit organization helping young people transcend trauma, social struggles, and isolation by sparking connections with dogs, volunteers, and each other. Working with trained therapy dog teams, CIC leads classes blending dog training and therapy to teach students patience, compassion, and confidence while building communication skills and establishing healthy boundaries. Unity Church member Toni Lee volunteers with CIC.

October 27: SteppingStone Theatre

The collection will support programming at the Obama School, providing eight weeks of performing arts experiences at SteppingStone Theatre facilitated by professional teaching artists. This school year, 60 scholars will participate in the program. Unity Church member Kelley Nelson works at SteppingStone and is helping to lead this new partnership.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / BLUU SYMPOSIUM

Board Service: Connection and Vision

Nancy Evert Trustee



There are so many ways to engage with Unity Church. I am in the choir, was a Boston pilgrim, have Dined with Nine, participated in Chalice Circles, attend Sunday worship, enjoy Wellspring Wednesdays — and, for the last three years, I've served on Unity's nine-member Board of Trustees. My term as a trustee ends in December. Through board service, I've deepened my understanding of our church structure, our congregation, and, our leadership team. With this column, I want to share some reflections with you.

When I told my friends and family that I was joining the Unity Church board, several people responded that service on a church board can be uniquely challenging, and sometimes disillusioning. We join a church to deepen our spiritual lives, to connect with an intentional community, to receive pastoral guidance and care. Getting involved with the governance of a church requires focus on leadership, finances, and future viability, all in the context of shared responsibility and decision making. For some, this shift in focus can distract from the experience of church — revealing differences with fellow members, complicating relationships with leaders, or raising concern about institutional integrity. For me, service as a trustee has increased my confidence in our staff and lay leadership and deepened my belief in Unity's ongoing and important relevance for our members and our broader community.

Unity's board is elected from among church members. As a trustee, I've been thoroughly impressed by the commitment and skills trustees invest in Board service. And, again, this year, the church is blessed with an abundance of members interested to contribute their time, perspectives, and talents in board service. At the annual meeting in November, the congregation will be presented with a slate of three well qualified candidates to replace those trustees whose terms are ending this year.

Board service has given me greater insight into the scope of work of our executive team (the five staff members who together provide leadership to the church) and their very impressive capabilities. In addition to the preaching and programming that is more apparent, the ET has complex administrative responsibilities. The board has visibility to the myriad operational systems the ET has established and implemented. The board hears the thoughtful theological underpinnings of Unity programs and gains insight into the complex planning required to offer our church facility as a hub for kindred community activities, as well. The board has clear focus on celebrating the final year of Rob and Janne's extraordinary ministry and positioning the church to thoughtfully transition into a period of interim ministry before calling a new senior minister(s).

The process and outcomes of our Ends Statements renewal process (2018-2023) adds to my confidence in Unity's future. There was an unprecedented level of congregational participation in informing and shaping these Ends. The Ends set forth our aspirational commitments for the next five years. The ET has interpreted the Ends and created strategies and plans that will continually invite the congregation to pursue these aspirations. The Ends communicate a clear direction for the executive team that will extend beyond Rob and Janne's departure. Importantly, too, over the last several years, the board has carefully reviewed and updated its bylaws and policies to assure that these documents maintain a strong foundation for the relationship of the board and the ET through the transition years ahead.

So, as I approach the end of my service as a trustee, I feel great appreciation for the leadership of Unity Church, believe we will be well-prepared for a successful ministerial transition, and am confident that our Ends establish a vision that will continue to call Unity Church and our members to the growth and change that we yearn for within, among, and beyond ourselves.

Black Lives of UU presents

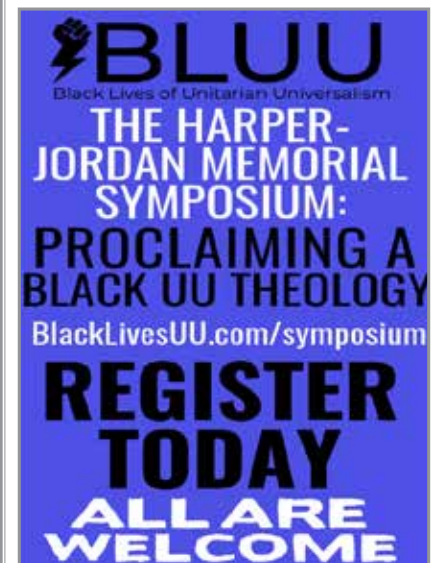
The Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium

**October 30-November 2, 2019
St. Paul, MN**

The Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium responds to a longing on the part of many Black Unitarian Universalists to more fully understand where we have been, who we are now, and how we hope to live out our Unitarian Universalism as Black people.

This four-day gathering will offer a welcome reception, informative and interactive plenaries, spiritual grounding and worship experiences, and as many meaningful and joy-filled networking and community-building opportunities as you can handle. The symposium will conclude with a worship service, open to all, at Unity Church-Unitarian.

The Symposium is open to everyone, with priority registration for Black people, Indigenous people and People of Color. After you have registered you will be notified if a space in the symposium is available for you. Full details and registration is online at www.blacklivesuu.com.



PLEDGE DRIVE: EVERYBODY IN

EVERYBODY IN

*We are bound always to the ground of our being,
the truth of our deeper selves,
and the network of accountability we form with one another.*

— Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd

October is pledge month! We are living into a future filled with the challenges and the excitement that transitions hold. We are called to embrace our mission to be a “free and inclusive religious community” and to stand together on our shared values.

This is not the time, in the world or in our church community, to fade away. It’s a time to reflect on what would be missing from our lives without Unity Church, a time to claim Unity Church as our spiritual cooperative, and to say, “Everybody In!” What we promise to one another and to the church creates the foundation and the means for the future we aspire to create.

Pledges provide 77% of Unity’s annual income and create the foundation for the 2020 operating budget, which will be presented for approval at the Annual Meeting on November 16, 2019. Pledging members earn the right to vote on the budget and other resolutions at annual meetings. Please pledge and give generously!

**Unity Church-Unitarian
Pledge Celebration
Weekend
“Everybody In”
with special guest
Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd
October 12-13, 2019**

**Saturday, October 12
Celebration Event
Rev. Ladd, reading
from her new book
After the Good News
Progressive Faith Beyond Optimism**

**Sunday, October 13
Celebration Sunday
Rev. Ladd, preaching
9:00 AM • 11:00 AM • 4:30 PM**

2020 Pledge Drive

This what to expect during the month of October:

- Your personalized pledge materials will arrive in the mail by the beginning of October. Please review the materials and consider your operating and capital pledges for the next two years.
- Pledge Celebration Weekend is October 12-13 with special guest, the Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd, senior minister at River Road UU Congregation in Bethesda, Maryland, and author of the book *After the Good News: Progressive Faith Beyond Optimism*.

On Saturday, October 12 from 9:00 a.m. to noon, Rev. Ladd will read from her new book and engage us in what’s sure to be a lively and thought-provoking conversation. All are welcome! Books are available in the Bookstall and the Anderson Library, and will be for sale on Saturday morning.

Sunday, October 13 is Pledge Drive Celebration Sunday with Rev. Ladd preaching at all three services. All are invited to turn in pledges in a celebration of giving, and special music will be included in each service.

- If you can’t attend on October 13, please make your pledges by Celebration Sunday. Mail your pledge card, drop it off in Song’s mailbox in the Unity Church copy room, or pledge online at unityunitarian.org/annual-pledge. We will help you remember to pledge if you forget!

Thank you for your generosity in sustaining and stewarding the church. “Everybody In!”

WELCOME WORDS / CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Welcome Words



Rev. Lisa Friedman

Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement

I was talking with a member recently, who observed that she loves to greet new people at coffee hour, but given the size of our congregation, she can't always tell who is new! It's true that we are a community of about 1500 people of all ages — larger than some small towns. We can't know everyone by sight or by name, though week by week, we can intentionally meet and learn a few more. But our conversation helped me to realize that maybe it isn't as important to know whether or not someone is new, but more important to cultivate a coffee hour where no one is a stranger; where we are truly present to one another — young and old, new and seasoned, shy and outgoing. What brought you here today? What did the worship service spark for you? How is your week going? Would you like a donut or a cup of tea? Thich Nhat Hanh once said, "The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence." May we be generous with this gift as we build the Beloved Community together. See you in church!

Pathway to Membership Classes

Sign up for Pathway to Membership classes at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement, at lisa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x 107. She is also happy to meet with you personally to answer questions and to welcome you into the congregation. Childcare is available by request at least one week in advance.

Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Inquiry

Finding Yourself at Unity is offered on a regular basis on Sundays from 10:20-11:15 a.m. in the Ames Chapel. These sessions can be attended in the order that works for you. In these classes, we will have an opportunity to share part of our religious journey, to take a more in depth look at the history of Unity Church, to discuss the expectations and benefits of membership, and get to know the programs and ministries of the congregation. Childcare is available in the nursery.

- October 6: Social Justice and Community Outreach
- October 13: Membership 101 and Congregational Life
- October 20: Building Tour
- October 27: UU History

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

Saturday, November 9 • 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Have you been considering membership at Unity Church? This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's needs 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!

Mentoring at Unity

A Path to Deeper Connection

Unity Church has a mentor program available to all visitors and new members. A mentor serves as a guide and a resource in the congregation. They pledge to meet at least once a month face to face, and be available for ongoing questions and advice for at least six months. Each mentor/mentee team can decide what is most helpful — to have a buddy with whom to attend services and events, or a partner with whom to discuss Unitarian Universalism and each other's spiritual journeys, and more. If you have questions, or would like to request a mentor, please stop by the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall or email Rev. Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org.

Your UU Elevator Speech

Saturday, October 26

9:00 a.m.–noon • Unity Church

Do you ever wish you could explain Unitarian Universalism in the time it takes to ride an elevator? Would you like to increase your confidence in talking about your church and your faith?

Join us for this workshop where we will write and practice our elevator speeches. Childcare is available by request up to a week in advance. Sign up in the Parish Hall on Sundays or email Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org.

Save the date! Third Annual Queer Retreat

Saturday, April 4, 2020

Unity Church is hosting a retreat for all those who identify under the queer and/or trans umbrella, and especially for people who don't fit into the gender binary. The planning team is currently seeking volunteers for a variety of roles! For more information check out the LGBTQ page at unityunitarian.org/lgbtq.html or contact Ray Hommeyer at ray@unityunitarian.org.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

First Saturday Men's Breakfast

On Saturday, October 5, the men of Unity Church will gather for good food, friendship, and conversation. The breakfast will run from 8:30 until 10:00 a.m. Our head chef will be the inimitable Tom Zell.

Racial Justice Film Series: *Slam*

Friday, October 11 • 7:00 p.m. • Robbins Parlor

Unity's Racial Justice Film Series seeks to further our growth in understanding and challenging white supremacy and structural racism. There will be time for conversation after the film. Popcorn, too.

Slam portrays the experience of a young African American man caught in the Washington, DC, correctional system. Set in a real prison, using inmates as supporting cast members, *Slam* explores institutional and internalized racism and the use of poetry as a way towards liberation.

Kung Fu

Curious about martial arts? Did you know that Unity Church is home to a vibrant and welcoming Kung Fu group? Our holistic self-defense practice invigorates the body, rejuvenates the spirit, and clears the mind. Explore our rich Five Animal Kung Fu (Leopard, Snake, Tiger, Crane, and Dragon) to develop a personalized style that suits your temperament and body type. Beginners and experienced martial artists welcome! Class is Saturdays, 11:00 a.m.- noon, in the Body Room. Questions? Contact Bryan Kujawski at barney.kujawski@gmail.com.

Tai Ji at Unity Church

A new bi-weekly Tai Ji and Qigong class begins Thursday, October 24, from 11:00-12:30 p.m., teaching the Tai Ji Five Moving Forces form. The class will include Tai Ji, Qigong, sitting meditation, and poetry, focused on the Five Moving Forces form choreographed by Chungliang Al Huang. The form originates in Taoism and emphasizes harmony with nature as a way of living. The group of movements expresses the five life forces — water, fire, wind, earth and metal — as metaphors to inspire kinesthetic awareness in our bodies.

Teacher Lisa Schlingerman has practiced Tai Ji for over twenty years. She says, "I learned Tai Ji as easy, natural, everyday movements." She notes that the practice is a safe and gentle form of exercise for people of all ages. No experience necessary, but an RSVP by email to karen@unityunitarian.org is requested by the day before. Wear comfortable shoes and loose clothing if possible. A free will offering will be taken.

Christmas Pageant 2019: Photos and Memories Wanted

This year marks Unity's centennial Christmas pageant, 1919-2019, and the excitement of the celebration is building. Mark your calendars for Tuesday, December 24, at 4:00 and 5:30 p.m., and come be a part of this historic milestone for our church community. All youth, K-12, are invited to be a part of this special cast. If you haven't been a part of it before — it's a great year to join! Details and participant registration will be available in November.

Like the pageant itself, the celebration will be simple and memorable. The planning team is hoping you will share your memories, photos, pageant programs, cast lists, etc. If you are a pageant cast alum, choir alum, or a parent volunteer alum, please share your keepsakes! Photos from 1919-1966 are particularly desirable. We look forward to engaging our entire congregation for this once in a lifetime opportunity! If you have ideas about how to commemorate this anniversary or are interested in helping with the planning team, please contact Kelley Loughrey at 763-607-7520.

Open Page

Writing Sessions

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering and held at Unity Church, Open Page writing session participants use stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom



from religious teachings, science and history, and provided prompts, to reflect on the monthly theme. No writing experience is necessary. Bring something to write with and on; the rest will be provided! Free; RSVP requested to karen@unityunitarian.org.

Forgiveness

**Wednesday, October 16
7:15–8:30 p.m.**

"Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a constant attitude," said Martin Luther King, Jr. An evening of reflection on the challenges and the power of forgiveness.

Gratitude

**Wednesday, November 13
7:15–8:30 p.m.**

The power of gratitude to open the heart is perhaps what cause Meister Eckhardt to declare, "If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is 'Thank you,' it will have been enough." We'll explore how to keep gratitude alive and well even in the hardest times.

Reverence

**Sunday, December 8
2:00-4:00 p.m.***

**Different session timing and length.*
"Without reverence, things fall apart," writer Paul Woodruff has observed. "To teach reverence," he says, "you must find the seeds of reverence in each person and help them grow." This writing session uncovers the seeds of reverence planted within each of us and help them grow.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun.

Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m., followed by worship in the Ames Chapel at 6:45 p.m., and an evening of rich programming beginning at 7:15 p.m. All are welcome. Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance.

Dinner: The cost for dinner is: \$8/adult (small increase this year!), \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family. (Children under the age two are free.) All meals will offer vegetarian and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies may contact madeline@unityunitarian.org to arrange to have a special preparation. Email Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org for financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner.

October 2

Dinner: Roasted chicken or veggie sausage, cauliflower tabbouleh, tzatziki, hummus, pita, olives

Book Launch: *Tell Me When You Get There* by Lia Rivamonte

The latest in a long string of talented Unity writers to have a new book out is our very own Lia Rivamonte with a collection of poetry called *Tell Me When You Get There*. David Mura says these poems "are lyrical, beautifully crafted, and complex in their emotional weather." Margaret Hasse writes, "I promise that these poems will take you places in the world and in your heart that feel both foreign and familiar." Reading with Lia will be special guest poet, Naomi Cohn. (See page 11.)

Women's Empowerment: Self Care and Self Defense

Please join Michelle Loken Price and Jessica Gallo for an hour of honoring and connecting to your inner care giver, while bringing forth your physical potential to protect yourself. Self love and self protection arise from the same source. This offering will begin to guide you on this journey.

Great College Search *Runs from 7:15-8:45 p.m.

Craig Allen will help you learn how to optimize the process and become a critical consumer of colleges.

- October 2: Financial aid basics.
- October 9: Competitive Colleges: What, Why (or Why Not), and How
- October 23: Exploring a Gap Year with Chris Brown

Sessions will consist of presentations followed by question and answer sessions and are for high school students and/ or parents who are currently in or interested in starting a college search and application process. We'll also try to raise up topics that might be of special interest to Unitarian Universalist searchers. Craig Allen is a member of Unity Church and a certified college admissions counselor.

Religious Education New Family Orientation

Led by Director of Religious Education KP Hong, this session is for families new to Unity Church who would like to learn more about religious education for children and youth.

Textile Arts

This group meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month and is open to textile creatives of all ages. Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Yin Yoga

Madeline Summers will offer a slow paced style of yoga with asanas held for an extended period of time. The practice will focus on breath as a sacred tether to the inner layers of being, relationship with discomfort on and off the mat, and will include guided meditation. Dress comfortably, bring a mat and a small blanket if you have one. All levels welcome.

October 9

Dinner: Roasted chicken, mashed potatoes, salad, pumpkin bars

Exploring the Pathways of Adult Faith Formation

Unitarian minister A. Powell Davies once observed that, "Life is just a chance to grow a soul." We might add, in that spirit, that church is a just a chance to grow our souls together. Join KP Hong and Lisa Friedman as they share the work they have done to more clearly articulate the pathways for adult faith formation here at Unity Church and learn more about opportunities to explore them together.

Onward Educators

Using the work of education, coaching, and resilience researcher Elena Aguilar, we will strengthen and support one another in monthly meetings. Grounded in neuroscience, social science, and psychology, this workshop will change the way we think about emotions, stress, and our purpose as educators. We will focus on the 12 habits that cultivate resilience, and their correlating dispositions, and provide a road map for how to feel more effective, more fulfilled, and happier at work. Facilitators Jackie Smith and Julianne Malcom will guide the group through a year of resilience-building exercises and reflections, and participants will collaborate to build their capacity for resilience throughout the school year. The sessions follow an arc throughout the school year, but participants are welcome to come to some or all sessions. All educators are welcome.

October 9 continued ⇒

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

October 9 continued

Getting Scrappy: Fruit

Come see some interesting and creative ways to utilize fruit scraps — banana peels, citrus peels, apple cores, watermelon rinds — all year round. Participants will leave with some marmalade, unique gift wrap ideas, recipes, and an art project.

Beginning Violin — Mayra Mendoza

Join Mayra Mendoza for a beginning violin class — all ages are welcome! Mayra is a violinist and teacher who volunteers frequently with the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony, McPhail Center for Music, and the Minneapolis Public Schools. She has also played with the Wayzata Orchestra and Northeast Symphony. Questions? Email mayraquitzia@hotmail.com.

Adult OWL

Unity Church is offering the adult (18+) version of Our Whole Lives, the UUA's human relationship and sexuality program. The course will be offered over 12 Wellspring Wednesday evenings beginning October 9. If interested, please contact Drew Danielson at drew@unityunitarian.org.

Great College Search: Competitive Colleges

October 16

Dinner: Black bean tostadas, braised beef, radish and avocado salsa, pickled red onion, queso, and cookies

Open Page Writing Session: Forgiveness

RSVP requested to karen@unityunitarian.org

"Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a constant attitude," said Martin Luther King, Jr. An evening of reflection on the challenges and the power of forgiveness.

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, Open Page writing session participants use stories, poetry, and images as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, to reflect on the monthly theme. No writing experience is necessary. Bring something to write with and on.

Gardening as a Spiritual Practice

With the gardening season coming to an end, this group will host a show and tell about gardening as an embodied spiritual practice. Bring something you've harvested or a photo and share your experience!

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Gentle Yoga — Suzanne Burr

This session, offered by Suzanne Burr, will focus on mindfulness through movement, open-heartedness, and presence. Nourish awareness through breathing, moving slowly, and paying close attention to internal sensations through a gentle yoga practice. Dress comfortably, bring a mat and a small blanket.

Textile Arts

October 23

Dinner: Roasted chicken, baked squash and brussels, kale salad, cookies

2019 – The Year of the Return

Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo declared 2019 "The Year of the Return." An invitation was extended to descendants of enslaved Africans. It acknowledges the 400 years since the trans-Atlantic slave trade began in 1619 between North America and West Africa. Russel Balenger, Nila Gouldin, and Ray Wiedmeyer will share their educational and enlightening experiences when they embraced this invitation to return.

Great College Search: Exploring a Gap Year

A well planned gap year is built around enhancing one's postsecondary education as well as fulfilling dreams of travel, volunteering, and learning in the real world. Is a gap year for everyone? No. However, well planned gap years are becoming more common. Come explore if it is for you. Chris Brown is the founder of Beyond the Walls Education.

A Climate Justice Conversation

In follow up to the World Climate Strike, Julia Nerbonne, executive director of Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light, will host a climate justice conversation. Join the Sustainable Living Team for an evening of reflection and planning about how we can authentically engage with the climate movement.

Tween Group: Grades 5-7

Beginning Violin with Mayra Mendoza

Yin Yoga with Madeline Summers

October 30

Dinner: Clam chowder with biscuits, peeled carrot salad, and Boston cream pie

Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism

Mtangulizi Sanyika (formerly Hayward Henry) has been a key figure in shaping Black Humanism. From the early 60s until today, Dr. Sanyika has been hard at work helping shape and strengthen the black liberation movement. He served as Chair of the Black Affairs Council and was a central leader in the Black Unitarian Universalist Caucus during the so-called "Black Empowerment Controversy" in the late 60s. Known by the honorific "Baba" among his friends at the center of Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism he is a compelling, inspiring speaker. Dr. Sanyika will reflect on black liberation both as an historical narrative and as a movement that is moving on.

Onward Educators

Yin Yoga with Madeline Summers

YOUNG ADULTS / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

The Possibility of Forgiveness

From Ray Hommeyer, Young Adults Group

But what do you mean by forgiveness? One of our young adults raised this question at our last meeting in June. I found myself remembering a conversation with a youth from Unity. She was dismayed and outraged about bullying at her school, yet she was also concerned — and confused by her concern — about how bullies were regarded. Her head dropped and then lifted as she asked a courageous question: “Can you forgive someone who was wrong?”

In that moment I felt my anti-oppression training shouting: only impact matters! It raged against my faith identity that insists on covenant; insists on recognizing intention as well as impact; insists on the possibility of forgiveness.

“Yes,” I replied. And her face froze in unease and longing. “Yes, because forgiveness and excusing someone’s behavior are not the same thing. Forgiving someone doesn’t mean you can’t also hold them accountable.”

“So... forgiveness and accountability are different?”

“*They have to be!*” My voice held both hope and desperation.

Forgiveness is not something of the past. It’s relevant and present in our young adult lives and the generations following us. Toddlers remind me of the importance of divorcing accountability and forgiveness. Kids throw toys, pull hair, pee on the carpet, but I continue to forgive them; yet if I forgave kids without also holding them accountable, they would never learn to not jump on tables or bite their friends! When I worked at a domestic violence shelter in college, my understanding of the difference between forgiveness and accountability was significantly complicated. I remember a time I was presented evidence that one of our residential survivors was being abusive towards another survivor at the shelter. How ought we respond to these complex situations — not only logistically, but emotionally?

Accountability is necessary, but so is forgiveness. Especially when I examine how I, too, am complicit in perpetuating the cycles of harm I am caught in. Yes, my yearning for forgiveness is somewhat selfish. I *need* the grace of forgiveness when I mess up; when I cause harm. But my belief in forgiveness is also an extension of my longing to live in community and work together with other human beings, fallible as we all are. I cannot envision living with people without a practice of forgiveness.

If we are willing to try forgiving others, can we also ask to be forgiven? In the multitude of work ahead of us laid out in our Ends Statements, can we ask for forgiveness for the ways in which we have already failed? In which our individual-centered lives get in the way of our efforts? Or, on the other hand, in which we ignore one another’s basic human needs in order to “get the work done?” *Isn’t this courageous practice of forgiveness essential to the possibility of our collective vision?*

Fellowship Groups

These 12-step groups meet at Unity Church: Al Anon meets Wednesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Science Room; Fresh Air AA meets Thursdays, 8:00-9:30 p.m., Anderson Library; Debtors Anonymous meets Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Drama Room

Afterthoughts offers time to discuss the service. This group meets after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact Paul Gade, 651-253-1493

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month, noon–2:00 p.m. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Evergreen Quilters: The group meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. (at Unity Church), and fourth Saturday of the month, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (offsite). Contact Peggy Wright, 651-698-2760

Families Living with Mental Health Challenges: A support group for families living with mental health challenges. Meets the first Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Living With Grief Group: For people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Men’s Conversation Group meets the second and fourth Monday of each month, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., in the Gannett Room, to discuss a wide range of topics. Contact Terry McDanel, tmcdanel@gmail.com

Men’s Retirement Group: Monday, October 7 and 21, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Tom Zell, tomzell@me.com

National Alliance on Mental Illness support group for young adults with a mental illness meets the first, third, and fifth Sunday of each month, 6:30-8:00 p.m., COA/OWL room.

New Look at the Bible: Meets the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade, 651-253-1493

Recovery from White Conditioning: Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m., Gannett Room. Contact Dayna Kennedy, daynamelissa@icloud.com

Textile Arts Group meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 7:15-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc. Contact Linda Mandeville, lindamandeville41@gmail.com.

Unity Book Club: Second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne, jack.hawthorne@comcast.net.
October 8: *It Can't Happen Here?* by Sinclair Lewis
November 12: *The War on Normal People* by Andrew Yang
December 10: *Before We Were Yours* by Lisa Wingate

Women In Retirement: Meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Friedman, lisa@unityunitarian.org

Young Adult Group (ages 18-35) meets Sunday, October 13 and 27, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact KP Hong, kp@unityunitarian.org

Zen Meditation: Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Ames Chapel. Instruction offered October 1 at 4:30 p.m. Contact KP Hong, kp@unityunitarian.org.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN / LIBRARIES & BOOKSTALL

Unity's Emergency Action Plan

From Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director

How would you respond if we had to evacuate the church in response to a fire, a gas leak or a bomb threat? What is the protocol if there's a medical emergency, or if an inappropriate person is posing a threat? Where do you go if there is a tornado?

Unity's Emergency Preparedness Team has developed an "Emergency Action Plan" (EAP) which offers guidelines and procedures in the event of an emergency. We are beginning a monthly newsletter article to present to you our EAP, section by section. We begin with section one below. You can find the plan in its entirety on our website at <https://www.unityunitarian.org/ept.html> or by contacting Barbara Hubbard at barbara@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x116.

I. STAFF RESPONSE

The basic premise of an emergency response is that at any emergency incident one member of the Unity Church Unitarian staff will be present at the site of the emergency and will be in charge of the response to the situation.

Unity of Command

Each individual participating in the operation reports to only one person. This eliminates the potential for individuals to receive conflicting orders from a variety of sources, thus increasing accountability, preventing freelancing, improving the flow of information, helping with the coordination of operational efforts, and enhancing operational safety.

This is necessary so that an efficient, timely, and appropriate response is made. The Incident Command System model is the basis for this plan. Roles/responsibilities are described, will be understood, practiced and adhered to.

The Lead Staff (LS) will direct other staff, volunteers, and church attendees in dealing with the emergency. Chain of Command to determine who will be in charge works in the following way. The highest ranked person on the list is in charge unless they are not on the site or unable to serve in this position, which would then move leadership to the next person on the list, and so on:

Chain of Command

(This list will change with any change in personnel.)

1. Executive Director: Barbara Hubbard
2. Director of Religious Education: K.P. Hong
3. Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement: Rev. Lisa Friedman
4. The most senior staff person on site (program / facilities / administration)

All staff members will be trained in this Emergency Action Plan, additional trainings as necessary and emergency plan exercises. These staff will have the authority to direct all activities related to the emergency and assign other staff to specific duties that may be outside of job descriptions.

Co-ministers and other worship leaders are not assigned operational duties within this plan, with the exception of implementing the response as directed by the Lead Staff. Their primary role will be to provide emotional and spiritual care to persons in the emergency and to calm others who are standing by or attending an event at the church when the emergency occurs.

Co-ministers, and in their absence other Executive Team members, will act in coordination with the Lead Staff as information source to media requests.

Book Launch

Tell Me When You Get There
by Lia Rivamonte

Wellspring Wednesday, October 2
7:15 p.m.

From Shelley Butler, Library &
Bookstall Team

The latest in a long string of talented Unity writers to have a new book out is our very own Lia Rivamonte with a collection of poetry called *Tell Me When You Get There*. David Mura says these poems "are lyrical, beautifully crafted, and complex in their emotional weather. Margaret Hasse writes, "I promise that these poems will take you places in the world and in your heart that feel both foreign and familiar."



I've long been a fan of Lia's work, having had the honor of reading it in a few issues of *Cairns* and then, hearing her read a few times at Café Unity. Come to her book launch to hear her read and have your book signed. Reading with Lia will be special guest poet, Naomi Cohn.

Tell Me When You Get There is available now in the Unity Bookstall, and on the evening of the reading.

And there's still time to read *After the Good News* by Rev. Nancy MacDonald Ladd before she comes on Pledge Celebration Weekend. She'll be reading and discussing her new book on Saturday, October 12, at 9:00 a.m., in the Parish Hall. Then, hear her preach "All In," on Sunday, October 13. Books are available in the Unity Bookstall.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Sustainable Living Team News

A Hope Called Greta Thunberg

From Dale Howey, Sustainable Living Team

How is it that a 16-year-old girl from Sweden could have such an impact? How could she get strike activity to happen in 117 countries and approximately 450 events in the United States?

Greta Thunberg stood up and focused on the story that we all need to pay attention to — our inaction on a climate crisis that has been building for all the history of industrialized mankind. She demonstrated in Sweden, addressed the European Union, attended COP24 in Poland, made a Ted Talk, and addressed the United Nations. She came to the United States on a carbon zero sail boat to rally us all to the single goal of saving the only place we have to live.

Greta did not mince words, she did not need to review all the science and all the data, all the evidence of the crisis we have brought upon ourselves — she told the simple truth. We are responsible and if we do not change our ways — all of us — and act now to start to contain CO2 emissions, this world will become increasingly uninhabitable.

Greta has raised the issue and the challenge. We are here to pull together and provide the action. In Greta's words, "What are you waiting for? You would jump in front of a train to save your children wouldn't you?"

To defeat diseases we banded together to defeat polio, and numerous other scourges. To defeat a dictator, our parents and grandparents lived with rationed sugar, coffee, nylons, butter, gas; donated blood, volunteered, worked in war industries, and sacrificed their lives to defeat Hitler. We fulfilled the challenge of John F. Kennedy to get to the moon when the way and the science was not clear.

If we can come together across the world to eliminate the threat of epidemics, threat of dictators, and to develop the technology to explore space — we can come together with our community and the world to address this climate crisis.

We, Unity's Sustainable Living Team, are working to create the opportunities for all of us to learn what we can do to make a difference in this climate crisis and to support our community to act now. There is no hope without action. And that is what we want to support our communities to do.

We are committed to educating and providing opportunities for our all of us to engage in climate action, environmental justice, sustainable living, and... HOPE!

The Sustainable Living Team meets on the first Sunday of each month (October 6), at 10:15 a.m., in the Crothers Room, and the third Sunday of each month (October 20), from 1:00-3:00 p.m., in the Center Room.

Opportunity Saint Paul Now Placing Volunteers!

As part of a city wide effort, Unity Church is joining other faith communities to rally an army of volunteers to combat poverty. Unity Church is becoming an anchor house of worship for Opportunity St. Paul, which matches volunteers with nonprofit organizations that have proven records of effectively addressing barriers to economic mobility. There are currently opportunities for monthly volunteer shifts available at all of Opportunity St. Paul's partners: Commonbond, Daily Work, Eastside Learning Center, Neighborhood House, Reading Partners, and the St. Paul Public Library.

For more information about the volunteer opportunities, please visit <http://bit.ly/ospartner19>. To apply to serve as a volunteer, please visit <http://bit.ly/ospvol19>.

Questions? Contact Ann Russell at annjd83@gmail.com or Sherri Knuth at sknuth001@msn.com, who will coordinate Unity's team of volunteers.

Generosity Ministry Nominate an Organization!

The Generosity Ministry Team asks Unity Church members and friends to consider nominating your favorite non-profit for a Sunday collection. It's super simple. Visit www.unityunitarian.org/generosity-ministry.html and complete the nomination form!

Food Shelf Donations

Thank you for supporting the families served by the Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf! Food shelf collection trunks are located at the Holly and Portland Avenue entrances. Non-perishable food, toiletries, and pet food are all gratefully accepted.

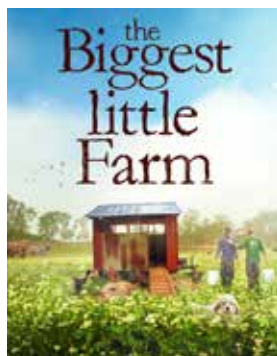
Sustainable Living Fourth Friday Film Series

The Biggest Little Farm

Friday, October 25 • 6:30 p.m. • Robbins Parlor

A testament to the immense complexity of nature, this film follows two dreamers who leave L.A. on an odyssey to bring harmony to their lives and to the land: 200 acres of utterly depleted soil suffering from drought. But as their land begins to recover, they discover they must develop a far greater understanding of nature's intricacies, and of life itself.

Discussion follows the film! Popcorn provided!



ART TEAM

Does it Matter?

From Paul Rogne, Chair, Unity Church Art Team

Art matters because it illustrates the human experience — the wonder of it, the bewilderment of it, the whimsy of it, and so much more. We would not be connected so deeply without the existence of art.

— Kathleen Dinsmore
Staff member, National Endowment for the Arts

Unity Church: First Impressions?

The power of first impressions is well researched. It is difficult to overcome a first impression even with subsequent contradicting facts. What is the first impression for newcomers to Unity Church? The building and the people. While certainly the people are most important, focus for a moment on the building's visible features.

A beautiful foyer — bright with attractive stone walls and woodwork. Have you noticed the bronze sculpture next to the Sanctuary entrance entitled "Appeal to the Great Spirit"? Paused to read about it? What does it say about Unity Church? The Sanctuary is peaceful — the magnificent wave of wood, a skylight, wonderful old beams, a fig tree, a chalice. Hopefully, all of this presents a comfortable environment — a positive first impression. Walking into the Parish Hall one sees art nearly everywhere. Continuing into the Eliot Wing, up the stairs, and in each room, there is more art.

What does this art say about Unity? First impressions matter.

The Unity Art Team

The Art Team is 15 members of the congregation who volunteer to manage all of the art at Unity Church. That task includes recruiting artists for, and the coordination of, the monthly exhibits in the Parish Hall and the Art Share display. The team also curates more than 70 pieces that Unity owns in its permanent collection and sometimes adds art to — or removes pieces from— the collection. Funds for adding art to the collection come from commissions from the sale of art exhibited in the Parish Hall.

Unity's Mission and Ends

The Art Team considers Unity's Mission and Ends seriously. How can the art at Unity Church help fulfill our stated ends? The team focuses on broadening our scope in the artists we choose to exhibit in the Parish Hall and the art we add to the permanent collection. It is our intention that the art be much more than just décor.

Does that matter?

Does the art at Unity matter to you? What impressions are made by this visible statement about what we are at Unity, what we stand for?

If you would like to be in touch with the Art Team, please send an email to artteam@unityunitarian.org.

The arts matter because they help us see the world from different perspectives. They give us empathy and help us understand people, places, periods of history, and issues with which we may otherwise be unfamiliar. They comfort us in grief and energize us in celebration. They are important because they can act as a catalyst for change...they can start a revolution! The arts ignite something in our brains that I can't explain, but I know it's essential for life.

— Jennie Terman
Staff member, National Endowment for the Arts

Parish Hall Artist

Ellen Sandbeck

I have always been entranced by the natural world, and have been making nature-based art since I was a toddler. I have been doing papercuts since 1985, when my son was born, and the constant distraction of tending him made it difficult to do any form of artwork that involved drying time. I soon realized that papercutting was my true medium. Though every papercut during that first year fell apart in my hands after a single, injudicious cut, I kept practicing. After that first year, I began sending samples to publishing companies, and within a year had landed my first book contract, with Dover Publications, for a stencil book.

In 1994, I began writing and illustrating my own books: *Slug Bread & Beheaded Thistles*, (Broadway/Doubleday, 2000) *Eat More Dirt*, (Broadway/Doubleday, 2003) *Organic Housekeeping*, (Scribner, 2006) *Green Barbarians*, (Scribner, 2010).

In 2009, I began a year-long project in which I executed a papercut of the historical Buddha every day. Like every project I have ever taken on, this project was far more time-consuming than I had anticipated, yet it was a year of very peaceful meditation. As the year progressed, so did I, and I began to feel as if I was getting a handle on my medium. Though papercutting could be considered rather limiting, and even clumsy, I find its limitations a challenge, and tend to regard it as a game or a sport, as well as an art.

In 2019 I executed a series called "Endangered Chinese Zodiac." I was able to find an endangered representative for each animal in the zodiac. I try to make my work beautiful, as well as heart-wrenching; there is no reason that it should be easy to find so many endangered species which fit such an arbitrary category.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Forgive My Mess

From Drew Danielson, Coordinator of Youth and Campus Ministries

I had the honor of speaking at the memorial for a tremendously important person in my life, who passed away last month. I worked myself into a state over the fear I wouldn't be able to keep myself composed. I thankfully got through it fine, although I didn't manage to keep all emotion out of my delivery, and I faltered at the end.

When I sat down, Atticus subtly touched my knee — just for a moment — and that was wonderful, though it threatened to make me tear up worse. He is after all a super cool, 17 year old jock who has said more than once that “emotions are stupid.”

I took a chance later on to acknowledge his gesture; he grunted which I interpreted to mean “don't mention it – really, don't mention it again.” I told him I knew I was becoming just like my dad, who as he got older started to tear up over everything, from a good donut to just about any shared memory.

“You know when I'm getting emotional right, you hear it in my voice? Do I do it too much at Tower Club?” I asked.

“No. But you know what I really hate? I hate when I get all teary whenever I apologize.”

I didn't know he experienced that. He went on to say when he really is sorry about something and he really feels it, he just falls apart. He wants to be forgiven, absolved, and even if it's really brief, the effect of it is crippling. The sense of shame and vulnerability is enormous. To make it worse, in that moment, being so overcome, it's nearly impossible to say “I'm sorry.” Instead, a laugh comes out, or deflecting, defensive arguments present themselves.

I know exactly what he meant, though he absolutely did not want to talk about it any longer. Usually I would have started talking about how powerful forgiveness is, how freeing and constructive it is to forgive someone and let go of your anger. But on that day, at that moment, a lesson wasn't what was needed. To talk of a useful technique in personal interactions would have missed it completely.

The point was, I think, to acknowledge there are times that truly expose our emotions, leaving us defenseless, with our hearts wide open, and there is no hope of composure.

Forgive me but I'm tearing up again.

Boston Pilgrimage for 11th Grade Youth

This annual pilgrimage over MEA weekend offers our youth an invaluable opportunity to step into Unitarian Universalist history and place with a community of peers, and to begin to find their faith identity come alive. Please hold them in your thoughts and prayers as they journey further along their spiritual paths.



October 2019

Religious Education Calendar

Wednesday, October 2: New Family Orientation, 7:15 p.m.

Sunday, October 6: Regular R.E.

Friday-Sunday, October 11-13: COA fall retreat at Camp St. Croix

Sunday, October 13: Regular R.E.

Wednesday, October 16: No OWL (fall break)

Wednesday-Monday, October 16-21: High School Boston Pilgrimage

Sunday, October 20: No R.E. Classes (MEA weekend); activities for school-age kids, nursery care available

Sunday, October 27: Story Sunday (Grade school and junior high children in Sanctuary)

October 2019

Tower Club (grades 10-12) Calendar

Sunday, October 6: Annual Little Women viewing party

As a prelude to the Boston pilgrimage, 5:45 p.m. start time, for annual showing of this fun, fluffy classic starring Winona Ryder, Kirsten Dunst, and Bat Man. Apple Pie ala mode for dessert!

Sunday, October 13: Tower Club evening meeting

Regular meeting, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Meet in Ames Chapel. We will have a “send off observation” for the juniors heading to Boston

Sunday, October 20: Fall Break, no meeting

Juniors in Boston

Sunday, October 27: Tower Club Halloween Party

6:00-8:00 p.m. Costume contest. Carve Pumpkins. Welcome back the Juniors! Make our own pizzas!

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music Notes

From Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries

"To create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships." Of Unity's Ends statements, this one particularly resonates with me. This is because much of my work as a pianist and conductor outside of Unity Church has centered around the idea that we must rethink the canon, that we must build a shared multicultural musical repertoire that is built on authentic personal relationships. This is not merely an artistic or intellectual pursuit. Integrating music from a variety of cultures into education, performance, and worship is an issue of social justice. In an increasingly interconnected world, the exclusion of entire forms of musical expression becomes ethically inexcusable. When we marginalize entire forms of musical expression, we marginalize the people that are connected to that music.

The music at Unity is not meant merely to reflect the demographics and history of its congregation but, rather, its aspirations. The hymns we sing and the music we include in worship should be a reflection of who we want to be, and by putting this in practice we are already taking a step in that direction. Unity's aspirations are big and ambitious as so beautifully stated in Unity's Ends: to dismantle dominant culture, to create brave space for racial healing, to grow our capacity for wonder and spiritual deepening, to advance justice, wholeness, and equity... I believe music can do all this, but not inherently, we must engage it in the right way. Performing music from a diversity of cultures in an ethical manner provides an opportunity to become aware of our assumptions and biases, examine systemic oppression, and dismantle racist hierarchies that function as much in our musical tastes and practices as they do in society at large.

A common excuse to work entirely with a white, euro- or anglocentric repertoire is that there are no people of color in a community (why would we include reggae in worship if there are no Jamaicans in our congregation?). I believe that these are actually the cases when it is most necessary to engage with music from a different culture: it can be the first step towards a deeper connection, for many the first and perhaps only exposure to that culture, a necessary step in creating empathy and a real appreciation of our shared humanity. The all-white, middle-school choir in rural Minnesota needs to sing African American spirituals more than other choirs, not less.

I believe that performing music from different cultures is one of the most important things we can do, but it is a practice that is inherently wrought with power-dynamics, systemic oppression, cultural misappropriation, and a host of other problems. The commitment to creating a multicultural musical repertoire is not for the faint of heart. It is, however, well worth the effort because, when it is done well, we can truly forge relationships across cultures that can serve as catalysts for social and political change.

Unity Children's Choir

All children and grades 1-5 are invited to join the Unity Children's Choir! Rehearsals are held each Sunday, from 10:15-11:00 a.m., in the Robbins Parlor.

Children's Choir rehearsal activities are focused on hands-on music making. In addition to singing, the children experience music through movement, games, playing instruments, and learning about the elements of music.

Check it out, meet new friends and join in the fun of making music!

Border CrosSing presents

Black Christ of the Andes

An exploration of religious faith in the Americas throughout history, seen through the lens of sacred choral music from different periods. Highlights of this program include a unique interpretation of *Misa Criolla* by Ariel Ramirez and selections from jazz composer and pianist Mary Lou Williams' rarely performed choral masterwork, *Black Christ of the Andes*.

Friday, October 18 • 7:00 p.m.
Our Lady of Guadalupe Church

Saturday, October 19 • 7:00 p.m.
Church of the Ascension

Pre-concert talk at 6:30 p.m.

Details: bordercrossingmn.org

The Mirandola Ensemble

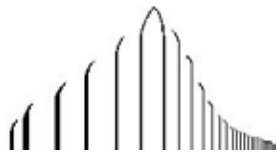
The world premiere of Jeffrey Van's "Pictures of the Floating World" plus music of Schubert, Brahms, and madrigals of Renaissance England and Italy.

Friday, October 25 • 7:30 p.m.
Unity Church—Unitarian

Details: themirandolaensemble.org

Share your Musical Gifts!

If you play a musical instrument, compose, sing, teach music, or if music is a significant part of your life in other ways, contact Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries, at ahmed@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x118, to find ways to connect your musical gifts to the congregational life at Unity Church.



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
Business Entrance: 732 Holly Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-228-1456 • fax: 651-228-0927 • www.unityunitarian.org • unity@unityunitarian.org

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Unity Church-Unitarian
Pledge Drive Celebration Weekend
"Everybody In"
with special guest
Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd
October 12-13, 2019

Saturday, October 12 • Celebration Event
Rev. Ladd, reading from her new book
After the Good News: Progressive Faith Beyond Optimism

Sunday, October 13 • Celebration Sunday
Rev. Ladd, preaching
9:00 a.m. • 11:00 a.m. • 4:30 p.m.

EVERYBODY IN
Make your 2020 pledge
during October!