

## Change and Tradition

*The life of a congregation is a rich community tapestry of people, programs, ministries, and worship. We lift up the patterns of this tapestry at Unity Church with the threads of monthly themes woven through our worship and programming. These themes deepen our understanding of our faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community.*

*The stability of a religious institution is a necessary precondition to the instability religious transformation brings.*

— Dan Hotchkiss, *Governance and Ministry*

There are few themes more important to the start of a new ministry than the balance between change and tradition. As a new shared ministry begins, how does it relate to the traditions of its setting? What will change in the coming years and months? What should change? What traditions must we hold fast to?

Dan Hotchkiss gets at something vital when he identifies the tension between stability and transformation as the central dialectic in religious community. How do we balance the intergenerational, centuries-long story of a church like Unity with the radical transformation we say is a part of our Unitarian Universalist faith?

This is not simply an academic exercise. In the life of this church, like many churches, our ceremonies recognizing moments of transformation and change (births, deaths, marriages, coming of age) are some of the most traditional, scripted, parts of our liturgy. In moments where the big pieces of our lives change, the church leans into what does not change from generation to generation.

Unitarian Universalism calls itself a “living tradition.” We are not bound by tradition; we are not a traditionalist faith. We draw on what has come before, but always in the service of the current moment: the way things have been done before is valuable insofar as it speaks to the current

moment we are in. It is up to us to ask questions, to interrogate tradition, to figure out if it serves us, or holds us back from becoming the best version of our community.

At its best, tradition is like the twelve-bar blues; a chord progression so well known by all the players it allows for the common vocabulary and meter that makes great improvisation possible. Our traditions ground us in what has come before, but in doing so they open up possibilities of what might yet be, possibilities that are not always clear when we simply look at a blank page.

Change is a constant in life. In moments of transition, like the start of a new ministry, that change is especially rapid and noticeable. If we do it right, however, whatever change comes with the start of something new will be grounded in the traditions of what has come before: a new chapter, rather than a new book. Not a new song, but a chord change.

*Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair  
with this month's theme team*

### Theme Resources

For further reflection on the theme, see this month's spiritual practice packet, available online at [unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles](https://unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles).



We are at such a meaningful moment at Unity Church as Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair begins his ministry with us. We have moved through many challenges in our shared ministry to get to this juncture. What seeds of joy can we plant in this moment together? What blossom, what fruit, can we imagine emerging from those seeds in the future?

October marks the beginning of Unity's annual pledge drive when we ask each other to declare our financial support for the church's worship and programs in 2025. You likely already received a mailing that includes a personalized pledge card and information about why and how to pledge.

At this time of hopeful beginnings, your generous support is more important than ever. Nature gives generously of its seed and its fruit. Imagine what we could do next together if we likewise seed our future with generosity and joy. Your pledges will make that possible.

*Pledging to Unity is an opportunity for me to co-create our community. Contributing is part of belonging. When I sing with Women's Ensemble, teach a Rotations class, usher at the Christmas pageant, or make a pledge, I bring my shoulder to the yoke of our shared work: peace work, neighborly work, creative work, and the work of building a beloved community.*

—Megan Hall

# JUST WORDS



## Just Words

**Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister**

Hanging in my office is a picture of Buchille Etiv Mor, a mountain in the Scottish Highlands just south of Glencoe. Buchille Etiv Mor lies along the West Highland Way, a one hundred mile long walking path from Milngavie to Fort William that I walked during my last sabbatical.

In the picture in my office, there's a ridge off to the left-hand side of the picture. The West Highland Way crosses Rannoch Moor, the largest uninhabited wilderness in the United Kingdom, before passing over the ridge into the shadow of Glencoe. A year and a half ago, crossing that ridge, I decided to begin the search process that led to my family and I coming to St. Paul.

Long journeys, taken alone, have often been a chance for me to reflect. Whether by foot, canoe, car, or bike, the repetition of traveling from point A to point B, over multiple days, is a chance to step away from the day to day demands of life and ask questions that are ever-present but rarely addressed. How is it with my soul? Where am I going, metaphorically in life and very practically in the journey? What do I need to take the next faithful step? The opportunity of a long journey is a chance to ask those questions without pressure to find a particular answer, but to dwell in them for the sake of the question.

Called ministry is like this. There is a spaciousness to it unconstrained by a specific, predetermined end date. As a new shared ministry evolves, it can sit with questions, unconcerned at the lack of immediate answers. In this ministry that we are starting together in St. Paul, Minnesota, what will change for both the congregation and the minister? What will stay the same? What new things will we build together? The chance to sit in these questions, asking them of each other on purpose, is one of the gifts of this calling.

And, for all that, it is still good to step away sometimes. For the last nine months, I have been working hard, first balancing a ministerial search with my day job, then moving and starting up a new ministry. I am writing this article on September 14. Tomorrow, I will preach in the morning and then drive north for three days of canoeing alone in the Boundary Waters. It is a chance to reflect on where the last year has brought me, and where I am going next, as well as an opportunity to be still and listen to the world all around us and the God of my understanding. It is precious time, and I look forward to coming back in a few days ready to launch into the year together at Unity Church.

— Oscar

*Unity Church seems always at the ready to engage me: I have been challenged from the pulpit, I have thrilled to the music, been transformed by Circle of Peace, found purpose in Act for the Earth, raised a child in Religious Education, and when my earthly life comes to an end, it will, I hope, be in the goodly company of this community. It will not be surprising, then, that this year I have upgraded to a "Premium Membership." Just kidding — there is no such thing. But I did increase my pledge and every time I pass through the church's doors, I am grateful for this place. — Paul England*



## The Wheel of Life

*In Celebration*

**Leila Poullada**

Celebrated her 100th birthday!

**Bernice Hanson**

Celebrated her 98th birthday!

**Doug Ostergren**

Celebrated his 96th birthday!

## Congregational Care

Do you have a concern or celebration you wish to have shared in the Embracing Meditation during Sunday worship? Would you like to request a call from a minister or a helping hand or listening ear of a Care Team member? Complete the online congregational care request form at [unityunitarian.org/congregational-care](https://unityunitarian.org/congregational-care) or send an email to [pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org](mailto:pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org). If you are experiencing an urgent need for pastoral support, call 651-300-9123.

## Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday worship service, please contact Suki Sun at [sunflowerselflove@gmail.com](mailto:sunflowerselflove@gmail.com).



UNITY CHURCH-  
UNITARIAN

integrity · service · joy

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

# SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

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## Sunday Worship Services

Sunday services are held at 9:00 and 11:15 a.m. The 9:00 a.m. service is also offered via livestream. Find the livestream links, sermon podcasts, and a selection of transcripts at [unityunitarian.org/sunday-services](https://unityunitarian.org/sunday-services).

### October 6: Imagining Change

#### Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair

Pop culture is full of dystopian stories. In a time of climate change, war, and political uncertainty, dystopia feels near at hand. Even as they grapple with the consequences of the suffering and destruction, authors from Octavia Butler to Becky Chambers can help us to imagine a better world. What are the tools of storytelling that might help us imagine ourselves into a sustainable, joyful future?

### October 13: Seeds of Joy

#### Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair

Join us for Celebration Sunday, as we gather to celebrate Unity Church and commit to a joyful year together. Unitarian Universalist congregations depend on the support of their members for everything from religious education and kitchen volunteers to legacy giving and ongoing financial support. How do we root our gifts to the church in our spiritual practices?

### October 20: Adaptation

#### Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair

Dan Hotchkiss writes, "Congregations create sanctuaries where people can nurture and inspire each other — with results no one can predict. The stability of a religious institution is a necessary precondition to the instability religious transformation brings." How do we balance the tradition and change in our lives together? How do we embrace the future we imagine while holding onto the traditions that define us?

### October 27: The Only Constant

#### Rev. Lara Cowtan

We have heard it said, the only constant is change, and that there is no growth, no growing forward without letting something go and embracing change. Sometimes a door must close in order for a window to open, but how do we navigate this kind of loss, these decisions about what and when to let go in order to be open to new possibilities? Anatole France wrote, "All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves. We must die to one life before we can enter another." But, this doesn't mean we throw everything out the window and start from scratch over and over! So, what can we hold onto that is solid and true, what can we trust as a constant in our lives when the ground shifts and change happens?

## Offering Recipients

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

### October 6: Sounds of Hope

[Sounds of Hope](#), founded in 1997, aims to promote global citizenship through the arts by bringing together kids age 10 through 20 and creating with them a six-week series of summer performances. Their concerts are a living example of the strength and wonder of diversity and a lesson in what is possible when young folks from around the world live, work, and create together. Today's collection will provide funds to offset the basic cost for one local, low-income participant in 2025. Unity's Christine Butter has spent years as a Sounds of Hope volunteer.

### October 13: Mano a Mano Outreach Ministry Team

Unity's [Mano a Mano Community Outreach Ministry Team](#) supports Mano a Mano International by collecting, sorting, packing, and shipping medical, construction, and school supplies to Bolivia. The team also organizes community information forums, providing advocacy for Mano a Mano's many projects on the ground in Bolivia. This collection will specifically support Unity's community outreach team in engaging the local community and promoting the work of Mano a Mano.

### October 20: Jeremiah Program

[Jeremiah Program](#), located in St. Paul's Summit-University neighborhood, supports single mothers and their children as they pursue career paths, life goals, and charting pathways to economic mobility. Unity's Evergreen Quilters provides meals for the mothers and their children several times a year. This collection will provide personal hygiene products as well as supplemental apartment needs for the infants, children, and mothers at Jeremiah Program.

### October 27: Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf

[Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf](#), a lighthouse of hope in the Summit-University community since 1929, operates a food shelf and clothing closet serving families in the neighborhood. Hallie Q. 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 food needs and emergency services, bringing moments of light and hope into the remaining months of 2024. Unity's Evergreen Quilters partners with Hallie Q. and coordinates the congregation's ongoing food collection for the food shelf.

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES | WELCOME NEWCOMERS



## Love at the Center

**Mary Baremore, Secretary**

During the last several months, Unity's Board of Trustees has been in deep conversation about the condition of loneliness. The CDC has reported an increased prevalence of loneliness nationally, leading to concerns about

people's mental and physical health. At Unity, while we are in an exciting time in the church's history, there are those among us who are reporting a lack of connection and the absence of a feeling of belonging. People are yearning, hungering for deep associations among a community of fellow seekers. While church may be a plausible place for these connections to be fostered, we are asking ourselves why some among us are reporting that they're lonely and are missing the connections. What is happening? What building blocks are missing? Can faith formation and a deeper church life help people make meaning and grow into what they are seeking? Do we need to slow down, breathe deeply, and find quiet among us?

Embedded in the Board's discussions is the question of how we welcome newcomers. Are we living out our Ends in "creat(ing) a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships" and "...an ever-widening circle of belonging for all people"? When we see someone with a paper name tag, do we approach them? Do we engage them? How do we respond when they've asked us a question that we don't have the answer to?

As a model that can help to inform us, I look to recovery circles. In meetings across our wider community, people are considering how they can help the still-suffering newcomer, often lifting them up as the most important person in the room. The group takes on a nesting posture, holding that person close and letting them know that they can call the group and the program "home." The new person is welcome to ask questions and connect with others in the group whom they begin to trust. Through this, the newcomer begins to heal.

At church, while our newcomers may not have an identifiable addiction they would like to address, they enter our doors wanting to find a healing space where they can place their vulnerabilities and find peace. This desire is not limited to just newcomers. How are we showing up for them and for each other? Can we embrace and bear witness to our own and others' rough edges, and experience healing? Can we be the embodiment of the Love that is at the center of our faith?

Early in 2025, our congregation will embark on our Ends renewal process where we'll begin to dream about our future and the kind of place and people we strive to become. We'll have opportunities to engage one another deeply in discussions and activities centered around some of the questions raised above and in other areas of church life. We'll show up for each other, with Love at the center, and build our future together.



## Welcome Words

**Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant**

In the Ingathering litany (where we welcome new members during a Sunday service), we talk about just how much we ask of ourselves and of each other in this community. It is no easy task to

embody a living tradition that strives to confront injustice and unkindness. Our traditions within ourselves, among our community, and beyond us are always growing both deeper roots and new branches. Change and tradition are a continuum, and it is a lifelong journey to explore that space. But, as we *also* say in the Ingathering litany, we do not walk the path alone, and that makes all the difference. This month, I encourage you to embrace both change and tradition, here at Unity Church and out in the world.

## Pathway to Membership Classes

The offerings below invite you to explore a deeper connection to Unity Church and the commitments and opportunities of membership. Contact Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant, [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

## Finding Yourself at Unity

**For Visitors and Inquirers**

**Sundays 11:15 a.m. | Drop-ins welcome; childcare available  
Gannett Room or online via Zoom: [bit.ly/fyuonline](https://bit.ly/fyuonline)**

Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time. Weekly church emails include the session topic or find the session schedule at the Welcome Table in Parish Hall.

October 6: Q&A with Rev. Oscar

October 13: Unitarian Universalist History

October 20: Social Justice and Community Outreach

October 27: Faith Formation for Children, Youth, and Adults

## 2,198 Pounds of Food Donated

Thank you for all your generous donations! So far this year we have donated 2,198 pounds of food to Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf, located just down the street from Unity Church. If you could bring a can of vegetables or a bag of rice every time you come to church, we would really increase our support! In October the food shelf needs corn bread and cake mix, frosting, canned corn and green beans, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie filling and general Thanksgiving food items.



## Collision of Race, Class, and Policing

Rev. KP Hong, Beloved Community Staff Team



*Racial segregation as a way of life did not come about as a natural result of hatred between the races [but as] a political stratagem employed by the emerging Bourbon interests in the South to keep the southern masses divided and southern labor the cheapest in the land... Why, if the poor white plantation or mill worker became dissatisfied with his low wages, the plantation or mill owner would merely threaten to fire him and hire former Negro slaves and pay him even less.*

— Martin Luther King, Jr., address at the conclusion of Selma to Montgomery march in 1965

In February 2021, Clyde Kerr III — a sheriff's deputy in Louisiana, veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, and forty-three-year-old Black father — posted a series of videos delivering a searing critique of policing and our criminal justice system. He voiced deep sense of turmoil about his profession in the killings of Black people, including George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. "I've had enough of all of this nonsense, serving a system that does not give a damn about me or people like me." The videos served as an extended suicide note, at one point stating that his decision to take his life was an act of protest. Kerr took his life sitting in his patrol car outside the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office.

Much earlier, in an 1960 essay "Fifth Avenue, Uptown," James Baldwin describes this collision at the heart of policing. He looks at the projects of Harlem and points to a deep inequality reflected in the geography of Fifth Avenue, the same street conjoining the opulent shopping corridors of midtown and the destitution of the Harlem ghetto uptown where police move "like an occupying soldier in a bitterly hostile country." Baldwin draws particular attention to the damage this labor of occupation inflicts upon the police themselves who are tasked to manage the boundary dividing the different worlds along Fifth Avenue and throughout our country. The officer patrols the dividing line, and "he is not prepared for it [as] he is exposed as few white people are to the anguish of the black people around him." How does he reconcile his purpose to serve and to protect with his daily work of ghetto containment? How does he manage the injustice of his occupation with the daily encounters of Black humanity that belie the underclass mythology

of the inner-city poor as criminal, self-sabotaging, and unassimilable? How does the police officer live with himself? "He can retreat from his uneasiness in only one direction," writes Baldwin, "into a callousness which very shortly becomes second nature. He becomes more callous, the population becomes more hostile, the situation grows more tense, and the police force is increased. One day, to everyone's astonishment, someone drops a match in the powder keg and everything blows up." And all the while, capitalist elites in midtown are less concerned with abolishing the conditions that policing has come to manage than with kneeling on the neck of protesters who threaten retail spaces, commercial real estate development, and capitalist interests of the market economy.

Policing and mass incarceration have always existed to serve and protect the dominant capitalist economy and class structures developed through slavery, and to control "surplus populations" of the unemployed and unemployable, those pressed to commit survival crimes to earn a living, those superfluous to capitalist accumulation and so racialized, exploited, and targeted for police control. For in the often-misleading race-class debate, the class character of policing remains largely overlooked by the power and expediency of the racial justice narrative. But racial oppression and economic exploitation have always been entwined in capitalism. We forget that George Floyd was unemployed and allegedly using counterfeit money; that Eric Garner was selling untaxed cigarettes to earn a living; that Walter Scott was under warrant for delinquent child support payments; that Breonna Taylor, though not directly engaged in survival crimes,

lived in gentrifying zones where police sweeps regularly cleared the neighborhood for real estate valuation. Countless fatal police encounters result from minor infractions like broken taillights or unpaid tickets, more symptoms of economic hardship than real threat to public safety. The fact that so many resorted to criminalized forms of work to make a living remains critically important for understanding the common class predicament of Americans who are overpoliced. The problem of structural unemployment and poverty are not exceptions to capitalist economy but outcomes of the exploitation at the heart of profit-making.

Racism alone cannot fully explain the expansive carceral power produced by capitalist class society, relentless in securing conditions for compounded growth. A singular focus on race only serves the interests of late capitalism by reducing the question of obscene inequality to skin color and identity politics while obviating discussions about healthcare, housing, childcare, and education. If all we have to do is expunge the racism in the hearts of police officers, or just reduce the number of racist patrol officers, we can forestall the question about poverty or at least pretend that class conflict and racialized police violence are two separate issues. But Stuart Hall famously described race as "the modality in which class is lived, the medium in which class relations are experienced." What is needed is not the dismantling of police departments but the conditions that modern policing has come to manage. What is needed is not shoehorning our history of injustice into either race or class, but to see and engage more complexly, intersectionally, and courageously.

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

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## Wellspring Wednesday Schedule

Wellspring Wednesday gathers a multigenerational church community to nourish right and holy relationship among us and deepen our life of faith, grounded in spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural work. Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. in Parish Hall, a short chapel service begins at 6:40 p.m. in Ames Chapel, and programs begin at 7:10 p.m. Childcare is available and advance registration is not required.

The cost for dinner is \$10/adults, \$5/child (ages 5-12), \$3/child (ages 2-4), and \$25/family. If you need financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner, please email Philippa Anastos at [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org). If you plan to join us and need a special dietary preparation (vegetarian, dairy-free options are available), please email Heidi Birkholz at [heidi@unityunitarian.org](mailto:heidi@unityunitarian.org).

### October 2

*Dinner: Miso-glazed root vegetables over rice, mixed greens, and oatmeal butterscotch cookies*

#### **Clean Energy and Climate Policy Action: What Comes Next?**

**Parish Hall and Zoom:** [bit.ly/ucenergyclimate](https://bit.ly/ucenergyclimate)

Join J. Drake Hamilton, Fresh Energy's senior director of science policy, for a compelling talk on climate solutions and clean energy. Learn about the progress made, future visions, and actions we can advocate for in this crucial election year. Hamilton, appointed to Governor Walz's Climate Advisory Council, is a dynamic speaker with a passion for environmental change. Don't miss this opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions that will shape Minnesota's energy future.

#### ***Behind the Sun* | Ames Chapel**

Join On Stage for a stimulating discussion led by local teaching artists Jane Froiland (actress in *Behind the Sun*), Anna Hashizume and Warren Bowles. Participants will read two scenes from *Behind the Sun*, a play that is staged at History Theatre now through October 13. The readings will be followed by a discussion of the themes, tying in current events, personal values, and narratives. Participants will also receive a ticket discount to see the play at History Theatre.

#### **Religious Education New Family Orientation | Gannett Room**

Interested in learning more about Unity's religious education programs for children and youth? We offer Religious Education New Family Orientation on the first Wednesday of every month. Email Nelson one week in advance if you plan to attend: [nelson@unityunitarian.org](mailto:nelson@unityunitarian.org).

#### **UU the Vote | DeCramer Room**

Get involved with our voter registration efforts and have some company for your postcard writing! Questions? Contact Priscilla Morton at [prismorton@comcast.net](mailto:prismorton@comcast.net).

#### **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) by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesdays to ensure a lesson.

### October 9

*Breakfast for dinner: Spinach and leek breakfast casserole, fruit salad, mixed greens, and Rice Krispie bars*

#### **Everything Brought to Speech:**

**Oral History as Healing after Communal Trauma**

**Parish Hall and Zoom:** [bit.ly/ucoralhistory](https://bit.ly/ucoralhistory)

Psychologist Judith Butler writes that "the will to deny terrible events and the necessity to tell the story of what happened is the central dialectic of healing from trauma." In the fall of 2022, the Unitarian Church of Lincoln recorded dozens of conversations between members, telling the story of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nebraska. Drawing from lessons learned in Nebraska and elsewhere, come join Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair in considering how storytelling can be a path toward healing.

#### **Bylaws Change Meeting | Room TBD**

Come meet with Unity's Board of Trustees and discuss proposed changes to Unity's bylaws! After last year's additions and changes to the Bylaws, a few minor edits are required regarding the addition of absentee and remote presence voting. The board would like to use this time to share the proposed changes, answer questions, and hear your thoughts!

#### **Lectio Divina | Zoom: [bit.ly/UnityLectio24-25](https://bit.ly/UnityLectio24-25)**

Join a sacred experience of listening, contemplating, and responding to inspirational texts. Though the spiritual practice of Lectio Divina is centuries-old, typically utilizing Scripture, Unitarian Universalists use contemporary poetry. Participants report that Lectio Divina is "rejuvenating" and "insightful." Zoom from the Gannett Room at Unity on Wednesdays. Led by Lisa Wersal or Shelley Butler.

#### **Young Adults Group (ages 18-35) | Center Room**

A fun, reflective group of people working to build multifaith and multicultural community, exploring questions of life and faith, and practicing sharing what is sacred as they navigate the complexity of being an adult.

**UU the Vote** (see October 2)

**Beginner Violin** (see October 2)

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

October 16

*Dinner: Roasted chicken with Brussels sprouts, squash, mixed green salad, and browned butter blondies*

## **Braver Angels: Building Bridges in a Polarized World**

**Parish Hall and Zoom:** [bit.ly/ucubraverangels](https://bit.ly/ucubraverangels)

Wondering how to talk with your friends and relatives about the upcoming election if they don't share your political beliefs? Bill Doherty, Ph.D., co-founder of Braver Angels and professor Emeritus in the Department of Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota, will present an overview of the problem of polarization, the core Braver Angels approach to addressing it in our lives, a summary of several skills and a chance to practice one of them.

## **Hymn Sing | Robbins Parlor and Zoom:** [bit.ly/ucuhymnsing](https://bit.ly/ucuhymnsing)

In 2021 Unity Choir members started meeting with Ahmed every few weeks on Zoom to sing and discuss the hymns in the Unitarian hymnal, *Singing the Living Tradition*. The group started with the first hymn, and is now nearly 200 hymns in! At each session group members sing the hymn, discuss its music, text, history, and theology, while also sharing personal reflections on the music and its meaning.

**UU the Vote** (see October 2)

**Beginner Violin** (see October 2)

October 23

*Dinner: Impossible tater tot hotdish, Waldorf salad, broccoli, and brownies*

## **Justice Learning Partners | Parish Hall and Zoom:** [bit.ly/ucujlp](https://bit.ly/ucujlp)

In the wake of the murder of George Floyd, we asked the congregation what should be our "next right action." Some asked for an opportunity to learn with others more about oppression and how to dismantle it. Come learn more about this program, get resources for deep reflection (discussion guides provided), and sign up for a partner or group. Questions? Contact Becky Gonzalez-Campoy at [beckygc83@gmail.com](mailto:beckygc83@gmail.com).

## **Considering Five Theological Questions**

In this first of six sessions facilitated by Nathan Schultz, we invite adult members and friends of Unity Church to explore one of five questions at the heart of systematic theology. These same questions guide the church's religious education program, with our youth sharing their answers, however provisional, each year at Coming of Age. This week's session explores the question: What does it mean to be human and alive? Come prepared to engage in personal reflection and share your responses. Future sessions offered: November 13, December 4, January 29, and February 26. All those who would like to formulate their thoughts into a credo statement, as our youth do for Coming of Age, are invited to share a statement of faith in our final session on March 26. \*If you are mentoring a young person through Unity's Coming of Age program, we examine each question before you will meet with your ager to focus on that topic.

**Young Adults Group** (see October 9)

**UU the Vote** (see October 2)

**Beginner Violin** (see October 2)

October 30

*Dinner: Grilled cheese and tomato soup, snap pea and radish slaw, and brown sugar cookies*

## **Death Café: Conversations about Death**

**Parish Hall and Zoom:**

[bit.ly/ucudeathcafe](https://bit.ly/ucudeathcafe)



Come, eat cake, drink tea and discuss our mortality. Since its inception in 2010, the Death Café model has spread quickly to more than 90 countries across Europe, North America and Australasia. At a Death Café people drink tea, eat cake and discuss death. The aim is to increase awareness of death to help people make the most of their (finite) lives. It seems people have a lot to say about death, and enjoy engaging in these conversations with others. What better time than the day before Halloween for us to engage in a conversation about death? Feel free to bring some spooky treats to share. See [deathcafe.com](https://deathcafe.com) for more info.

What it is: A Death Café is a group directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or themes. What it is not: A group focused on bereavement, grief support or a group counseling session.

**UU the Vote** (see October 2)

**Beginner Violin** (see October 2)

**Help prepare a Wellspring Wednesday meal!** [bit.ly/wwfood2425](https://bit.ly/wwfood2425)

We have such a good time in the kitchen together! Kids are welcome with their adults!

Questions? Contact Heidi Birkholz at [heidi@unityunitarian.org](mailto:heidi@unityunitarian.org).

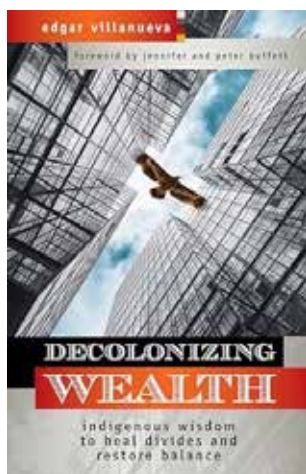


## What If \$\$ Could Heal Us?

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

What if money *could* heal us and not divide us? What if we didn't separate the world into haves vs have-nots? What if control of our institutions, foundations, companies, media, government, teachers, and military was *not* overwhelmingly white? What if foundations and companies didn't give away a fraction of earnings to solve problems, while at the same time invest in industries that create the problems? What if we walked alongside people instead of trying to save them?

These are the questions in *Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance*, Second Edition, by Edgar Villanueva, foreword by Bishop William J. Barber II. Recommended by a Border CrosSing board member, this title is one of the resources being offered this month in the Justice Learning Partners (JLP) program. Both personal and universal, accessible and understandable, I highly recommend *Decolonizing Wealth* to our own Board of Trustees and to you all.



Divided into three parts, Villanueva opens with a first-hand account of his work giving away \$160 million through philanthropic organizations, and of what he calls, "the core of the affliction, white supremacy, the savior mentality, and internalized oppression." In Part 2, "Being a Healer," the author asks, "What's your medicine? How will you recognize the opportunity to be a healer?" and then describes money as medicine that can decolonize and heal, if done right. Part 3 outlines how to heal through seven steps. And through all the book, the focus on the Indigenous ways of connection and belonging, being and giving, and mutual dependency and reciprocity stand in stark contrast to the exploitative ways of white supremacy.

"The Native way is to bring the oppressor into our circle of healing. Healing cannot occur unless everyone is part of the process." May the Indigenous ways inspire the non-Indigenous (most of us at Unity Church) to do better. As the author writes, "Let it begin."

For more information on the Justice Learning Partners (JLP) program, see the article on this page. Find *Decolonizing Wealth* in the Bookstall and Anderson Library.

8

Integrity, service, and joy.

## Justice Learning Partners

Becky Gonzalez-Campoy, Justice Learning Partners Leader

"True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice." — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1955)

You've taken the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). You've done a lot of reading on your own. You take the IDI again and perhaps you haven't grown as much as you thought you would. What to do? Get involved in Unity's Justice Learning Partners, a spiritual practice that provides an opportunity to make real these Unity Ends Statements:

- Discover and pursue our individual and collective work to advance justice, wholeness, and equity for people, our Earth, and all life on it;
- Create brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture.

JLP (formerly Antiracism Literacy Partners, ALP) got its start as one of Unity's "next right step" responses following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. Originally an online program only, ALP encouraged participants to hold themselves and each other accountable through the study of a selected resource — a book, video, or podcast — in their efforts to blend spiritual practice with antiracist multicultural work. This is an opportunity to engage with others on real-world justice issues, to transform our thinking and practice, and to learn together how to affect change.

This year, we're taking things to the next level by broadening and deepening the focus, embracing more areas of justice, and exploring additional ways of learning how to live into Unity's Ends Statements. And now we're meeting in person, in addition to our online presence. We invite you to join us for our Wellspring Wednesday in-person debut of JLP, on October 23 at 7:10 p.m., in Unity's Parish Hall (and online).

Our program will include guest panelists sharing observations about how JLP can help us in our justice work. We will discuss the what and how of the program, sharing resources with discussion guides to use as a foundation for study and conversation in small groups or with partners. Participants will be formed into groups based on the chosen resource, and groups will create meeting schedules. Resources offered this fall include:

1. *Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance* by Edgar Villanueva (book);
2. "Be Antiracist with Ibram X. Kendi" (podcast);
3. "Race: The Power and Illusion" (video series)
4. *The Sentence* by Louise Erdrich (novel);
5. *Our Hidden Conversations* by Michelle Norris (book/online project);
6. "We Cannot Look Away: Israel and Palestine Part II" (packet of mixed resources)

JLP will meet four times during the church year on Wellspring Wednesdays. Questions? Please contact Becky Gonzalez-Campoy at [beckygc83@gmail.com](mailto:beckygc83@gmail.com).

Wonder, open-hearted engagement, courageous action

# OCTOBER ART EXHIBIT | FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

## October Parish Hall Artists

### *Against All Odds Watercolor Group*

**Bobbi Bina**

**Anne Cowie**

**Dana Fox Jenkins**

**Carol Humpage**

**Paula Marie Pettis**

**Randi Ilyse Roth**

**Rockie Weymouth**

**Tara Sweeney, Mentor**  
[tarasweeneyart.com](http://tarasweeneyart.com)



“She Dances on Rocks”  
by Tara Sweeney

Our watercolor artists group, Against All Odds, grew from our collective and individual intentions to maintain creative practice during the difficult COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, many of us did not know each other, and we had varying levels of art experience. (Our working backgrounds include music, non-profit administration, education, graphic design, and law). Most of us live in the Twin Cities, but one hails from Maine (Hi, Dana!). Our common thread: we all had taken in-person classes with our mentor, Tara Sweeney, Professor Emerita with Augsburg University.

We enthusiastically accepted Tara’s invitation to study with her online on the Zoom platform. First, we sketched with prompts every day for 21 days. Then we kept going for another 90 days! Confined to our homes, we looked forward to making daily sketches and sharing them in our online meetings. Look for a selection of these pandemic sketches in this exhibit. We learned from Tara and each other how to select good equipment, tackle a difficult composition, handle line and color.

Now that the pandemic has receded, we still meet online once a month to share new successes and continuing challenges. We have held in-person retreats at a northern Wisconsin cabin for the past three years. Some of us have won several awards. All of us have gained valuable skills and celebrate wonderful friendships. We are so grateful that, against all odds, we are still together as a cohesive group, and that Tara continues to support and facilitate our individual artistic goals.

You will see here our wide variety of subjects and styles. We hope you enjoy our work!

**An artists reception will be held on Saturday, October 5, 10:00 a.m.-Noon. All are welcome**

## Fellowship Groups

Email Philippa Anastos at [philippa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:philippa@unityunitarian.org) to get connected with a fellowship group.

**Afterthoughts** offers time after the 10:00 service to discuss the service.

**Caregivers Support Group** meets on the third Thursday of the month at noon. An informal support group for caregivers.

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

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

**Living With Grief Group** meets on the third Tuesday of the month. A group for people living with grief and loss.

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

**Men's Conversation Group** meets on Zoom October 14 and 28, 7:00-9:00 p.m. The Men's Conversation Group meets to discuss a range of topics; to offer support for each other with emotional, spiritual, family, and other issues; and to develop a deeper connection with one another.

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

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

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

**Textile Arts Group** meets the first and third Wednesday of each month, 9:30-11:00 a.m., in the DeCramer Room. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc.

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

October 8: *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt

November 12: *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World* by Katherine

December 10: *James* by Percival Everett

January 14: *While The World Watched* by Carolyn Maull McKinstry

**Women in Retirement** meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, 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).

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Housing Justice Team

Dayna Kennedy, Housing Justice Team

President Jimmy Carter:

*Habitat's Most Famous Volunteer Turns 100*

Unity's Habitat for Humanity Team is getting ready to celebrate President Carter's 100th birthday on October 1 in style: By building much needed housing!

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity was named host of the 2024 Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project. From September 29-October 4, five Unity Church members will join hundreds of Habitat volunteers in the bustling construction at The Heights, a major redevelopment of the 112-acre former Hillcrest Golf Course on St. Paul's East Side.

All volunteer spaces have been filled, but the background info is inspiring: [tchabitat.org/blog](https://tchabitat.org/blog).

Join in Jimmy Carter's October 1 birthday "Build Forward Bash!" Jonathan Scott (TV's *Property Brothers*) and Sly and the Family Stone co-host a fundraising bash to honor and mark President Carter's centenary milestone and to raise funds for The Heights and Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity. Tickets and information at [tchabitat.org/buildforwardbash](https://tchabitat.org/buildforwardbash)

For more information about how Unity's Housing Justice Team partners with Habitat for Humanity, please contact Chuck Griggs at [griggscb@msn.com](mailto:griggscb@msn.com).



President Jimmy Carter and Melo Lawson work on her future Habitat home in 2010 in Minneapolis.

## Asylum & Faithful Hospitality

Families seeking asylum in our community face an overflow in emergency shelters. Born out of this need, the Faithful Hospitality initiative partners with local houses of worship to provide shelter for these families. Interested in volunteering with us? Want to learn more? Please contact Annessa Ihde at [aihde@interfaithaction.org](mailto:aihde@interfaithaction.org) or give her a call at 651-364-7489. Or contact Unity member Janice Gestner at [janicemgg@comcast.net](mailto:janicemgg@comcast.net).

## Act for the Earth Team



Act for the Earth's Labor Day bike ride and lunch along the Mississippi River was a perfect end to summer!

## Expanded Active Hope Spiral as a Tool for Liberation

**Saturday, October 5 | 9:00 a.m.-noon | Unity Church**

**Registration:** [bit.ly/exactivehope](https://bit.ly/exactivehope)

Facilitators: Jean Hammink and Roberta Cassidy

A half day workshop designed to make the connection between climate change and racism. We will experience three additional steps on the Active Hope spiral journal that bring self-awareness of our own social location, help us understand the systems of oppression, and guide us towards acts of liberation for self, community, and Earth.

## Active Hope Practice Group

**Monday, October 7 | 7:00-8:30 p.m. | Unity Church**

Join us for this monthly session to stay resilient and engaged in light of climate change and all the other issues we're facing. Practice in a community of others who care deeply about these issues, reflecting on each step of the Active Hope Spiral of gratitude, honoring the pain, seeing with new eyes, and going forth. Mark your calendars now for: October 7, November 11, December 16. No registration needed.

## Ballot Measure: Take a Position

Thirty years ago, Minnesotans voted to dedicate Minnesota State Lottery proceeds to fund conservation activities. One billion dollars have been invested to restore and protect our water, land, and wildlife.

This year, Unity's Act for the Earth team again urges Minnesotans to vote YES on the constitutional amendment "Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund Renewal" in order to keep this important work going.

Over one hundred and thirty organizations and businesses have banded together through Minnesotans for our Great Outdoors to encourage people to again vote YES.

Failure to vote on the constitutional amendment will be counted as a NO vote. Please find the amendment on your ballot and vote YES!

Questions? Contact Act for the Earth Team member Craig Cox at [craigalancox@gmail.com](mailto:craigalancox@gmail.com).



## The Wisdom Train

**Katrina Nichols, Nursery Coordinator**

I'm guilty of a current parenting practice bordering on tradition: the "late night panic Google." A parenting micro-crisis arises and I turn to Google with questions like, "Is this normal?" or "At what point do I call a doctor about this?"

While the panic Google can sometimes find me a satisfying answer to these questions, there's another question I carry to each Google search, though it stays in my heart: "Am I really as alone as I feel?"

I know I'm not alone in this feeling — Surgeon General Vivek Murthy has described loneliness as a health crisis in our country. There are lots of "boogeymen" to blame — we could get into it about capitalism, meritocracy, social media — but it would be remiss not to mention the trend in our country away from church attendance and voluntary associations of all kinds. I'm writing to the choir here — a group of people drawn to a religious community. May the following be a testament to the potential of a community like ours to combat loneliness, and to the need to do so.

Murthy more recently wrote about the negative impacts of the specific stresses of parenting, and it really is a particular "parent flavor" of loneliness that I feel. So I panic Google, so I turn to a long playlist of parenting podcasts, and while these all have their place, there remains a hollow these resources are not designed to fill. The parents on the other end don't see me.

But *you* do, at least when I let you. Shortly after Eira's birth, instead of a meal train, Jess and I asked for a wisdom train. We emailed the Unity Church parents we knew at the time and asked them to drop by and just *be* with us as we marked the threshold into parenthood. I still think of those moments of being really *seen* at that tender time and the stories we heard — not advice, but stories of real, lived experience. The pool of storytellers has only grown since Eira's birth. Each story lives in me, beyond the reach of the Google searches.

"Tradition" comes from *tradiare*, "to transmit or hand over." While the practice of panic Googling may be unavoidably handed down to my child, I hope we are also handing over a practice of being with one another — in our authentic, vulnerable, making-this-up-as-we-go fullness. I long for my experience as a parent in the church to be a long, unbroken wisdom train, and I taste it in my work here with other families. May this become our tradition.

Unity's nursery seeks adult volunteers during the 11:15 a.m. service. Interested? Email [katrina@unityunitarian.org](mailto:katrina@unityunitarian.org) for more information.



## Music Notes

**Ahmed Anzaldúa  
Director of Music Ministries**

Although this column is supposed to be about the month's themes of change and tradition, it's difficult for me to focus on those themes with the prospect of another Trump presidency in the horizon. My

thoughts turn back to 2016, to the months before and after that Presidential Election — the sense of imminent danger, the shock and outrage, the numb disbelief. I was hospitalized that December, with gall stones that complicated in all sorts of unexpected and awful ways, leading to infected pancreatic necrosis (which, even with the highest standards of medical care, has an estimated risk of death from organ failure of one in five). Spring of 2017 was difficult, not only because of the direction the country was headed but also because most of it was spent either in the hospital or at home recovering and preparing for the next surgery.

And yet, I remember this period as a time of renewed commitment to making music. I remember a heightened need for it, a yearning for singing, playing piano, and conducting to feel that a day was truly complete. This was the year I started Border CrosSing. That year I took on several projects that seemed incredibly far-fetched just a few months before. Making music was empowering, it felt like it was a big middle finger that I could point up to the universe, to a country that rejected me and my people, to a body that seemed intent on shutting down.

What can I do when half the country is willing to vote for someone that has threatened to harm and kill me and the people I love: immigrants, Muslims, Palestinians, people of color, women, my trans child? I can't vote. I can't afford to donate any meaningful amount. Civil disobedience and protest? I'm not a citizen; if I'm arrested I will be deported.

I can laugh.

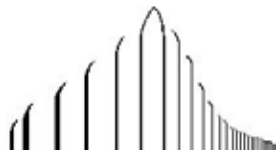
I can make time for joy, friends, music, food, pleasure, art, the things that keep me sane and lighten my heart, that give me the resolve to face fear and uncertainty. The best satisfaction for those that hate me and the people I love is to see us miserable. We win when we can create beauty and joy in the face of bigotry and dehumanizing indifference. Music, theater, art, these things are not a distraction, they are the whole point.

## Bridges WaterSongs: The Ripple Effect

**Sunday, October 13 | 4:00 p.m.**

**Minneapolis South High School**

Join the Minnesota Chorale and Border CrosSing as we continue our Bridges/Puentes series under the baton of Dr. Shekela Wanyama as she explores how music and our impact on the earth intersect. [bordercrossingmn.org](http://bordercrossingmn.org)



# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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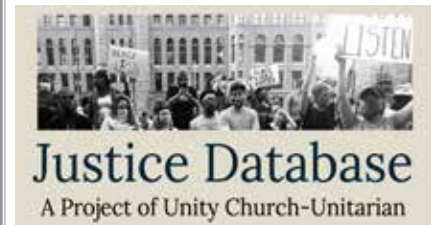
*Unity has been my church home and cherished partner through life's joys and challenges for almost 50 years. Extraordinary good fortune and a bit of hard work have blessed me with resources to share... which I do with organizations that are active in ways that reflect my core values and the kind of world I hope my grandchildren will inherit. Which brings me right back to Unity Church! My gifts to Unity do the work of social and economic justice, music, art, theater, education, gun safety, antiracism and environmental preservation — all through the hands and hearts of people I am honored to count as my faith community. — Joan Maclin*



## October is Unity's Annual Pledge Drive Month

Thank you for your generous financial gifts to the church.

## In The Justice Database The Decolonizing Wealth Project



"Our mission is to bring forth truth, reconciliation, and the healing of our global family from the ails of colonization through education, radical reparative giving, and storytelling." One goal is to redistribute wealth from a reparations approach.  
[bit.ly/JusticeData](http://bit.ly/JusticeData)

### Belongings



new and selected poems  
Margaret Hasse

You're invited to a special event!

Come help celebrate the release of and hear the poet read from her new book.

**Belongings: new and selected poems  
by Margaret Hasse**

**Friday, October 25 | 7:00 p.m.  
Parish Hall and online**

Refreshments. Books for sale. Booksigning.

With Arleta Little  
Executive and Artistic Director, The Loft