

To Yoke Ourselves

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.

To be yoked is to work. A yoke is an ancient tool for farming, a piece of wood that joins two oxen to a plow, transferring the energy from their shoulders pushing forward down and back to a blade plowing a row through a field. To be yoked is to be on a team — yokes are not harnesses, they join the work of two oxen to a single plow, directed by a farmer walking behind them. Like many agricultural images, it has made for rich religious metaphor over the centuries, from early Jewish imagery of “the yoke of bondage” in Egypt, to Jesus’s message that “my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” The apostle Paul warned his followers to take care not to be “unequally yoked,” and the stoles that ministers wear in Unitarian Universalist worship services symbolize (among other things) the yoke of ministry that we put our shoulders to every Sunday.

Like many of the richest metaphors, the yoke is a powerful symbol for good and bad. When imposed from above, a yoke can be a mark of bondage, of control (Egypt and the use of yoke in the book of Exodus). But when chosen freely (ministers donning stoles on Sunday morning), a yoke can be a symbol of joyful obligation. This is what we choose to commit ourselves to, knowing that we are not in charge, but that we are committed along with people around us to bring our effort to work for the common good.

This October, our theme at Unity Church is “to yoke ourselves,” drawing on the language of the congregation’s

ends statements, which ask us to “yoke ourselves to the demands, sacrifices, and hard work of antiracism, multiculturalism, and climate and economic justice.” This set of ends statements chose rich, complicated language, and October’s theme is the first of nine themes drawing out rich images from the text.

Over the coming month in worship, we’ll explore different ways to use the image of the yoke. On October 5, we’ll kick off our pledge campaign by talking about what it means to voluntarily choose to take on commitments — not out of a sense of obligation and impending punishment, but out of a sense of joy. To choose to yoke ourselves to a religious institution is to proclaim, to the world and ourselves, that there is something here worth preserving and proclaiming. Later in the month we’ll draw lessons from community organizing and talk about Unity Church’s work towards reparations for the legacies of slavery and indigenous land theft in this country. The reparations work, in particular, exists at the intersection of racial and economic justice that our ends call us to.

One of the hardest things for many of us Unitarian Universalists to do is to give up our expectation of control. The (white, capitalist, usually male) American image of the self-sufficient prairie farmer, where “I am the master of my fate, ...the captain of my soul” is deep-seated for many of us. But the religious life continually asks us

to question the assumptions that we inherit. Our Unitarian Universalist tradition teaches us that we are all interconnected, that nobody is quite the self-sufficient island we would like to believe.

When we yoke ourselves, we make a voluntary choice to forfeit the illusion of control. Instead, we identify a goal (i.e. antiracism, multiculturalism, and climate and economic justice) and put our shoulders to a plow that we do not necessarily steer. From a practical organizing standpoint, this helps us to use our power most effectively. And from a religious perspective, it helps us to set aside our ego in service of a common cause.

*Grateful to be yoked to you,
Rev. Oscar
On behalf of the Theme Team*

Theme Resources

For further reflection on the theme, see this month’s spiritual practice packet, available online at unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.

Access all the hyperlinks in this newsletter by scanning this QR code.



JUST WORDS



Just Words

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister

There's an old story about Hosea Ballou, a 19th century Universalist preacher. In trying to describe how he imagined the love of God, he hit on a metaphor: Imagine, Ballou asked, that, "Your child has fallen into the mire, and their body and their garments are defiled. You cleanse them, and array them in clean robes. The query is, Do you love your child because you have washed them? Or, did you wash them because you loved them?"

"Yoke" is probably the single word in the Unity's new ends statements that has generated the most feedback, questions, and theological heartburn. It is a word about commitment, but also a word that asks us to give up control. To yoke ourselves implies that we are committed to something, but we don't know exactly where it will lead or what will be asked of us. It is a dangerous word.

It is also a word that has two very different framings. The first is about control: what am I yoked to, that requires certain actions from me? The other is love: what am I compelled to do, not because I love the result, but because I love the person I am yoked to?

I've been thinking a lot about caretaking this month. Stacie and I are in a season of our lives when family members who we love dearly need a lot of care — from help going to doctors appointments to babies with overflowing diapers. It is a common enough experience that there is a name for it. The "sandwich generation" is the period of time where many of us are caring for both children and elders alike. It is an exhausting, challenging period, with constant demands and worries about whether we will — or are able to — do enough. It feels, on a day-to-day basis, like being in a yoke. Stacie and I are stuck together pulling a plow through a field, the sun is hot and the work is hard. And yet, the yoke we are in is not one of obligation, but of love. It is the same yoke Hosea Ballou was trying to point to in his description of the love of God.

We do the hard, time consuming tasks of caretaking not out of a specific result. We don't know how our kids will turn out, and we know that no amount of care for aging family members will prevent loss. We do not care for each other because we are only loveable if we are cared for. We do care for each other because we love the people in our lives. We choose to yoke ourselves to networks of care, because in doing so we express our love. And on days when it is hard? We're working together, as a team in a single harness.

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Ray Wiedmeyer and Karen Abraham celebrated their 50th anniversary on August 29, 2025.

Barb and Pat Foss celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary on September 7, 2025.

Bernice Hanson celebrated her 99th birthday on September 13, 2025.

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 the Minister or a helping hand or listening ear of a Care Team member? Send an email to pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org. If you are experiencing an urgent need for pastoral support, call 651-300-9123.

Ends Statements

We the people of Unity Church-Unitarian, grounded in a joyous vision of beloved community, within, among, and beyond ourselves,

- understand the interconnected roots of oppression and yoke ourselves to the demands, sacrifices, and hard work of antiracism, multiculturalism, and climate and economic justice;
- cultivate a multigenerational community of joy, care, and belonging, and evangelize love to meet the deep and abiding hunger in all of us;
- practice lifelong faith formation, grounded in Unitarian Universalist theology, that breaks us open and allows us to be transformed.

commUNITY is the monthly newsletter of Unity Church. Deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to the month of publication.

Subscriptions (digital and USPS) are available by contacting Martha at martha@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x105.

Access all the hyperlinks in the current newsletter by scanning this QR code.



SUNDAY SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Sunday 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 worship theme resources at unityunitarian.org/sunday-services.

October 5: Yoked to Joy

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair | Ollie Stocker, worship associate

On Celebration Sunday we begin Unity's annual pledge drive with a reflection on joy. What does it mean to choose to be yoked to joy, to commit ourselves to institutions and ways of being in the world that call us to deeper meaning, rather than transient happiness?

October 12: Reparations as Repair

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair | Meg Arnosti, worship associate

For the last several years, Unity's Board of Trustees has been considering the work of reparations as a moral imperative, partnering with the Saint Paul Reparations Commission and other activists in the community to imagine how the church can engage in work to address historic harms. This Sunday we'll consider where that work has led us, and what might come next.

October 19: The Work that Reconnects

Rev. Shay MacKay | Charlie Caswell, worship associate

Building on the work of Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone, how can we possibly yoke ourselves to joy in times like these? What happens when we let our grief for a broken world direct the plow? Resiliency and creativity are not only tools of the joyful, but are also honed by what we've lost.

Story Sunday, October 26: Yoked Together

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair | Chris Russert, worship associate

Yoking is not a solo endeavor. To be yoked is to be joined in a team, each pulling together in a common effort. Community organizing teaches us the power of organized people, each giving up some level of autonomy in order to effect change together. How do we navigate our Unitarian Universalist tradition's emphasis on individual conscience with the need for collective action in these times?

On Story Sundays, children in grades 1-8 begin in worship with the congregation in the Sanctuary. After the Story for All Ages, Workshop Rotation children (grades 1-5) go to their classrooms for religious education while Middle School youth (grades 6-8) remain in the Sanctuary for the entire service.

Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday worship service, please contact Martha Tilton at martha@unityunitarian.org.

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.

October 5

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. They also organize community information forums encouraging people to become passionate advocates for Mano a Mano's many sustainable projects. This collection will support the ongoing outreach work of Mano a Mano.

October 12

Unity's Peace and Justice Scholarship was created to honor the dedicated leadership of Pat Haff and her 12 years of coordinating Unity's Community Outreach Ministry. This fund is dedicated to supporting equal access to participation in Unity's pilgrimages and hands-on workshops serving as an important cornerstone of Unity's community outreach programs. This collection will provide scholarships for congregational justice events and learning opportunities.

October 19

[Pacem in Terris Hermitage Retreat Center](#) provides solitary and silent retreats for anyone who reaches out to them. Founded in the Franciscan tradition, Pacem is ecumenical in its scope and practice. The grounds offer many miles of carefully groomed trails and 23 individual hermitages where participants surrender to the silence and the abundance of natural beauty, and slip into wonder, renewal, and reflection. Pacem exists on donations and this collection will support the ongoing recovery from 2024 tornado devastation.

October 26

[Justus Ramsey House](#) (JRH) was the epicenter for St. Paul's first community of African American porters working for the Pullman Company and the Great Northern Railway. This stone cottage was doomed for destruction until St. Paul's West 7th Street Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association stepped in, obtained pro bono legal help and convinced the St. Paul City Council to save the structure. JRH has been meticulously dismantled and will be rebuilt on the grounds of the Minnesota Transportation Museum. JRH, through its exhibits and programs, will keep the stories of early Black railroad porters alive. This collection will kickstart the restoration of this historic St. Paul structure.

Nominate an organization to receive the Sunday offering! Details and a nomination form are online at unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html.

BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

Reparations Commission

Maura Williams, Racial Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team

Since it became seated in spring of 2024, the Saint Paul Recovery Act Community Reparations Commission has created its own bylaws; developed sub-committees, work plans, and budget; hosted community listening sessions; and set the course for its next big steps: a Harms Report and a legislative proposal. The Harms Report will underlie future recommendations for repair and redress. The contract for production is being awarded this fall, and delivery of the Harms Report to the Commission is requested by the end of 2026.



The Slavery Disclosure and Redress Ordinance (SDRO) will likely be proposed to Saint Paul City Council this year. Slavery Disclosure acts require that companies who wish to apply for government contracts investigate their history, and that of predecessors and acquisitions, for any links to slavery and the slave trade before the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. In addition to companies that directly benefitted from the labor of enslaved persons, businesses like financial institutions and insurance companies that engaged in holding or transferring enslaved persons as assets or providing loans for their purchase, would also be required to investigate their records. Companies must then file an affidavit about their findings. Depending on how the ordinance is written, consequences for records of links to slavery must be disclosed to the municipality, and continued pursuit of a city contract might require public disclosures and hearings, programmatic support and/or financial contributions. Insufficient investigations or false affidavits could result in legal action or being barred from future contracts.

SDROs have been enacted in other municipalities — Chicago, San Francisco, Detroit, Philadelphia, and more, as well as at the state level in California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Connecticut.

Members of Unity's Racial Justice Team, and more recently the Board's Reparations Committee, have attended monthly meetings of the Commission as a show of support and as an opportunity to develop personal and institutional relationship with the Commission. Quietly observing their policy work is a far cry from the "hard work of antiracism" as stated in our new ends, but we are preparing to learn, together with the Commission, what will be requested of white allies who commit to standing with them as their recommendations become actionable. The SDRO proposal will be the first public act of the Commission aimed at establishing accountability for historic acts of oppression that enriched the bottom line of enterprises now doing business in Saint Paul.

We don't know what kind of blowback the proposal might generate. The Commission will be asking for signatures of support from individuals and organizations to accompany the ordinance proposal to City Council. Most of us are probably comfortable adding a signature to a list of supporters and asking our City Councilperson to back a measure. Are we as willing to take it to the next level and ask organizations in our networks, or our workplace, to add their names in support of the SDRO?

Learn from representatives of the Commission and Unity's Board and Racial Justice Team at Wellspring Wednesday on October 1 (see page eight).

Unity Church Board Reparations Committee

LauraSue Schlatter, Trustee

In an article in the [April 2025 commUNITY newsletter](#), Board Trustee Louise Livesay-Al provided some history about Helener Currier, and the origins of the reparations fund at Unity Church. Having determined that the St. Paul Reparations Commission would be a primary source of moral authority for that work, the Board Reparations Committee and members of Unity's Racial Justice Team met with members of the Reparations Commission in early May to learn what Unity Church could provide that would be most helpful to the Commission now. The Commission requested money to help them pay for a harm report, to underpin its ongoing work. The Commission also sought nonpublic, unrestricted funds to significantly expand its public outreach. The board formally offered \$100,000, and the Commission is proceeding with the formalities required (City Council approval) to accept the money this fall.

But, as Louise said in her April article, transferring money, especially money that cost us nothing to begin with, is not the hard work of reparations that we at Unity Church must do. Louise asked, "How do we have 'skin in the game'?" This is a moment for deep reflection and reckoning — what does it mean to be individual and institutional beneficiaries of systems built on slavery; and to energetically and actively engage when we are asked to support the Commission's legislative and advocacy activities? This is how we take a baby step at understanding the interconnected roots of oppression and yoke ourselves to the demands, sacrifices, and hard work of antiracism and economic justice.



Moral Ownership

Jackie Duffus Boyd, Trustee

Two years ago I sat in Robbins Parlor on an early winter evening. I was there to receive my policy and Policy Governance training as an incoming trustee. I was handed a wonderfully organized, black three-ring binder that included the theory, philosophy, history and, of course, policy, that are the foundation of Unity Church. On page five, Policy D of our governing policies is a header that reads “Moral Ownership.” The page goes on to explain what, and more importantly who, has the moral ownership of our church.

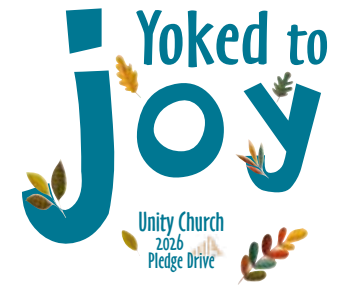
*The Moral Owners of Unity Church-Unitarian are members of Unity Church-Unitarian and **others who yearn for the Beloved Community and see Unity Church-Unitarian as an instrument for its realization.** The Beloved Community is engaged in the work of the spirit. **It is community at the highest level of reality and possibility, where love and justice prevail.***

This policy was first created in 2005, twenty years ago. I find it to be just as relevant and compelling today. I love that Unity Church holds itself accountable to the members of the congregation, of course, and to all people and organizations who see in Unity Church an instrument for building a community “where love and justice prevail.”

The board did a lot of work with the idea of Moral Owners as we gathered input and created the new ends statements for the congregation. One of the Moral Owners we spoke to was Rev. Kinga-Reka Szekely of our partner church in Homoródszentpéter, Transylvania, Romania. Just a month ago, Kinga and several others from the Unitarian Church of Homoródszentpéter, visited Unity Church. I had the opportunity to attend a potluck with Kinga and the Romanian pilgrims, as well as many Unity Church members who had participated in past pilgrimages to Homoródszentpéter. Rev. Kinga-Reka Szekely shared with us that she’d been advised not to talk to Americans about three specific topics: money, politics and religion. And that she very much hoped we would all be willing to disregard this cultural norm, and in fact, engage with her in meaningful conversation about these three tricky topics. She trusted that the strength of our relationship could hold this type of deep and meaningful conversation.

To me, this is a model for what it means to engage with our Moral Owners. It is a beautiful thing to build deep, mutually beneficial relationships with people, communities and organizations beyond the walls of Unity Church. Relationships that can hold meaningful conversation and even differences of opinion.

I hope that as we progress through our ten-month series exploring the dangerous words of our new ends statements, we’ll simultaneously continue to deepen our understanding and engagement with these 20-year-old words: Moral Ownership and Moral Owners. I hope that we can continue to grow, nurture and deepen our relationships with our partners in Romania, as well as those much closer to home, who yearn for Beloved Community and see Unity Church as being an instrument for its creation.



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 for the next year. How should we think about our financial contributions to Unity Church in 2026? Our new ends statements contain some provocative, even dangerous, words to guide our generosity. What if we trusted that as we live into those words, we would find joy singing even amid heartbreak? Not fleeting happiness but deep and abiding joy, not found in things or circumstance, but in the best of who we are and who we yearn to become. What would it mean if we expected that joy and yoked ourselves to it?

This pledge drive, we invite you to *yoke to joy*. Consider how your financial commitment to the church can connect you — and yoke us all — to the joy of active stewardship. Notice how the generosity that propels our pursuit of the church’s mission and ends opens us to the transformative grounding at the heart of true joy. Even in these challenging times — climate change, social division, economic uncertainty — your pledge makes Unity Church a place of hope.

Know that every pledge matters! Your pledge card includes an invitation to step up your pledge and bring our congregation closer to a pledge base that fully funds our operating budget and mission. If you haven’t received a pledge card in the mail, please pick one up at the church or reach out to Laura Park at laura@unityunitarian.org.

Save the Date: Sunday, December 7 | 1:00 p.m.

Annual Meeting of the Congregation of Unity Church-Unitarian

WELCOME NEWCOMERS | FELLOWSHIP GROUPS



Welcome Words

Philippa Anastos
Membership Coordinator
and Program Assistant

For me, this month's theme, "to yoke ourselves," is a call to step out of despair and into collective action. I have the immense privilege of meeting the people who visit Unity Church each week. I hear their stories, do my best to answer their questions, and help them find connections within the community. I am writing this in the wake of yet another deeply unsettled week in our society, and have reflected often on how courageous it is to seek connection at times like these. We seem to know intuitively that, if there is an answer to the polycrisis, we will not find it alone. Instead, we will find it by going out of our normal paths and patterns, and by visiting and welcoming each other.

Finding Yourself at Unity

Finding Yourself at Unity: For Visitors and Inquirers
Sundays 10:15 a.m. | Center Room | Childcare available

Explore a deeper connection to Unity Church and the commitments and opportunities of membership. Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time. If you have questions or would like one-on-one conversation about getting connected or about membership, contact Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant, philippa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110.

October classes include:

- October 5: Worship and the Liturgical Year
- October 12: Q& A with the Minister
- October 19: Religious Education and Faith Formation
- October 26: Membership 101

Committing to Unity

Tuesday, October 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m. | Center Room

Join Philippa Anastos and Rev. Oscar for a discussion of the commitments of membership at Unity Church. Does the invitation into this ongoing work resonate with you? This session, for people ready to become members, explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's need meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church. Contact Philippa Anastos at philippa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110 to let her know you're interested in participating or to ask questions. She can also arrange a private signing ceremony. Email katrina@unityunitarian.org, one week in advance, to request childcare.

Fellowship Groups

Email Philippa at philippa@unityunitarian.org to get connected or visit unityunitarian.org/fellowship-groups.html.

Afterthoughts: Sundays, 10:15 a.m., Middle School Room 021, to discuss the service

Caregivers Support Group: third Thursday of the month at noon, Zoom

Evergreen Quilters: second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Anderson Library, and fourth Saturday of the month, 10:00 a.m.-noon, off-site.

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

Living With Grief Group: third Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Zoom

LGBTQ+ Group: This group coordinates some of the LGBTQ+ programming with the congregation.

Men's Coffee Group: Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m., Center Room, for light-hearted conversation

Men's Conversation Group: Monday, October 13 and 27, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Zoom. Discuss a range of topics, offer support, and connect.

Men's Retirement Circle: Monday, October 6 and 20, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Robbins Parlor

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

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

Textile Arts Group: first and third Friday of the month, 9:30-11:00 a.m., Crothers Room, bring your knitting, stitching, etc.

Unity Book Club: second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Zoom. On October 14 the group will discuss *Salt Houses* by Hala Alyan

Unity Gardeners: Join other Unity Gardeners and sign on for a few hours of gardening care heading into winter. No experience necessary!

Women in Retirement: second and fourth Thursday of each month, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Center Room

Young Adult Group (ages 18-35): every other Wednesday at 7:10 p.m., Center Room. 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.

Dine with Nine

Registration: bit.ly/dinenine25

Want to enjoy conversation, food, and fellowship with fellow Unity Church members and friends? Enjoy meeting new faces and/or renewing prior acquaintances? Like extending the hospitality of Unity's community in a personal way? Dine with Nine is for you!



Small groups (approximately nine per group) of Unity Church members and friends gather once a month for food and fellowship. Each group is self-directed and chooses the dates, times, and locations for their gatherings. Often, these are potluck meals in group members' homes, but groups may also choose to mix in visits to restaurants, a picnic, or a catered/delivered meal.

Are you eager to explore new recipes? Do you want to reduce your carbon footprint? Act for the Earth will provide meatless meal ideas, cooking tips, and recipes to all Dine with Nine groups.

Questions? Contact Philippa Anastos at philippa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110.

Volunteer to Give Rides

We're looking for volunteers to give fellow community members rides to church. Your kindness and support will help others connect and participate. If you're able to assist, please consider volunteering! For more information, contact Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant, philippa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110.

2025 Christmas Pageant: Save the Dates

- Pageant cast and children's choir registration runs November 23-December 5.
- Casting completed and posted online by December 8 (all who register will have a role).
- Costume fitting is December 14 between services.
- Rehearsal is Tuesday, December 23, 1:00-4:00 p.m. Cast only, no children's choir.
- Pageant performances are Wednesday, December 24, 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. Cast and choirs should arrive by 3:45 p.m. and will be done by 6:30 p.m.

If you are interested in learning more about getting involved with the pageant production, please reach out to Pageant Director Kelley Loughrey at kelleyloughrey@comcast.net or text/ call 763-607-7520. This includes all behind the scenes work including lighting, props, prompters, an assistant director or two, and a costume designers. You do not need to be a parent or pageant alum — all are welcome!

Regulation for Resistance

Saturday, October 25 | 9:00 a.m.-noon | Parish Hall

How do our embodied experiences and the deep wisdom they contain support us in knowing when to move, when to rest and when to resist, especially in the midst of uncertainty, fear and violence? How do we tap into the wisdom of fight/flight/freeze and other automatic nervous system functions? Join a workshop that will support us in meeting the moment whole and embodied.

Led by Lucinda Pepper, a doula of the in-between and active love practices guide, you will be invited to explore the somatic realities of our bodies, emotions and values through an embodied framework that centers love, justice, reciprocity and care. Workshop participants will gain understanding of the human autonomic nervous system's function, practice skills for personal care and collective well-being, and participate in somatic storytelling. No experience necessary. The workshop will include listening, accessible and gentle movement, sitting and standing. Wear comfortable layers.

Weekly Moving Practice Circle

Mondays | 5:00-6:00 p.m. | Ames Chapel

The circle, led by Revs. Karen Hering, Ruth MacKenzie, and Kate Tucker, includes guided gentle movement and breath, silence and poetry and song, grounding us in the energy and resilience needed to meet the growing challenges of this time. Learn movements that can regulate an unsettled nervous system and help access the body's natural resources for resilience and resistance. No experience is necessary. The practices can be modified for sitting or standing. Wear comfortable clothing, bring a water bottle and a curiosity in mind, heart and body.

Sangha Practice

Tuesdays | 4:30-6:00 p.m. | Ames Chapel

At the heart of Buddhist practice is the commitment to awaken — to step into our doubts and predicaments and hear the roaring of life at the still point of a turning universe. Through weekly practice of meditation, we discover a clarity of mind attentive and accountable to each moment of life's flow, and touch the mystery of our original face. This group is open to anyone interested, no experience is necessary, and instructions will be provided. Email kp@unityunitarian.org if you would like to join the weekly practice.

Lectio Divina

Second Wednesday and Fourth Tuesday of Each Month

7:10 p.m. | Zoom: bit.ly/UnityLectio24-25

Is it poetry? Is it meditation? It's a bit of both — Lectio Divina! Come experience the alchemy that occurs through focused reflection on an inspirational text. People find Lectio sessions to be a time of rejuvenation and insight. Led by Shelley Butler and Lisa Wersal; facilitated by your own heart.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

October 1

Dinner: Cabbage and sausage, kale salad, apple cake

Saint Paul Reparations Commission | Parish Hall and [Zoom](#)

Unity's Racial Justice Team brings together representatives of the Saint Paul Recovery Act Community Reparations Commission and Unity's Executive Team and Board of Trustees Reparations Committee in a conversation about the Commission's plans and how we might actively participate in supporting their work.

Activism for Beginners: Small Group Practice Anderson Library | Robbins Parlor

Those who attended the September 24 Activism for Beginners workshop are invited to practice their new skills. In Anderson Library, Dayna Kennedy will lead a practice session on writing elected officials, and in Robbins Parlor, Sherri Knuth will lead a practice session on calling your elected officials.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Join Mayra Mendoza for beginning violin lessons appropriate for all ages. Email mayraquitzia@hotmail.com by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday to ensure a lesson.

Wellspring Wednesday

Wellspring Wednesday gathers a multigenerational church community to nourish right and holy relationship among us and deepen our life of faith, grounded in spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural work. Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. in Parish Hall, a short chapel service begins at 6:45 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. 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.



October 8

Dinner: Miso glazed root vegetables, mixed greens, butterscotch oatmeal bars

Five Theological Questions – Large Group | Parish Hall *What does it mean to be human and alive?*

Facilitated by Nathan Schultz, Nathan Jacobson, Monica Digre, Ruth Lencowski

Explore one of the 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 first session explores the question: What does it mean to be human and alive? Come prepared to engage in personal reflection and share your responses with participants of all ages in a large group format.

The small group session for this question will be held on October 22. Children under age 12 are welcome but should be accompanied by an adult. Future sessions are scheduled for November 5 and 19, December 4 and January 7, January 21 and February 4, and February 25 and March 4. Attend as your schedule allows. All participants are invited to share a statement of faith at the final session on April 15, 2026.

If you are mentoring a young person through Unity's Coming of Age program, we examine each question before you will meet with your age group to focus on that topic.

A Spiritual Practice to Feed Your Soul: Lectio Divina Gannett Room | Zoom: bit.ly/UnityLectio24-25

Is it poetry? Is it meditation? It's a bit of both — Lectio Divina! Come experience the alchemy that occurs through focused reflection on an inspirational text. Many people find Lectio Divina sessions to be a time of rejuvenation and insight. Led by Shelley Butler and Lisa Wersal; facilitated by your own heart. Register once and attend as often as you are able. Questions? Contact Shelley at library@unityunitarian.org.

Young Adults Group | Center Room

Unity's Young Adult Group 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. To be added to the Young Adults email list, email kp@unityunitarian.org.

Somatic Yoga | Body Room

Experience a gentle, nervous system-informed yoga practice designed to help you pause, tune into yourself, and release tension stored in the body. The class is accessible to anyone comfortable sitting on the floor, bring a yoga mat, blanket, or blocks for added comfort. Led by Dr. Tamara Kraft, a somatic psychotherapist and holistic health coach.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Email mayraquitzia@hotmail.com by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday to ensure a lesson.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

October 15

Dinner: Grilled cheese, tomato soup, slaw, brown sugar bars

Town Hall: Organizing | Parish Hall

In this social climate, it is more vital than ever that we learn to organize across large groups, but that task presents unique challenges. Rev. Oscar will share his experience from organizing across multiple initiatives, states, and sectors, and is available to answer your questions.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Email mayraquitzia@hotmail.com by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday to ensure a lesson.

October 22

Dinner: Tater tot hotdish, Waldorf salad, broccoli, brownies

Unity's Development Ministry Team | Parish Hall

As we launch our annual pledge drive, Unity's Executive Team and Development Ministry Team are here to answer your questions. What does it mean to be "yoked to joy" and how does our pledge drive help us achieve our prophetic ministry in the world?

Five Theological Questions – Small Group | Robbins Parlor *What does it mean to be human and alive?*

Facilitated by Nathan Schultz, Nathan Jacobson, Monica Digre, Ruth Lencowski

Explore one of the five questions at the heart of systematic theology. Come prepared to engage in personal reflection and share your responses in small group conversations. Children under age 12 are welcome but should be accompanied by an adult.

Cultivating the Sacred Well of Resilience | Anderson Library

Join educators Jackie Smith and Sara Ford for a four-month series designed to cultivate resilience and well-being in the lives of educators. Rooted in care, connection, and community, this course is ideal for anyone seeking greater clarity, balance, and sustainability in their work. Wherever you are in your teaching career, developing habits that support wellbeing can help sustain the joy and purpose of teaching in an increasingly complex world.

Young Adults Group | Center Room

Unity's Young Adult Group is a fun, reflective group of people working to build multi-faith and multicultural community.

Somatic Yoga | Body Room

Experience a gentle, nervous system-informed yoga practice designed to help you pause, tune into yourself, and release tension stored in the body. The class is accessible to anyone comfortable sitting on the floor, bring a yoga mat, blanket, or blocks for added comfort.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Email mayraquitzia@hotmail.com by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday to ensure a lesson.

October 29

Dinner: Red beans and rice, andouille sausage, green beans, brown-butter chocolate chip bars

Neighbors Among Us: A Primer on Immigration Terms, Status, and Mass Deportation | Parish Hall

Immigration policy can feel overwhelming, filled with confusing terms and shifting rules. This session, facilitated by Unity's Sanctuary Justice Team, will provide a clear overview of immigration statuses and categories, from asylum seekers to DACA recipients, and explain who is most at risk given current policy shifts. We will also explore the legal and ethical implications of these changes and consider how our community, guided by faith and justice, can respond in solidarity with immigrant neighbors.

Hymn Sing | Robbins Parlor

At each session group members sing a hymn from our hymnals; discuss its music, text, history, and theology; and share personal reflections on the music and its meaning.

Beginner Violin | Choir Room

Email mayraquitzia@hotmail.com by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday to ensure a lesson.

Food Ministers Welcome Here



Join us for kitchen ministry! No previous experience is required as we give on-the-job training. We only ask you have a collaborative spirit and are willing to put love into the food we prepare and serve. If you are interested, you can sign up here bit.ly/wwfood25 or email Heidi at heidi@unityunitarian.org.

We Tell Our Stories

Indigenous artists using bold color and imagery to illustrate stories of their heritage.

Parish Hall and West Hall Exhibit September-October 2025

Reception: Friday, October 10, 5:00–7:00 p.m.

Meet the artists: Sunday, October 26, 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Carly G. Bearseason's inspiration is drawn from her experiences as a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe. Her Indigeneity manifests itself in her work through her use of color and pattern. She is drawn to vivid primary colors, inspired by memories of dancing and of admiring bright hues of powwow dress. The richness of color she portrays in her work is inextricably tied to the richness of Ojibwe culture and traditions.



Gordon Coons is a member of Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Band of Lake Superior Indians of Wisconsin and Ottawa/Potawatomi. He is a largely self-taught painter, printmaker, and fumage artist. He paints in the Ojibwa Woodland style and creates fumage, smoke art, by burning cedar. He incorporates playfulness in his images, telling stories of relationships between Western and Native cultures, and connections we have to our shared history.



Kent Estey is an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation of Ojibwe and is known for bold and bright colors in his art. Kent's lineage includes self-taught artists where black ash basketry, beading, birch bark, and fiber artistry were everyday occurrences in his home. Often, the subject matter of his paintings are land, sky, and water. Vibrant colors reflecting his feelings captivates the viewer as he captures the beauty of his surroundings.



Art Team Adds to Permanent Collection

The Unity Church Art Team has added two new pieces to our permanent collection including "Her Story" by Hend Al-Mansour and "Grandma Exercising the Children" by Catherine Palmer. Visit [Art Lives at Unity](#) to see the art and learn about the artists and their inspiration.

All Our Fullness Art Show

The Unity Church Art Team is planning a congregation art show in February of 2026! Watch for details about how to participate in the November *commUNITY* newsletter.

Two Couples, A Century Apart

The Married Ministry Teams of Unity Church

Pauline Eichten, Archives Team

Revs. Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs were co-ministers of Unity Church from 2000-2021. However, they were not the first married couple to serve Unity Church. Richard Wilson Boynton and his wife, Harriet Barton Boynton, came to Unity in 1900 and stayed until 1907. During the Boyntons tenure, the congregation moved up the hill from downtown and in 1905 built the original sanctuary at the current location.

Richard and Harriet graduated in 1895 from Meadville Theological School, then in Meadville, Pennsylvania, and married shortly after. In 1896 they were installed as the ministers of the Unitarian Society of Roslindale, Massachusetts. In [The Year-book of the Unitarian Congregational churches, for 1896](#), both are listed as ordained, with Richard Boynton the settled minister,

In a letter to Elinor Otto in 2001, the Boyntons' grandson, David Parke, wrote that in Roslindale Harriet preached often, visited the sick and elderly, and connected with isolated Unitarians and prison inmates through the American Unitarian Association's Post Office Mission. According to Mr. Parke, it was the custom at that time in New England to have a morning and an evening service. The Boyntons divided up the preaching, alternating the morning service. The birth of their first child in 1898 probably required some changes in Harriet's responsibilities.

He couldn't say whether Harriet was considered a co-minister at Unity Church, but was certain she thought of herself as functioning in ministry, "within the limits imposed by marriage and motherhood."

Perhaps the Boyntons planted seeds for Unity Church's future collaborative leadership.

More information about the Boyntons can be found at Meadville Lombard Theological School Archives and in the Unity Church collections at the Minnesota Historical Society.



Meadville community, circa 1895. Richard W. Boynton, first row, second from the left. Harriet Belle Barton, second row, seventh from the left. Photo courtesy of the Archives and Special Collections, Meadville Lombard Theological School; Portraits, Prints, and Photographs Collection.



Marg Walker has done it again!

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

So, I'm greatly tempted to quote Michelle Obama to say to Marg Walker, "Girl, you have done it again!" ***So Surprisingly Light the Small Suitcase of Certainty: Poems*** (Nodin Press) is Marg's second book of poetry, out just in time for her **book launch and reading on Saturday, October 11, at 4:00 p.m., in Parish Hall and on Zoom.** Not satisfied with just a new poetry book, Marg has collaborated with musicians and produced an audiobook of her work "embroidered with music from piano, flute, and solo voice," entitled *Words to Warm the Silences*. One hundred percent of the sales of the audio book will support Unity's Music Ministry.

Having the pleasure of getting an advanced look at the book, I'm in complete agreement with the well-known in Minnesota, illustrious poet, Jim Moore. He says:

At the heart of this book is the shock of pleasure just to be alive. In poem after poem, Marg Walker returns us to this shock, to this pleasure... Wrapped inside this gift are the surprises the poems so often embody, the unexpected turns, the sudden moments of humor or of an awareness so startling it is like lightning on a dark night... For a moment /there was no difference between my soul and song, Walker writes in one of her brief "For A Moment" poems. But fortunately for us, there are many such moments in this collection. This is a truly wonderful book.

There is complexity among the themes of the poems — beauty, love, family of origin, the isolation of COVID, loss, time marching on — but most of all gratitude among all life has to deliver. Consider this from "The Arms of the World":

*Let me not fail to praise
these veiled and layered realms
not skim as stone does over water
or water over stone
but belong to all affections,
the stone, the water, the impossible
stars, this field, this sun, and you...*

Come to Unity Church on Saturday, October 11, at 4:00 p.m. when new poetry and music, all will be revealed. Books and audiobook for sale. Book signing and refreshments to follow reading. Books will be available in the Bookstall on Sunday, October 12.



Plant Seeds of Justice

Welcome a Guest at Your Table

Krista Finstad, UUSC Partner Team

The Unity Church UUSC Partner Team seeks to re-ignite our congregation's connection to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). Learning more about and financially supporting the UUSC gives us a chance to put our "faith in action."

According to the UUSC website, the UUSC is a "nonprofit, nonsectarian organization advancing human rights together with an international community of grassroots partners and advocates."

The Guest at Your Table fundraising program is celebrating 50 years in 2025. It is a chance to learn more about the 50+ groups and organizations that the UUSC funds in 20 countries. This year's theme is "Plant Seeds of Justice."

The Guest at Your Table Program provides a cardboard box with photos of four guests so that we can view their faces as they "sit down" to share a meal at our tables, as well as *Stories of Hope* to read and learn more. Participants can contribute currency or paper IOUs to the box for a check to be written later.

According to the UUSC's website, participants will learn more about these four guests:

1. Innovative migration justice leaders housing LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers in Philadelphia;
2. A Honduran community of water defenders carrying on the legacy of the late Juan Lopez;
3. Political prisoner Ruth Lopez fighting for government accountability and human rights in El Salvador; and
4. Haitian activists fighting for the rights of people in migration.

Unity's UUSC Partner Team will be distributing boxes through Religious Education and in Parish Hall after services during October and November. Contributions can also be made directly on the website.

Any individual's unrestricted donation of \$150 or more is eligible to be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY.

Join us in renewing our congregation's connection to this vital service provided by our fellow Unitarian Universalists to act on our values here at home and throughout the world.

Sign up for updates from the UUSC's website to learn more: <https://www.uusc.org/subscribe/?email=>.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Housing Justice Ministry Team

Project Home has a Permanent Home

Dayna Kennedy, [Housing Justice Team](#)

Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul has taken ownership of the Best Western Plus Como Park Hotel at 1010 Bandana Boulevard West. Through their Project Home initiative, they now have the potential to house 100 unsheltered families — doubling the size of their program.



Project Home is one of only two emergency family shelters in Ramsey County's Coordinated Entry System. The organization also provides food, clothing, tutoring, job coaching and rapid exit housing case management.

Retrofitting and updating the hotel for families is not cheap, and doubling the size of the program costs money. Thirty families have already moved in and just to upgrade the security system, for example, will cost more than \$70,000. Please consider making a donation! Make checks payable to: Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul and write Project Home in the memo line. Mail your check to Interfaith Action at 1010 Bandana Boulevard West, Saint Paul, MN 55108. Or call Erica Collins at Project Home: 651-461-3102. All donations are tax deductible. Questions? Contact Unity Church member Janice Gestner at janicemgg@comcast.net.

If you would like to give in other ways, consider volunteering as a meal driver. Until a commercial kitchen has been completed, drivers are needed to bring meals from the kitchen at Provincial House to the new Bandana location. Sign up here: bit.ly/phmealdeliv.

Postcard Success

Thank you to everyone who signed postcards to influence the draft federal budget. Unity Church ended up signing 230 postcards of Beacon Interfaith Housing's 5,000 signed postcards that went toward this national campaign. Although President Trump's initial housing funding was abysmal, both the Senate and House went against his draft and kept supportive services in their draft budgets, items such as mental health services, recovery services, job coaching, etc. Postcards *do* have an impact! Thank you!

The Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance connects Unitarian Universalists and allies to help shape a just and loving world. muusja.org



Household Goods: A Very Big Thank You

Unity's [Evergreen Quilters](#) and [Housing Justice Team](#) have been collaborating since last spring on collecting gently used and new small household items for Project Home. The items go to families when they move from transitional housing at Project Home into their permanent housing. On Saturday, September 13, four very packed vehicles with donations were collected and delivered to Project Home. Since this joint effort started last spring, 18 vehicles loaded with donations have been delivered to Project Home.

We are so grateful for all of the support and donations that we have collected so far. Project Home is extremely grateful for what we are doing. This will be an ongoing effort. We aren't sure when our next collection will be but probably in spring 2026. This is a real community project. Thank you!

Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf

We are back on track with our donations to Hallie Q. Brown. In August we donated 217 pounds of food and household items. There is considerable need in our neighborhood — inflation, job loss, high rent, homelessness, food desert, federal food support cuts, and more. Thank you for your generosity and continued support.



During October please donate corn bread mix, canned corn, canned green beans, cake mix, frosting, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie filling, general Thanksgiving food items.

Food shelf financial contributions are accepted at hallieqbrown.charityproud.org/donate.

In The Justice Database



Justice Database

A Project of Unity Church-Unitarian

[The International Human Rights Arts Movement](#) gives voice to artists and issues around the world; knowing that creative engagement with all members of society is the surest path toward social justice and positive change.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

The Urgency of Awareness with Jodi Pfarr

Saturday, October 11 | 9:00 a.m.- noon | Unity Church

Registration: bit.ly/uofaware1025

This final workshop is open to anyone who has read the book or attended one or more of the sessions and/or the Zoom call.



[Unity's Racial Justice Team](#) invites you to join them for the final gathering in the four-part series with author Jodi Pfarr, based on her book *The Urgency of Awareness*.

Through these workshops, participants have been exploring identity, intersectionality, and how our larger culture normalizes some identities over others. Jodi invites us to notice our own assumptions, pause when emotions arise around "difference," and engage a process that leads us toward deeper connection, equity, and transformation. This final session will weave together Jodi's insights with Unity's mission, values, and ends as a faith community committed to courageous action, open-hearted engagement, and the creation of beloved community.

Mano a Mano Ministry Team

Team Meeting Location Change

[Unity's Mano a Mano Community Outreach Ministry Team](#) now meets on the second Wednesday of every month, at 1:00 p.m., at Mano a Mano headquarters: 925 Pierce Butler Rte, St Paul. The next meeting is Wednesday, October 8. The team will spend an hour sorting medical supplies and then meet for planning and updates about Mano a Mano work in Bolivia. For more information contact Ann Mabbott at amabbott@hamline.edu.

Practice your Spanish!

Join Unity's Mano a Mano Team for Spanish conversation every Thursday, at 2:00 p.m., at Mano a Mano headquarters: 925 Pierce Butler Rte. For more information contact Chuck Griggs at griggscb@msn.com.

Act for the Earth

Costume Swap: Adults and Children

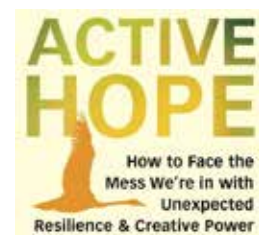
Sunday, October 19 | After services

Join [Unity's Act for the Earth Team](#) for a fun costume swap! Let's help keep seasonal items out of landfills and incinerators. Bring your used costumes, candy buckets, and decorations and find something new-to-you to take home for this year.

Active Hope for the New Now Practice Gathering

Monday, October 13 | 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. | Robbins Parlor

This monthly practice features a pressing issue as a focus for each session. Moving through the Active Hope Spiral in response to the issue will prevent our hearts from deadening with the news of the day, and fortify us in resilience and action. All are welcome, no experience or registration needed. Questions? Please email Jean Hammink at jeanhammink@gmail.com.



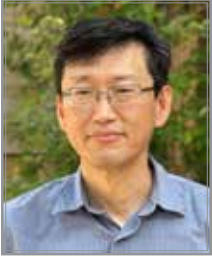
Partner Church Team



On Saturday, September 6, at 10:00 a.m., in the green space, Unity Church celebrated the dedication of a Székely Gate gifted to us by our partner church in Homoródszentpéter. Pictured here is Rev. Oscar and Rev. Kinga at the dedication — please visit the [Partner Church Team webpage](#) for more pictures. Many thanks to everyone who made this visit and celebration possible!

To learn more about our church partnership, please visit the engaging display in Robbins Parlor that includes many images, videos and a timeline.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Pitter-Pattering Questions

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

Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation

Though little is known about Jigar Gor as a yoga teacher or writer, he is widely attributed for a line that circulates in wellness communities: “Yoga is not about touching your toes.

It’s about what you learn on the way down.” Perhaps its popular appeal reflects a yearning for deeper spiritual roots often stripped away in the commodification and marketplace aesthetics of yoga studios, branded gear, and influencer culture. Yoga remains at the forefront of contemporary wellness culture and a lifestyle companion in shaping identity, especially for that urban professional seeking balance, authenticity, and connection in our fragmented, fast-paced environments. And understandably so, for at its root (*yu*), yoga means “to yoke” and join the self to something greater. It is a movement of connection and alignment, yoking together body and breath, movement and meaning, inner and outer, self and other, presence and awareness, as it bows toward the mystery of a greater wholeness that holds us all. In a world marked by fragmentation, yoga is seen as relief and resistance against the unraveling of our lives, a healing discipline that yokes us within, among, and beyond, gesturing toward the fullness of being.

Touching our toes may signal flexibility, control, and mastery — achievements of wellness and enhancements to quality of life. But the quote invites us to look elsewhere: not at the final pose but what happens in the descent, to the stretch, resistance, and even the ache on the way down. What does it mean to yoke ourselves to a pedagogy of effort, tension, limitation, surrender, and grace in the hard work of becoming? Who would want to be yoked to such learning “on the way down”? Is it bondage, or discipline that shapes belonging? Is it mere compliance, or surrender that opens to transformation? Is it about being subdued, or being joined to the ties that bind us to life?

Like all spiritual practice, if yoga is the practice of yoking ourselves to what is greater than the self — where ego softens and breath draws from a deeper wholeness — what might we learn from one of yoga’s foundational postures known as *Child’s Pose*? Deceptively simple in form, the posture resembles prayer as the body curls toward the earth, knees tucked beneath, forehead down, arms stretched forward, body folded in humility and trust, bowing not in defeat but in reverence. Surrender as strength. The (w)holiness of being small. The posture of the child, vulnerable yet strong, yoked to the paradox of trust that risks certainty for wondrous possibility. And in a world unraveling, this posture becomes our teacher. On the way down, into collapse and uncertainty, we are invited to see upside-down, to be emptied out of what no longer serves, to become spacious enough for new revelation to take root. A reordering of vision. A deeper communion. A belonging beyond any bootstrapping but instinctively and effortlessly alive as in the child. What might the child teach us on the way down, of the child’s pose as the yoke and condition from which new life takes form?

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

October 2025 Religious Education

Wednesday, October 1 – New Family Orientation 7:15 p.m.

Sunday, October 5 – Regular Religious Education; Celebration of New Lives (9:00 a.m. service): If you have a new baby that you would like to be welcomed into the embrace of the congregation, please email katrina@unityunitarian.org to learn more about our Celebration of New Lives ceremony.

Sunday, October 12 – Regular Religious Education

Wednesday, October 15 – No OWL (MEA break)

Sunday, October 19 – No Religious Education Classes (MEA weekend; activities for school-age kids, nursery care available)

Sunday, October 26 – Story Sunday (Rotations begin in Sanctuary, Middle School attend full service)

Childcare for Church Events

Unity Church offers childcare for church-wide events, free of charge. Nursery care is consistently provided for every Sunday service and Wellspring Wednesday program — no reservation is needed. Outside of these times, reservations for childcare are required. Please request childcare one week ahead of time by completing the online form: unityunitarian.org/childcare-request-form.html. Katrina Nichols, Unity’s Nursery Coordinator, will contact you to confirm the reservation.

2025-26 Religious Education Enrollment

Enrollment in Religious Education is ongoing. Please email Nelson Moroukian at nelson@unityunitarian.org with questions or to enroll a child.

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa
Director of Music Ministries

The Music Ministry's annual holiday concert on Saturday, December 13, at 6:30 p.m., will consist of a performance of *Saint Nicolas* by Benjamin Britten.

The idea for this performance came about after a conversation with Oscar about the connection between St. Nicolas and early Unitarianism. He intended to explore this dimension of Santa Claus in one of the December worship services, and what better piece to accompany that theme on the same weekend?

Benjamin Britten's *Saint Nicolas* is a vibrant work written in 1948. It tells the story of Nicolas, the 4th-century bishop of Myra whose generosity and courage inspired the legend of Santa Claus. Britten had a special gift for writing music that included and uplifted an entire community, not just professional musicians. In *Saint Nicolas*, he wove together parts for an operatic soloist, several choirs, children, and even the congregation, making it a true act of shared music-making and worship.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the piece is Britten's scoring for the orchestra. He deliberately designed it so that the string parts could be played by local amateurs, guided and supported by a small group of professional players. This made *Saint Nicolas* not only an artistic work, but also a communal one, a piece in which musicians of many levels could participate together. It was Britten's way of breaking down barriers and reminding us that the joy of music is for everyone... especially during the holiday season! In addition to the string orchestra, the instruments include a piano duet, to be played by our new pianist Jared Mikach and our recently retired Kathy Kraulik; an organ part, which will be played by the one-and-only Ruth Palmer, and a percussion part also intended to be played by a combination of musicians of all levels.

My hope is that our own performance of *Saint Nicolas* will include an orchestra made up largely of amateur string players from our community, as Britten intended. If you play a string instrument (violin, viola, cello, or bass), I hope that you will join the orchestra and help bring this charming piece to life. Don't worry if you don't consider yourself a professional; Britten wrote the parts with you in mind!

If you are interested, please get in touch with me at ahmed@unityunitarian.org to take a look at the string parts and talk more. Rehearsals for the community string orchestra will begin on Sunday, November 2, and continue every Sunday from 1:00-2:30 p.m. through December 7. We will have two rehearsals involving everyone on Friday, December 12, from 5:30-9:30 p.m. and the morning of Saturday, December 13, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Border CrosSing

Saturday, November 1 | 3:00-4:00 p.m.
The Hook and Ladder Theater



Border CrosSing artists, with Coro Acardenchado and Juan Pablo Villa, will perform Canto Cardenche songs arranged by Ahmed Anzaldúa as part of the festival.

One Voice Mixed Chorus: Protest Lines

Saturday, November 15 | 4:00-6:00 p.m. | Tickets soon!



Protest Lines explores the role of music as a form of resistance and a testament to human resilience. Audiences will experience a dynamic blend of historical and contemporary protest songs that have galvanized movements and uplifted communities. Beyond performance, *Protest Lines* functions as a community sing-in: the chorus will teach audience members several protest songs in real time, transforming passive listening into active participation.



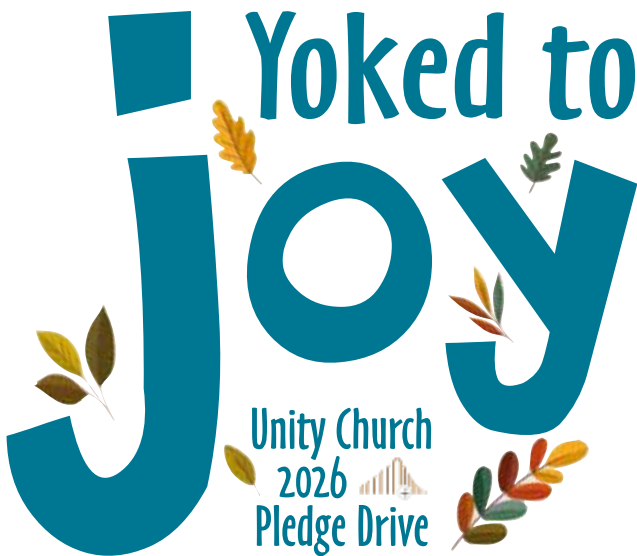
UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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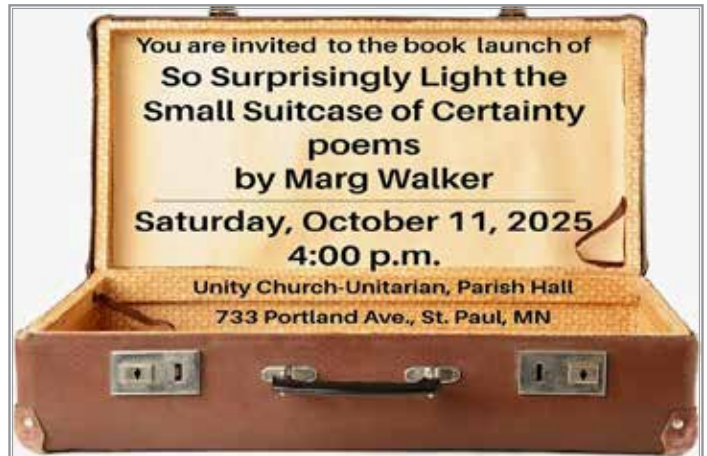
Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister
Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation
Laura Park, Executive Director
Mary Baremore, Chair, Board of Trustees

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**TIME SENSITIVE
MATERIAL**



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 for the coming year. How should we think about our financial contributions to Unity Church in 2026? Turn to page five for more information and then join us for Celebration Sunday on October 5 when we celebrate our financial commitments and what it might mean to be *yoked to joy*.



CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF

See page 11 for details!

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE!

LEARN MORE BY VISITING:
UUSC.ORG/GUEST