



UNITY CHURCH – UNITARIAN

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**Unity Church – Unitarian Program Ministries Report  
June 1, 2025-June 6, 2026**



Access the program report online  
<https://bit.ly/2526programreport>

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## Board of Trustees and Staff List as of June 6, 2026

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2026

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Rev. K.P. Hong	Minister of Faith Formation
Laura Park	Executive Director

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Philippa Anastos	Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant
Ahmed Anzaldúa	Director of Music Ministries
Laura Betinis Healy	Unity Choir Alto Section Leader
Amy Brunell	Hallman Ministerial Intern
Drew Danielson	Coordinator of Youth and Campus Ministries
Mark Dietrich	Unity Choir Bass Section Leader
Meleah Houseknecht	Manager of Community Outreach Ministries
Kathleen Kraulik	Choir Accompanist
Rev. Shay MacKay	Minister of Congregational Care
Jared Mikach	Choir Pianist
Nelson Moroukian	Religious Educator for Children and Family Ministries
Katrina Nichols	Nursery Coordinator
Kathleen Radspinner	Children's Choir Director
Shahzore Shah	Unity Choir Tenor Section Leader
Shekela Wanyama	Unity Choir Soprano Section Leader

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Sherifatu Akibu	Facilities Specialist
Heidi Birkholz	Events and Technology Coordinator
Lillian Birkholz	Facilities Specialist
Marcos Del Angel	Facilities Specialist
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Barbara Hubbard	Executive Director Emerita
Ruth Palmer	Director of Music Ministries Emerita

## **Introduction to the 2025-2026 Program Year Report**

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister

Last summer, the Executive Team and ministerial leadership<sup>1</sup> at Unity Church gathered for a two-day retreat at the Mount Olivet Conference and Retreat Center to consider the congregation's recently adopted Ends Statements, and start to develop programming for the year that would move the congregation toward the ends. We knew, as we gathered, that we were in a contested moment, that the election of Donald Trump in November 2024 had shaped the previous year and likely would this one. We heard, in the ends statements, a clear call from among the congregation's membership to respond – to develop practice, language and theology that would meet the moment within and beyond our walls. What we did not anticipate, in August, was the degree to which the beyond came knocking in church year 2025-26.

Just weeks after our retreat, a young person with a gun attacked the Annunciation school. Major fraud investigations in Minnesota, combined with a deportation campaign led by the federal government built up over the fall, and by December Operation Metro Surge deployed thousands of immigrations enforcement officers to the Twin Cities metro area.

The reports contained in this packet tell a story of a church engaged with the world around it, building on long standing partnerships and new challenges and opportunities to meet the moment it finds itself in. We did not know in August that by February Minnesota would be the inspiration for a Bruce Springsteen protest song and hundreds of clergy gathering in witness, or that thousands of Minnesotans would be deported. But when we needed to respond, we had the tools to do so.

In April 2025, Rev. David Carl Olson preached from Unity's pulpit: "Congregational polity says that when the people are assembled, when they fully examine their hearts, when they consider with one another the deepest questions of our age, they can hear the voice of God. They can find the divine will that asks them to go in a direction..." This charge has been tacked over my (Oscar's) desk for the last year, as a reminder that the words the congregation chose were not random, but the result of the deep, collective discernment that is our Unitarian Universalist way.

Whether it was providence, or hard work, luck or discernment, in a year when we needed to go as big as we could, we had the language we needed already on hand: "Yoke ourselves," "evangelize love," "grounded in Unitarian Universalist Theology," "Joyful visions of the Beloved Community." These phrases from the Ends Statements were more than just monthly worship themes, they were fuel for our collective response to Operation Metro Surge and our answer to the question "What is the church for in this moment?"

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. KP Hong, Laura Park, Rev. Dr Oscar Sinclair were joined by Rev. Shay McKay & Amy Brunell.

The membership of Unity Church should be proud of how they, collectively, showed up this year. The story of the winter of 2026 will be told for a long time in Minnesota, and even as the usual “life of the church” continued in births, deaths, and Sunday mornings, this congregation found ways to express our values in the world in countless ways.

Unity’s Ends process follows a five-year cycle, so this language will be with us for some time. In the coming year we’ll look to build on this year, growing our capacity to engage the world beyond our walls, even as we attend to the work within and among ourselves. We will keep listening, collectively, “fully examining our hearts and considering with each other the deepest questions of our age.” And we will keep working in the world, living out our values within, among, and beyond Unity Church.

## Ends Report

### **Overview**

In most program years, we would provide the Executive Team’s annual report to the board on ends outcomes. However, this was the first program year of the new ends, and we only have baseline congregational survey data from May 2025 on the new ends. Therefore, we instead include the Executive Team’s August 2025 report to the board that includes:

- Ends interpretations
- Further anticipated outcomes

The Executive Team will provide the board with an assessment of progress on the ends at the July 2026 board meeting and next year’s program report will include it.

### **Process and Structure**

The Executive Team, under Unity Church-Unitarian (Unity Church) Policy IB, is responsible for providing the Board of Trustees an internal report on Ends Interpretation each year. The Board, in turn, determines whether the Executive Team’s interpretations meet the Policy Governance standard of “reasonableness.”<sup>2</sup>

Over the course of the 2024-2025 congregational year, Unity Church’s Board of Trustees (Board) led the congregation in a process to discern new Ends Statements (Ends), which will guide our work together for the next five years. In late spring, the Board distilled input from the congregation into three statements, which it then ratified on June 14:

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.

This summer, the work turned from the Board discerning *what* the new Ends would be to the Executive Team working on *how* we will meet these Ends. From August 18-20, Unity Church’s Executive Team (KP Hong, Laura Park, Oscar Sinclair) gathered at Mt. Olivet Retreat Center to interpret the Ends, begin articulating outcomes, and plan programming for the coming year. Hallman Ministerial Intern Amy Brunell joined us for the whole retreat, and Acting Minister of

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<sup>2</sup> “A reasonable interpretation is one that the Board agrees would be likely to be considered reasonable by a prudent person in a similar situation.” “Any Reasonable Interpretation - Governance Glossary,” Governance for Impact, Accessed September 3, 2025, <https://www.governforimpact.org/policy-governance-glossary>.

Congregational Care Rev. Shay MacKay joined on August 20. This document reflects the conversations over those three days as we grappled with the dreams, anxieties, and possibilities the Board articulated for Unity Church in these Ends statements.

The format is slightly different than in previous years. The first section, **Theological Interpretation**, is the result of free-form conversation around the religious values and theological implications we see in the Ends Statements. **Outcomes** are our best guess of what the congregation will look like in five years if we have lived into these Ends, structured as 'congregants will' statements. The last section, **Citations**, is a collection of excerpts that came up repeatedly in our conversation – these will likely be central to how we discuss and expand on the Ends in the coming year.

Part of the conversation not captured elsewhere in this document is the Executive Team's deep appreciation for the congregation and the Board in articulating these Ends. You consistently pushed for the most impactful statements about what it means to be Unitarian Universalist in this moment, and who we are called to be as a church. This relatively short list of three Ends is ambitious, and we are grateful for your confidence in us to implement your vision. We will strive to live up to that confidence over the next five years.

On behalf of the Executive Team,  
Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair

## ***Theological Interpretation***

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;

Our Ends open with an affirmation of congregational polity, our understanding that when “We the people of Unity Church-Unitarian” are assembled, fully examining our hearts, considering the deepest questions of our time, we can discern the voice and shape of the sacred in our lives. From that discernment comes direction – where the church is going, together.

The direction the Executive Team discerns in these Ends is a movement towards the boundaries between ‘us and them,’ ‘among and beyond,’ as we break down what is meant by ‘we’ and ‘us.’ As we navigate the ‘polycrisis’ of climate, racial, civic, and economic disintegration, who is included in our joyful vision of the beloved community? Who are the people of Unity Church? Each End asks us what it means to draw the circle wider and, in doing so, transform ourselves, our community, and our world.

Actual interconnected determinants (roots) of systemic oppression rarely come into view together. Instead, we see the fragmentation and division which are surface features of colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy. These features work to break apart ecological, economic, and cultural bonds and conceal the injustices of extraction, exploitation, and exclusion. “Understanding” in our first End is a radical awakening to the ways in which dominant culture veils an underlying abundance and generosity beneath narratives of scarcity and competition. This awakening calls us to move away from the politics of itemizing inequities, and move towards a framework of confronting fragmentation in deep solidarity. To that end, we joyfully choose the yoke with a multitude of partners, willing to sweat for the opportunity to change direction of our mutual plow. We know we do not direct the plow; we willingly harness ourselves to work that is not necessarily our own, particularly in the areas the first End identified but in others as well.

The interconnected roots of oppression and the climate, racial, civic, and economic polycrisis are fed by a dominant narrative that leads to disconnection, alienation and hunger for sources of meaning. Members of Unity Church are called to be repairers of the breach,<sup>3</sup> at work in the ruins,<sup>4</sup> resisting the forces that would unmoor love from struggle and co-opt it into its false copies such as lust, possession, comfort, and tribalism. Instead, Unity Church members will testify to the power of

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<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 58:10, 12

<sup>4</sup> Vanessa Machado de Oliveira, *Hospicing Modernity*, New York: North Atlantic Books, 2021 and Dougald Hine, *At Work in the Ruins*, London: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2023.

practice lifelong faith formation, grounded in Unitarian Universalist theology, that breaks us open and allows us to be transformed.

an alternative narrative of multigenerational<sup>5</sup> connection, joy, and abundance.

The challenge of the third End is how to understand Unitarian Universalist theology, since our non-creedal nature means there are few consistent, coherent answers to questions of faith and the relationship with the transcendent. We have theologies, plural. We have individual Coming of Age credos. We have Unitarian Universalist practices. But we do not yet have a fully developed theology that can counter the consistent, coherent dominant narratives creating the ruins on which we currently stand.

As repairers of the breach, at work in the ruins of the world as we have known it, Unity Church must develop and preach a theology adequate for the night.<sup>6</sup> A shared understanding of the holy or transcendent, and the experience of spiritual practice, provide us with the tools and language to respond to moments when we are broken open. These enable us to stay in the moment of crisis long enough to create wrought,<sup>7</sup> dependable meaning rather than succumbing to nihilism.

We are called to the work of faith formation and spiritual practice that provide the moral and spiritual vocabulary to imagine new futures – both in the register of the visible future we can strategize for through community organizing and political action; and in the theological, eschatological, hope for the beloved community. Faith Formation that touches the transcendent is capable of attending to suffering, discerning future possibilities, and reshaping desire for the beloved community.

Collectively, we will respond to this moment of crisis, forging our joyful vision to guide us into “a new [form] of community within which the moral life [can] be sustained.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This multigenerational community, even as it sometimes does its work in age-specific groups, is not segregated. People in multigenerational community reclaim the

skills for connection across the lifespan that resist the market segmentation of a capitalist culture.

<sup>6</sup> Nancy Schaffer, “A Theology for the Night,” *Instructions in Joy*. Boston: Skinner House, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> In *Lifespan Faith Formation*, we talk about faith as ‘taught,’ ‘caught,’ and eventually ‘wrought,’ as experience and hardship tests our understanding of how the world works.

<sup>8</sup> Alasdair McIntyre, *After Virtue*, Notre Dame Press, 1982.

## **Outcomes**

As a result of this interpretation, the Executive Team discerned outcomes. If we fully live into these Ends, we hope to look at Unity and see the following after five years:

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

Congregants will:

- Enlarge the circle of people who are included in “We the people of Unity Church-Unitarian.”
- Testify to the way a joyful vision of beloved community shapes their participation in congregational life and beyond.

*End 1: Understand the interconnected roots of oppression and yoke ourselves to the demands, sacrifices, and hard work of antiracism, multiculturalism, and climate and economic justice;*

Congregants will:

- [Hear and respond to] *Demands*: describe who they are in relationship with, and how they will prioritize between overlapping or competing demands.
- *Sacrifice*: commit meaningful resources and time to the work of justice, and articulate what they have given up to do that work.
- *Work Hard*: continue Unity Church’s culture of hard work, while being mindful of how expectations around hard work can reinforce, rather than dismantle, systems of oppression.
- Participate as an act of solidarity, in justice work, whether through the church or some other venue. Our partners will say we respond and act in solidarity and do not attempt to take charge.
- Practice using their identity to connect across differences of race, gender, class, and more in our contemporary society.
- Sacrifice for justice and divest themselves of privileges unjustly acquired. Commit meaningful resources and time to the work of justice and articulate what we have given up to do that work.

*End 2: Cultivate a multigenerational community of joy, care, and belonging, and evangelize love to meet the deep and abiding hunger in all of us;*

Congregants will:

- Testify to how their life has been transformed by love, the role Unity Church/Unitarian Universalism has played in that transformation, and show willingness to share that with non-members.
- Find places in the community that need the love Unitarian Universalism offers and bring it to them in marches, rallies, volunteering, relationship, and more.
- Across the generations, find and maintain their belonging.

In service of building multigenerational community, adult congregants will:

- Adapt their practices and move into children and youth spaces to care and support them.
- Create more spaces where all generations can grow together.

While congregants of all ages will:

- Participate fully in the rituals and teachings of the church.
- Reach out to newcomers with ongoing, radical hospitality to help them find their belonging.

*End 3: Practice lifelong faith formation, grounded in Unitarian Universalist theology, that breaks us open and allows us to be transformed.*

Congregants will:

- Name the underpinnings of their faith as Unitarian Universalists and how that faith helps them hold the joyous vision of Beloved Community.
- Participate in shaping emerging Unitarian Universalist theolog[ies] that articulate what is commonly held among us, as Unitarian Universalism writ large responds to our current and historical context.
- In moments of crisis in their faith, “lean in,” engaging their places of hurt, possibility, and uncertainty to create a wrought faith.
- Use moments where they are ‘broken open’ to deepen solidarity with each other and Unity’s moral owners, rather than retreating into isolation.
- Step into each other’s broken moments in pastoral solidarity.

### **Citations**

#### **Isaiah 58:10, 12 (NRSVUE)**

<sup>10</sup> if you offer your food to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be like the noonday.

...

<sup>12</sup> Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to live in.

**Dougald Hine, *At Work in the Ruins*, p. 8**

No one I've met has more to offer by way of tools for the work of hospicing, but the way Vanessa [Vanessa Machado de Oliveira, *Hospicing Modernity*] tells it, this must be accompanied by a work of midwifery: assisting with the birth of something new, unfamiliar and possibly (but not necessarily) wiser, and avoiding suffocating this new world with our projections.

The philosopher Federico Campagna speaks about living at the end of a world. In such a time, he suggests, the work is no longer to concern ourselves with making sense according to the logic of the world that is ending, but to leave good ruins, clues and starting points for those who come after, that they may use in building a world that is – as Vanessa would say – 'presently unimaginable'.

They may be here already, the builders of that world. Some of them may have been here all along, inhabiting the ruins made by the world of the powerful. The anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing wrote a book called *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. That could be a role to take in times like these, to go looking for possibilities of life among the ruins around and ahead of us.

I don't write to announce the end of the world or to change the minds of those who are convinced that the world as we have known it can be saved or made sustainable. I write for anyone who has found themselves, as I have, needing to make sense of what is ending, how we can talk about it and what tasks are worth taking on in whatever time it turns out that we have. Something is coming over the horizon: a humbling from which none of us will be spared, that will not be managed or controlled, but will leave us changed.

Before it is over, I suspect, we will need to learn again what it means to take seriously things that are larger or smaller than were allowed to be real or significant, according to the scales and systems of modernity. We will need to dance again with the rhythms of cosmology, to be carried by the kind of stories and images in whose company – as the mythographer Martin Shaw would say – a universe becomes a cosmos. We will need to remember that we are not alone and never were, that we are part of a world of many worlds, only some of which are human. And we will need to rediscover that any world worth living for centres not on the vast systems we built to secure the future, but on those encounters that are proportioned to the kind of creatures we are, the places where we meet, the acts of friendship and the acts of hospitality in which we offer shelter and kindness to the stranger at the door. In this way, even now, there may be time to find our place within the vastly larger and older story of which we always were a part.

### **Nancy Shaffer, "A Theology for the Night"**

Not God as unmoved mover:  
One who set the earth in motion  
and withdrew. Not the One to thank  
when those cherished do not die—  
for providence includes equally  
power to harm. Not a God of exactings,  
as if love could be earned or subtracted.  
But—this may work in the night:  
Something that breathes with us, as others  
sleep; something that breathes also  
those sleeping, so no one is alone.  
Something that is the beginning of love,  
and also each part of how love is completed.  
Something so large, wherever we are,  
we are not separate; which teaches again  
the way to start over.  
Night is the test: when grief lies uncovered,  
and longing shows clear; when nothing we do  
can hasten earth's turning or delay it.  
This may be adequate for the night:  
this holding: something that steadfastly  
breathes us, which we also are learning to breathe.

### **Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 263**

It is always dangerous to draw too precise parallels between one historical period and another; and among the most misleading of such parallels are those which have been drawn between our own age in Europe and North America and the epoch in which the Roman empire declined into the Dark Ages. Nonetheless certain parallels there are. A crucial turning point in that earlier history occurred when men and women of good will turned aside from the task of shoring up the Roman imperium and ceased to identify the continuation of civility and moral community with the maintenance of that imperium. What they set themselves to achieve instead – often not recognizing fully what they were doing – was the construction of new forms of community within which the moral life could be sustained so that both morality and civility might survive the coming ages of barbarism and darkness.

If my account of our moral condition is correct, we ought also to conclude that for some time now we too have reached that turning point. What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us. And if

the tradition of the virtues was able to survive the horrors of the last dark ages, we are not entirely without grounds for hope. This time however the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers; they have already been governing us for quite some time. And it is our lack of consciousness of this that constitutes part of our predicament. We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another – doubtless very different – St. Benedict.

## **Administration**

Submitted by Laura Park, Executive Director

Like the warp threads on a loom, the administrative ministry at Unity Church provides the structure and tension against which the congregation weaves the patterns of our religious life together. When administrative ministry is formed from strong and resilient threads, it allows the emerging pattern of our shared ministry to shift and grow within the warp supports, allows us to incorporate a wide variety of textiles and colors without breaking the fabric. When events beyond the church came knocking at the door demanding a response, these warp threads held the tension of those challenges and allowed the congregation's open-hearted engagement to respond. Here are some of the threads in the administrative warp in the 2025-2026 program year:

### ***Communications***

The foundational work that built a consistent, reflective communications system grounded in faith enabled the church to respond dynamically to the urgent needs of Metro Surge. Our communications:

- Partnered with community organizations to amplify their message and increase their impact. Particularly on social media, our communications highlighted the work of ISAIAH, Interfaith Power and Light, Beacon Interfaith Housing, Monarca, and many others as we worked with them to respond to Metro Surge. In many ways, we became the justice help desk, funneling people to their next right action through our communications.
- Continued our care and consistency with how we use language to say who we are and what we support. This was particularly important as people who weren't yet connected by membership or regular attendance turned to the church in a moment of crisis for grounding and guidance.
- Enhanced people's experience on YouTube, drawing more views to our worship services without sacrificing the in-person experience. Our Communications Director Martha Tilton added thumbnails with people's faces to the video links, time stamps to the various sections of the videos, and tags for the algorithms to help people find the videos. She knows the audience is broadening for our videos because they are finally getting "dislikes."
- Curated the slow but steady growth of Constant Contact email subscribers, funneling those on social media and the website who are interested in learning more about the work of the church to subscribe.

### ***Facilities***

While the church building must never be confused with the real church, the building's capacity and longevity allow the church to do its work creatively, purposefully, and expansively. To that end, this program year we:

- Made progress on developing a life cycle maintenance program for our buildings and equipment. We have spreadsheets for all of the building systems (*HVAC, lighting,*

*plumbing, electrical, furnishings*) and projections for the most significant investments we will need to make and when.

- Developed our relationship with our excellent new vendor for annual preventative HVAC maintenance, making essential repairs to extend the life of our systems.
- Invested in upgrades and repairs, with much volunteer labor and support in addition to contractors. We:
  - Added pavers under the tent and an accessible path into the green space.
  - Installed the Szekely gate in the green space, built in honor of Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs ministry by our partner church in Romania.
  - Repaired the vandalized “We Dare Not Fence the Spirit” sculpture on the church’s south wall.
  - Turned over our fluorescent lighting throughout the church to LEDs, saving significant energy and responding to the phase-out of fluorescent bulbs.
  - Re-did our boiler venting to prevent future leaks.
  - Repaired and adjusted the main entrance fountain and pump to keep it working properly.
  - Painted and cleaned the duplex.
  - Cleared a major clog in our plumbing caused by wipes, which we have now removed from the restrooms.
  - Identified a malfunctioning fire damper and are working to repair it.
  - Hired a much more effective pest control contractor.
  - Upgraded our security cameras to HD and added one to better view the gate and the green space.
  - Installed sound baffles in the Foote room to reduce the echo
  - Repaired the permeable pavers at the main entry at the same time we installed pavers in the green space.
  - Worked with a generous congregant to purchase and install 11 new windows at the duplex.

Future repairs and upgrades will include:

- Repair and repaint the black stains on the sanctuary ceiling in July.
- 2026 capital project to resurface the St. Albans parking lot, reclaiming as much of the asphalt that is already there as possible and installing a rain garden to clean the run-off.
- 2026 capital project to replace the carpet coming in the Holly Avenue entrance and around the Center Room in the Eliot wing.
- Add insulation to the outer walls of the Eliot wing.
- Repair and paint the exterior door that leads to Ames Chapel and Religious Education spaces, plus the surrounding windows.
- Repair and re-caulk the stone at the Holly Avenue entrance; re-caulk where needed at the main entrance.
- Investigate the possibility of purchasing a work order system to better track current and future facilities needs.

### *Gardening*

Working with the cycles of nature, our Unity Garden Team gathered most Thursdays from spring to fall to plant, tend and care for the beautiful landscaping gardens around the church. In addition to landscaping, we have gardens that help absorb water runoff from the church, a pollinator garden with specific plants to support local pollinators, and garden beds in the green space to raise food during the Summer in the Garden Religious Education program.

### *Building Tenants and Community Groups*

One Voice Mixed Chorus and Border CrossSing Minnesota maintained their offices at Unity Church. We continued to have core tenants such as Medley Village Preschool, the New Century Club, Mind Stretch, the Minnesota Hungarians, Transforming Families, and several recovery programs. We also provided space for Red Cross blood drives and served as a polling site.

### *Finances*

We continued the work of streamlining and enhancing our financial tools and processes. We completed the migration to QuickBooks and have developed new processes to transfer contribution data from ShelbyNext to QuickBooks. QuickBooks makes it easier to input, update, and manage the church's financial data and the newly implemented chart of accounts provides the needed foundation for monthly financial reporting that aligns with the statements our auditor provides to the board.

This solid foundation gave us the capacity to begin work as the fiscal agent for two organizations providing mutual aid to the community, and for a third working with The Circle of Peace Movement on circle process with Indigenous communities. Our work as fiscal agent enabled these organizations to accept much larger grants than they otherwise would have been able to accept.

The last major project related to the finances was to do a deep dive into the myriad of funds on the books, to reconcile and determine current restricted balances and purposes for which they are restricted. We are doing this work with our auditors and will have this completed in conjunction with their issuance of the audit report for year-end 2025 early this summer.

The congregation's generosity continued to support the church in these uncertain times. Congregants:

- Increased pledging 7.2% to help keep pace with inflation and move closer to the amount needed to fully fund our mission.
- Participated generously as both donors and bidders in this year's fundraising auction, increasing the net total raised to \$52,000
- Provided nearly \$24,000 for rent relief for families unable to work during the ICE surge.
- Provided \$70,000 in matching funds for the Hallman Ministerial Intern endowment and added another \$10,000 for each of the next three years to support the intern stipend and benefits in the budget.

- Provided \$100,000 for a Heritage Society Matching Grant. When congregants inform the church that Unity is included in their planned giving (will, beneficiary options, trust, etc.), that amount will be matched dollar for dollar — up to \$1,000.
- Provided funds to hire a Manager of Community Outreach Ministries for the next three years.

### **Front Desk Volunteers.**

Submitted by Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant

The political climate during this program year resulted in multiple expansions of front desk duties, often on very short notice. Beginning in October 2025, as there was a disruption in SNAP funding, we saw a sharp increase in the amount of food requested. The Evergreen Quilters partnered with the front desk volunteers to make kits with a balanced, shelf-stable meal and directions to Hallie Q. Brown.

In December 2025, as Operation Metro Surge necessitated school guards, neighborhood patrols, and extended hours, a call for more front desk volunteers resulted in 76 applications! These individuals joined the core team of 17 in handing out equipment, directing callers for rent assistance, making sure the church was safe and locked down during alerts, communicating with neighborhood organizations, and more.

Through all of this, our dedicated front desk volunteers enhanced our ministry of hospitality with their warm welcome at the Holly Avenue entrance. Our front desk volunteers have done invaluable work this program year, both for Unity Church-Unitarian and for the community as a whole.

### **Kitchen Ministry**

*"[When washing dishes] I enjoy taking my time with each dish, being fully aware of the dish, the water, and each movement of my hands. I know that if I hurry in order to be able to finish so I can sit down sooner and eat dessert or enjoy a cup of tea, the time of washing dishes will be unpleasant and not worth living."*

--Thich Nhat Hanh

Kitchen Ministers practice hospitality as spiritual practice. Acting as servant leaders, with a sense of ownership over the work, the food, the equipment, and the space, they minister to the congregation and each other. This program year they:

- Baked, prepared, served and cleaned up 31 Wellspring Wednesday dinners. Dinners integrated partnerships congregants brought us with sustainable farmers and emphasized whole foods well grown.
- Served and cleaned up Sunday coffee hours
- Delivered donuts from Cub for Sunday Coffee Hour
- Kept the beverages flowing and the food coming during the March fundraiser auction, sustaining us all for better bidding

- Ministered to families and friends as they said goodbye to their loved ones at our memorial services: 15 in all for both members and for those without a church home.
- Provided a celebratory lunch for the Coming of Age class and mentors
- Served a celebratory dinner to graduating High School seniors and their parents
- Served a delicious dinner to those who have put Unity Church in their estate planning as a thank you from the generations to come that will benefit from your generosity.

Kitchen ministry welcomes all those who would like an active role in making the church more hospitable and has roles large and small, short-term and long-term. We particularly long to have more young people in the kitchen with us and will continue to work with Religious Education to strengthen that partnership and create multigenerational relationships. Come join us in the act of faith that the community will show up with and for one another.

**Anti-Racism and Racial Healing Monitoring Report**  
**II: Executive Team Limitations**  
**Policy J: Anti-Racism and Racial Healing Commitment**  
**Monitoring Report September 2025**

*Policy language in boxes; interpretation and metrics below. Changes in interpretation since the last report highlighted in yellow.*

The Executive Team shall not take actions or otherwise conduct the affairs of Unity Church-Unitarian in any manner that does not comport with its commitment to becoming an actively anti-racist institution.

A full interpretation of this policy would include the policies below, plus the interpretation of all other board limitation policies. We are confident that all our interpretations align with our commitments to become an actively antiracist institution and that compliance with the policies below is compliance with the overarching statement.

The Executive Team shall not:

1. Engage vendors in an amount greater than \$2,500 annually without assessing and educating any such vendor using a matrix of values which includes, but is not limited to anti-racism, anti-oppression, multiculturalism and class inclusion.

**Interpretation:**

The matrix below, to be used when choosing vendors ~~or when continuing our relationship with them~~, reflects the Executive Team’s operational understanding of this limitation:

<b>Matrix of Criteria for contracts and vendors (weighted):</b>
1. Minority hiring practices - resulting in a 31%* employment of people of color and women. <b>(25%)</b>
2. Sustainability practices – demonstration of a commitment to healing the earth. <b>(15%)</b>
3. Local engagement – demonstration of a commitment to the community’s overall health and well-being. <b>(15%)</b>
4. Worker’s Equity in fair compensation, inclusive benefits and healthy work environment. <b>(20%)</b>
5. Competitive fees for goods and services <b>(25%)</b>
*Keyed to Ramsey County requirements.

**Evidence of compliance:**

On the next page, you'll find a table of vendors to whom we've paid \$2,500 or more from January 1 through September 6, 2025 (not a complete year so that we only had to pull numbers from our new, much easier to use system), along with commentary about how we have applied the matrix. For many years, the Executive Team reported its intention to interview current vendors and we are still in progress on that work.

*We report non-compliance since we have not engaged with all vendors.*

<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Determined Compliance?</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Amazon Business	No	Chosen by price and convenience and what's in stock. We are working to reduce the amount we buy from Amazon.
Bredemus Hardware Co., Inc.	No	Long relationship.
Comcast Business	No	When chosen, there was no other choice.
Costco	Yes	Relied on public statements. See <a href="https://www.costco.com/our-values.html">https://www.costco.com/our-values.html</a> for more about Costco's commitment to diversity and inclusion, community contribution, and the environment.
Gilbert Mechanical	No	Long relationship
Great American Insurance Group	No	Chosen by price and coverage by our insurance broker
GuideOne Insurance	No	Chosen by price and coverage by our insurance broker
J Pfarr Consulting, Inc.	Yes	She is a solo practice antiracist multicultural trainer
Marco Technologies LLC	Yes	Not fully in compliance with Policy J when selected in 2010. Our Director of Communications has monitored the policy in relation to our partnership. In 2024, Marco was at 31% women employees and 36% non-white employees. That's up from about 21% 15 years ago. See <a href="https://www.marconet.com/about">https://www.marconet.com/about</a> for information about items 2-4.
MindIT Services	No	Long relationship
Nitti Sanitation	Yes	When hired in 2020. Not complete compliance but were better than the only other vendor that could handle compost.
D Ohlandt	Yes	Had the very specific skills required by the board and she demonstrated her values in partnership with Unity Consulting.

Peace Coffee	Yes	Relied on public statements. See <a href="https://www.peacecoffee.com/pages/our-impact">https://www.peacecoffee.com/pages/our-impact</a> for information about Peace Coffee’s impact through its fair-trade relationships with its farmer growers.
Perman Law Firm, PLLC	No	Has long involvement with our immigration work now.
Shelby Systems	No	We have a very long history with Shelby Systems. When we considered our database choices in 2020, none of them were fully aligned with Policy J, and we stayed with ShelbyNext for a host of other reasons, primarily to avoid the headaches of transferring data to a new vendor.
Spring Arbor Distributors	Yes	Relied on public statements. Ingram Industries, which owns Spring Arbor Distributors, has a robust report with a long URL you can request about the company’s practices and how they align with Policy J values. A few highlights: 58% female and 31% racial/ethnic employees. “We volunteer in our local communities and provide support to diverse organizations, as well as sponsor Nashville Pride.” “We partner with local schools and organizations to find diverse members of the community to join our company.”
Sysco Minnesota	Yes	When selected in 2024.
Total Mechanical	Yes	When hired in 2025.
UUA Insurance Plans	Yes	Relied on public statements about the values the plans implement. See <a href="https://www.uua.org/finance/compensation/insurance-plans/health">https://www.uua.org/finance/compensation/insurance-plans/health</a>
Winco Landscape & Design	Yes	When hired in 2021
Xcel Energy	No	No other choice of vendor.

2. Allow the Board to be uninformed about diversity of staff on payroll, including the percentage of positions and salary paid to people of color.

**Evidence of compliance:**

As of September 2025, our staff is comprised of 30% people of color (7 of 27: Ahmed, KP, Song, Sani, Sherifatu, Marcos, Shahzore, Shekela). 28% of gross wages from January 2025 (when we began our new payroll processor, to simplify calculations) through August 2025 were assigned to people of color (\$ 242,995.72 of \$ \$ 862,746.29).

These percentages are down slightly from last year.

*We report compliance, in alignment with our Policy J rubric in #1 above.*

3. Allow staff members to be uninformed about how to conduct their duties in alignment with the anti-racism, anti-oppression, multiculturalism and class inclusion values of Unity Church-Unitarian.

**Evidence of Compliance:**

- The existence of the Beloved Community Staff Team (BCST), composed of Executive Team, program staff, and congregant liaisons to the BCST Communications Team.
- We ask all incoming staff members to take the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) and develop an Intercultural Development Plan (IDP). Supervisors follow up with staff about their progress on their IDP and how the church can support their work, without violating the confidentiality of the IDI results.
- All program development goes through the lenses in this policy.

*We report compliance.*

4. Interpret the Ends statements without consideration of the anti-racism commitment of Unity Church-Unitarian and how that commitment is implemented in covenant with local communities of color.

**Evidence of compliance:**

- The ends interpretation submitted to the board for this September meeting includes numerous connections to these commitments.
- The 2024 annual report on pages 35-36 lists the partners of color that inform the work of our Community Outreach Ministry Teams.

*We report compliance.*

5. Allow the congregation to be uninformed about the work being done to live out the anti-racism, anti-oppression, multicultural and class inclusive values of Unity Church-Unitarian, and the measurable outcomes of that work, including the percentage of Sunday Offerings that go to organizations with an anti-racist agenda and/or that serve communities of color.

**Evidence of compliance:**

- Annual report. These commitments appear in the:
  - Strategic priorities for the ends (pp. 6-11).
  - Policy J report on pages 12-16.
  - Notes on Beloved Community Staff Team work on pages 33-34.
  - Notes on the work of Community Outreach Ministry Teams pages 35-36.
  - Inclusion in Wellspring Wednesday programming on page 43.
  - Notes on worship life page 53.
- Articles in the newsletter from the Communications Team of the Beloved Community Staff Team (BCST). Ten of the 14 newsletters from August 2024 through September 2025 included an article from this team.
- Offerings percentages are included in the 2024 annual report (see page 57-58). The table on the next page includes an update from July 2024 through June of 2025:
  - 83% of the organizations that received a Sunday offering serve communities of color or low-income communities. We are adding low-income knowing the potent intersection of race and class in oppression.
  - For this report, we are not counting those with an explicit anti-racist mission, given how challenging it is for organizations to state that commitment explicitly in this political climate. Most of the organizations that serve communities of color above make it clear they work to empower marginalized communities, however.

• **Policy J Offering Recipient Analysis**

Church Year	Total	# Serve	%	# With	%
Jul - June		Comm of Color		A-R Mission	
2014-2015	51	37	73%	23	45%
2015-2016	49	39	80%	35	71%
2016-2017	47	39	83%	24	51%
2017-2018	44	32	73%	21	48%
2018-2019	48	36	75%	20	42%
2019-2020	46	37	80%	22	48%
2020-2021	49	45	92%	24	49%
2021-2022	50	38	76%	17	34%
2022-2023	50	43	86%	19	38%
2023-2024	51	41	80%	9	18%
2024-2025	52	43	83%	n/a	

*We report compliance.*

## **Archives Team**

*May 1, 2025 through April 2026*

Last year, we moved all the archives-related boxes and items from the Facilities Storage Room to the Archives Room in the lower level of the church. With the help of the Facilities staff, we were able to equip and furnish our dedicated workroom. The team had about a year to enjoy the space before events beyond our control required a move to the Crothers Room on the second floor. We appreciate the help from Reed Richards and Marcos Del Angel with the move and are making the best of the situation.

Over the past year, the team conducted regular work sessions, answered questions, and updated the online history of Unity Church. We wrote regular articles for the monthly newsletter. One article introduced the first co-ministry at Unity, Richard Wilson Boynton and his wife, Harriet Barton Boynton, who served from 1900 to 1907. We also developed an exhibit about the 1963 sanctuary fire, displayed on two Sundays in March 2025. We remounted the exhibit one more time, in April this year. A version of the exhibit is available to view on the history page of the Unity website at <https://www.unityunitarian.org/unity-church-history.html>.

We are sorry to be losing one of our stalwart members this year—Louise Merriam and her husband, Jim Oberly, are leaving Minnesota and moving to Maine. Louise was one of the founding members of this Archives team and we have benefited from her experience. We recently added a new member, Aubrey Lodahl, who answered our call for volunteers to help with a photo project, sorting and identifying the many hundreds of snapshots.

This will be the third year of the intentional collection of archival material, a process developed with Executive Director Laura Park. Staff are asked to place items that represent the work and life of the church in boxes located in the offices of Martha Tilton and Laura Park. The Archives Team annually collects the contents of these boxes and prepares an inventory. Most of the collected material will be added to the [Unity collection](#) at the Minnesota Historical Society. MNHS is continuing the work of digitizing the audio-visual materials in the collection. Unfortunately, some of the cassette tapes must be specially handled because of mold found on the tapes. This dates to when the materials were stored in a damp location, prior to our involvement in 2013.

Multiple artifacts related to Unity's history appeared in the Archives Room in 2025, pending decisions as to where they should end up. Some items went into this year's auction; some need conservation. We are happy to report that one of these items, the Frederick May Eliot Wing memorial plaque, has been mounted on the wall outside the Facilities office. This plaque lists the names of people memorialized by donors to the Eliot Wing capital campaign in 1956-57.

Archives Team members this year were Pauline Eichten, Aubrey Lodahl, Louise Merriam, Carol Miller, Betsy Moore, and Deb Woodburn.

## **Art Team**

### **November '24 –December '25**

Respectfully submitted for the Unity Art Team by Donna Gies

Unity Church's Art Team continues to provide the congregation and visitors to Unity Church art exhibitions which embody Unity's Ends Statements through the recruitment of artists with diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, and (dis)ability, and those who tell the stories of the beauty of the natural world and love. They offer unique expressions with different styles and artistic processes.

### **Parish Hall Artists**

The period between November 2024 through December 2025, the Art Team brought a variety of artists and mediums to the Parish Hall and the Eliot hallway.

We had an artist whose works large scale oils are reminiscent of the style of old masters (Ekaterina Kazachenko), to a group of artists creating intricate patterns with paint and marbles (Midwest Marbling). Themes throughout the year included Nature, Artistic Process, Social Change, Indigenous art and storytelling. Most shows included multiple artists that reflected the multiple ways a theme can be seen, interpreted and expressed.

In connection with the exhibitions, the Art Team sponsored three Wellspring Wednesday presentations. Brian Poulton, a mixed media artist who often focuses on water, gave a presentation with Clean Water Action speaking to the threats to clean water in Minnesota. This was co-sponsored with the Act for the Earth team. The Midwest Marblers presented an exhibition on how they create their beautiful, intricate designs. Kent Estey, one of three indigenous artists, spoke to his grandmother's artistry as a black ash basket maker and a boarding school survivor.

In 2026, the Art Team plans to showcase works of the congregation in a Congregational Exhibition and the works of the children of the church with an RE Exhibition. This in keeping with a desire to cultivate a multigenerational community of joy, care and belonging,

### **Permanent Art Collection and Acquisitions**

The Art Team continues to expand our permanent art collection featured throughout the spaces of Unity Church. The purchase of these works supports our faithfulness to the Ends Statements. Five pieces were added this year

- *Herstory* was painted by Hend Al-Mamsour. Al-Mansour was born and raised in Saudi Arabia, where depicting human forms in art is restricted. As an artist, she has worked to break down the barriers that separate her two worlds, blending the richness of Islamic art with the stories of women who have claimed their power. "Using the very constructs of faith and culture," she writes, "my art initiates a dialogue of reform and a call for change." The piece, "Herstory" was created over several years, going through stages of change. It shows a book's pages with the first woman partially hidden behind a screen.

On the right that woman, later in life is looking at the viewer in front of an unfinished, colorful page on which she begins to claim her power and write the next chapters of her story.

- *Grandma Exercises the Children* by Catherine Palmer. During the unprecedented stillness of COVID-19, Palmer delved into the silent narratives held within the cavernous urban parking ramps. In their eerie quiet she saw them as involuntary witnesses to the crises of the people there. This expressionist piece is a snapshot of a moment in that time and place evoking the raw emotions and unsettling beauty found in this space. The deliberate blurry, fragmented, voyeuristic image underscores a sense of surveillance and detachment. As if seen through CCTV, the image mirrors how society observes but fails to engage.
- *Matwa (Power Lines)* by Gordon Coons. It is a Golden acrylic painting on canvas the artist describes as “The image depicts my clan symbol, Make, who has three roles for the clan ... protector, teacher and healer. Represented in this image: the spiral for continuation of life for Makwa, for stylized Thunder Birds, Stars for our elders in the sky and three sets of four lines of power coming from Makwa. The four directions, four seasons, four races and the four ages of life are represented by the four circles and black spirit lines connected together.” It is done in the Woodland Style of the Ojibway people. Coons is of the Lac Court Orville’s Band Lake Superior.
- *Grandmother and Grandchildren* by Carly Bearseason. Some of the team saw an immediate connection to the piece by Catherine Palmer “Grandma Exercises the Children”. In fact, these two could be displayed together as companion pieces. This piece shows three individuals in beautiful colored clothing. It is a pastel drawing with nice colors, composition and design.
- *Portrait of the artist’s daughter* – by Heather Leigh. The painting is a vibrant, joyful representation of a mother’s love. It was donated by the artist in appreciation for the opportunity to share her work with our community.

The Art Team worked with staff members to refresh the art in their offices which led to a review of the placement of art throughout the church. Some pieces were moved to new locations to provide an opportunity to see them afresh. Labels for all art in the Permanent Collection have been standardized.

In partnership with the Partner Church Community Outreach Ministry Team, we updated the display in the Robbins Parlor to showcase in images and text the story of our long relationship with our partner congregation in Homorodszepeter, Transylvania, Romania. This was completed in time to welcome our guests from the village as they joined us to dedicate the Szekely Gate in the green space.

## **Administrative Changes**

- *Parish Hall Exhibits* Primarily due to our limited resources (volunteers), the Art Team voted to extend the duration of each Parish Hall Exhibit from one month to two months, commencing March 2025. This has created excellent exhibitions, however coordinating shows with multiple artists created its own struggles. Going forward we are using a combination of single month and multi-month exhibitions.
- *Financial Administration* The Art Team did not require commissions from the sale of art while church staff determined the appropriate method to manage and account for this. Going forward we again require a 20% commission for works sold during shows and have updated our Artist Agreements to reflect this direction. We will collect payment in check form (payable to the artist) and cash and encourage artists to use direct payment by digital methods. We will not process credit card payments on behalf of artists.
- *Facility Upgrades* The Art Team worked with Unity staff to provide improved lighting in both hallways of the Eliot Wing to view art displayed on the walls, which are often used to extend the exhibit in the Parish Hall.

## **Beloved Community Staff Team**

Reflections and Highlights

Submitted by Rev. K.P. Hong, Minister of Faith Formation

Among the foremost abolitionist scholars and organizers of our time, Ruth Wilson Gilmore sets the baseline for critical discourse on race: antiracism must confront the deep-running truth that *“capitalism requires inequality, and racism enshrines it.”* She makes unmistakable that racial capitalism is not a deviation from capitalism but its defining feature, woven throughout its entire history and fundamental to its operation. In this way, she stands firmly within the Black Radical Tradition—the prophetic lineage of voices including W.E.B. Du Bois, Claudia Jones, C.L.R. James, Angela Davis, and Cedric Robinson—extending their insights into contemporary struggles to understand the interconnected roots of oppression. Race has always been bound to the organization of economic life and to the political economy designed to maintain domination. Racial categories were never created merely to describe human difference but engineered to justify the expropriation of land, extraction of resources, exploitation of labor, and the extermination of surplus populations. Race has long functioned as a technology of social organization, structuring land, labor, vulnerability, punishment, and life chances, determining whose lives are protected, whose labor is exploited, and whose wellbeing is made expendable in service of economic gain. Far from being a matter of interpersonal attitudes or cultural misunderstanding, as liberal antiracism often prioritizes, racism has always been a matter of political economy determining the exploitation of certain peoples so others may profit. As Malcolm X famously asserted, *“You can’t have capitalism without racism.”*

Unity’s longstanding commitments to liberal antiracism—identity work, interpersonal repair, inclusion, diversity, representation, cultivation of multicultural community—laid essential groundwork. These practices helped us acknowledge histories of harm, expand literacy, deepen awareness of privilege and marginalization, and build relationships across difference. Yet these approaches that illuminate the injury often stop short of interrogating the systems that blithely continue to reproduce racialized inequity. Liberal antiracism that centers identity, representation, and interpersonal understanding cannot fully account for the durability or depth of racial injustice as a structural arrangement embedded in our political economy and the racial logics that sustain its operations. This historical moment calls us to widen the frame and move beyond identitarian, recognition-based antiracist work toward a structural, political-economic interrogation of racial capitalism as the underlying logic threading the interconnected roots of oppression.

Over the past year, the emerging clarity of our antiracist multicultural work expanded our focus from *“within”* and *“among”* toward the *“beyond,”* asking us to examine how land, housing, immigration, policing, debt, healthcare, climate, and material conditions are organized in ways that lay bare the *“exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death.”* This widening lens invited a structural analysis into how racialized harm is produced and reproduced through economic systems, public policy, and institutional practices of racial capitalism. It called us to move beyond the gravitational pull of white people’s feelings in the personal and

interpersonal realms where antiracism often remains, and to confront the structural machinery that perpetuates harm.

This commitment took shape in a six-part series on the *Interconnected Roots of Oppression* offered this spring. As a significant entry point into understanding the encompassing nature of racial capitalism, each session traced a specific root—housing, immigration and policing, debt, healthcare, and environmental harm—inviting participants in learning circles to explore these domains not as separate issues but as interconnected expressions of an underlying structural logic. Further learning opportunities deepened this work, with Justice Learning Partners and the Racial Justice Team offering follow-up circles for continued dialogue and study.

Especially in the sweep of Operation Metro Surge, we saw with sharper eyes neighbors displaced, families surveilled, workers threatened, and communities absorbing the weight of overlapping harms. What unfolded in real time—housing precarity, “crimmigration” enforcement, racialized economic vulnerability, food insecurity, disruptions to education and public health—revealed the very patterned operations of racial capitalism. Together, these experiences of learning and building partnerships toward a greater solidarity continue to draw us into a praxis of transforming systems that shape collective life.

Our reparations work advanced as a concrete expression of this structural analysis. Through collaboration with the Racial Justice Team and the Indigenous Justice Team, partnerships with Black-led organizations, sustained engagement with the Saint Paul Recovery Act Community Reparations Commission and the Board of Trustees’ historic \$100,000 contribution, our congregation moved from acknowledgment toward repair. This work asked us to understand reparations not only as a moral obligation but as a structural intervention—one that names harm, transfers resources, and strengthens Black-led processes of truth-telling, policy transformation, and community-rooted healing. By hosting listening sessions, supporting the Commission’s call for a comprehensive harm study, and tracking emerging initiatives such as the Reparatory Justice Fund and the proposed Slavery Disclosure Ordinance, we continued to align our commitments with efforts to address the material conditions produced by generations of racial dispossession. And as our reparations work widens to Indigenous calls for Land Back, we are learning to weave the strands of *abolitionism* (Black reparations) and *decolonization* (Indigenous reparations) as two distinct but related mechanisms.

We accompanied our Community Outreach Ministry Teams (COMTs), many of whom were activated during Operation Metro Surge. Their on-the-ground engagement placed them in direct contact with the very structures of harm interconnected within racial capitalism—housing precarity, policing, immigration enforcement, labor, childcare, restricted mobility, and economic vulnerability—requiring the critical imaginary and approach capable of meeting interconnected realities with interconnected strategies. We offered spaces for reflection, grounding, and collective discernment, helping COMTs read their experiences increasingly through a structural lens rather than fragmented, piecemeal efforts, and to cultivate partnerships and strategies aligned with systemic transformation.

Unity's antiracist multiculturalism is listening more attentively to the lineage of the Black Radical Tradition and larger liberation movements of history, embracing practices that seek not only to change how we relate to one another, but to change the world in which those relationships unfold. This shift radicalizes and deepens our work ahead, expanding and integrating our commitments so that they more fully address our political economy and the underlying racial capitalism that determines whose land, labor, and lives are valued and whose are not. The challenge and hardship of this moment is also the promise and possibility, and through the luminous tear in the fabric of our world, we may glimpse the contours of a more just and beautiful future.

## Community Outreach Ministry

### Reflections and Highlights

Submitted by Rev. K.P. Hong, Minister of Faith Formation

Across the past year, Community Outreach Ministry Teams (COMTs) began a formative and consequential shift from faithful but largely separate acts of service toward a more collaborative, systemic, and spiritually grounded praxis. Teams began to see themselves not only as attending to their particular issue or community need, but as an interdependent network of moral imagination, moving from issue-specific efforts to interconnected strategies for interconnected challenges. Still in its early stages, this shift signaled a congregation learning to see the world structurally, to act collaboratively, and to align its ministries with wider movements of mutual aid and solidarity toward collective flourishing.

Operation Metro Surge marked a defining turning point, drawing many COMTs into a clearer sense of shared purpose and recognizing themselves as part of a shared ecosystem responding to neighbors displaced, immigrant communities surveilled, workers threatened, schools and clinics disrupted, and communities absorbing the weight of overlapping harms. In accompanying neighbors through crises—from housing and economic vulnerability to immigration enforcement and legal defense—COMTs forged partnerships that embody solidarity with moral partners. Teams engaged in listening circles, strengthened their capacities for public action, partnered with immigrant support and rapid-response organizations, and continued to move into deeper collaboration with community-based networks committed to mutual aid, protection, and collective wellbeing.

The shift was further catalyzed by a six-part learning series on the *Interconnected Roots of Oppression*, tracing housing precarity, immigration and policing, debt-driven economy, healthcare, and environmental harm as interconnected expressions of racial capitalism. And because the moment was urgent, and forging solidarity essential for confronting interconnected harms, the learning series drew connections to the broader movement for dignity, affordability, and community wellbeing articulated in *The People's Agenda*. In aligning ourselves with this vision shaped by ISAIAH, we stepped more fully into a statewide, faith-driven movement, with disciplined clarity about transforming the political and economic structures that shape our common life, and declaring that our liberation is inescapably bound together.

This widening clarity—about interconnected structures and solidarity with moral partners—naturally shaped collaborations needed to advance Black and Indigenous reparations, especially with the Saint Paul Recovery Act Community Reparations Commission and Black- and Indigenous-led organizations. The *Community Outreach Project Fund* further encouraged creative collaboration among our eleven COMTs, prioritizing projects that bring teams together in shared work. And recognizing the scale and promise of this work, a new dedicated staff position will begin this coming church year to coordinate, support, and deepen the community outreach ministry of the church. All throughout, what is emerging signals an unmistakable shift from individual teams working on particular issues to becoming a network of

movement-aligned ministries, acting from a growing understanding of the structural roots of oppression and standing in solidarity within the wider ecosystem of justice work. This is justice not as additive but integrative, one braided commitment toward collective transformation.

2025-2026 Community Outreach Ministry Teams:

- Act for the Earth
- Evergreen Projects
- Gun Violence Prevention
- Housing Justice
- Indigenous Justice
- Barack and Michelle Obama School Outreach
- Mano a Mano (“Hand to Hand” in Spanish)
- Partner Church
- Racial and Restorative Justice
- Sanctuary Justice
- Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East (UJME)

## **Congregational Care Ministry**

Submitted by Rev. Shay MacKay, Minister of Congregational Care

One of the gifts of congregational life is that we as individuals can trust that this community is wide enough and deep enough to hold us in both our joys and our sorrows, in our challenges and our celebrations. Through all that life presents us, we move together - in groups of two, twelve, or two hundred - comforting, encouraging, and inspiring each other into wholeness.

2025-2026 was another transition year for the caring ministry of this church as I stepped in as Acting Minister of Congregational Care in September. By October, I knew I wanted to stay longer than my one-year contract, and by December we had made it official! I'm honored to be serving Unity in this capacity and hope to do so for many years.

Because of this transition, the first part of the year was focused on me familiarizing myself with everything that happens at Unity, as well as letting all of you get to know me. During this time comfort shawls have continued to be knit, care cards written on Sundays, and the care team continued to show up in support of our congregants. Unity has been doing this for each other for a long time, and this year we were given the opportunity to do it for those beyond our walls as the entire congregation responded to the crisis of Metro Surge.

### **Congregational Care Team**

- Meetings - This year the care team has been reading *Trauma Stewardship* together, discussing it chapter by chapter at our monthly meetings. We also do a check-in, program planning, invitation for people to ask for/provide support, blessing of shawls that have been knit, and any other business. We have welcomed several new members to the care team this year!
- Caring Visitors – We currently have a robust list of 20 people who are trained and willing to provide their care to the Unity Community.
- Comfort Shawls – this is a special part of the Care Ministry, with many talented knitters providing shawls to Helen Pohlig, who finishes them and keeps track of them and makes sure they all get a good blessing from our team before they are delivered with love.

**Embracing Meditation (EM)** Each Sunday we set aside time to expand the caring ministry of the congregation. Congregants and friends of the congregation are encouraged to submit both joys and sorrows to be shared with the community on Sunday mornings during worship, as well as in the parish hall after services so that we can write cards of sympathy, support, encouragement and congratulations. This year we held 104 individuals/families in communal care with prayers and cards.

**Worship** As the Minister of Congregational Care, I have been present on 30 Sundays, including offering the Embracing Meditation, part of an ensemble of officiants, and preaching approximately once a month. I also lead the annual Blue Holiday Service, an evening service in Ames Chapel for folks who are feeling grief during the November/December holidays. Because Winter Solstice fell on a Sunday this year, I also incorporated the annual solstice service into regular Sunday services.

**Pastoral Care and Spiritual Support** I regularly provide individual or family support to congregants, either at Unity or at outside locations, including hospital and hospice visits, home visits, and coffee shop “dates.”

**Support Groups** Monthly support group meetings continue – some on Zoom and others in-person - with lay leaders managing the communications and facilitation, with support from me.

- The Living with Grief Group has been on hiatus this year as attendance dwindled and we figure out what the current needs of our community are
- Care Giver’s Support Group with Cynthia Orange facilitating
- Families Living with Mental Health Challenges Support Group with Angie Scott facilitating.
- Parents who have had a child die by suicide with Linda Kjerland facilitating.

**Memorial Services** Compassionately supported by our Events and Tech Coordinator, Heidi Birkholz, and our memorial service reception team, led by Barbara Ford, we held 15 total memorials in the 2025-2026 program year: seven for members and eight for guests. Unity also offers Guest Memorials for a fee to those who are unaffiliated with a church but want to gather their loved ones to say goodbye. Offering this service is a form of outreach to the wider community, drawing our circle wider still to support families during a difficult time.

Thank you to the mighty crew of bakers of bars and cookies, and to those who provided kitchen service and support at memorial services. Additionally, we would like to thank Terry Linskey and Laura Riskedahl-Hampton for their dedication in memorial coordination along with a wonderful crew of greeters and bell tollers to help these families say good-bye to their beloved.

**Elder Community Groups** Monthly meetings at three of St. Paul’s retirement facilities have been growing in number as new UU residents move in and also with non-UU participants joining. We have been using the monthly Theme Spiritual Practice packages to guide our lively, thoughtful and rich discussions, and these groups are thriving. Ari Giles co-facilitates these groups with Shay.

- **Lexington Landing Group** with Barbara Ford assisting in logistics.
- **Episcopal Homes Group** with Christine Butter assisting in logistics.
- **Marvella Group** with Marty Rossman assisting in logistics.

#### **Special Congregational Care Programs in 2025-2026**

- Writing for Well-Being - a workshop using writing to explore grief led by Shay, held twice on December 6th and February 14th.
- Metro Surge Vigil – January 23rd
- The Taproot Project - March 22nd, a workshop using art to recognize and strengthen resiliency and community resources.
- Death Café – Wellspring Wednesday May 13th.
- Facing the End: Three April Wellspring Wednesday sessions: Taking Care of the Rest, Green Burial, and Dementia 101

## Denominational Affairs

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister

Unity Church continued to maintain its covenantal relationship with the larger Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

Unity Church's financial support to the UUA / Mid America Region remained flat at \$70,540 in 2023, increased 4% to \$73,200 in 2024, and increased 2.5% in 2025 to \$75,000, which is 71% of the UUA's requested amount, down from 73% in 2024.

Rev. Dr. Sinclair was appointed to the Unitarian Universalist Association's Board of Trustees in, [October 2025](#), serving the remainder of a term ending in June 2026. He is currently running unopposed for a full three-year term that will run from 2026-29.

In January, MARCH (Multifaith Antiracism, Change, & Healing) organizing collective put out a [call for clergy](#) to come to the Twin Cities in the aftermath of the killing of Renee Goode. Several hundred Unitarian Universalist clergy from around the country traveled to our metro area, and Unity members and staff supported them through housing, a meal on Wednesday night, and an emergency vigil after Alex Pretti was shot and killed while many were still here.

The work to oppose the immigration enforcement surge in the winter of 2026, including but not limited to members of Unity Church, was recognized by the broader denomination. In June, the Unitarian Universalists of Minnesota will receive the President's Volunteer Service Award as part of the UUA's General Assembly. Normally this award goes to a single individual for exceptional service in a year, but this year the UUA has chosen to recognize all who contributed to the work opposing Metro Surge. Because so much of that work was underground and intentionally anonymous, the language of the award is uncharacteristically broad. "If you can in any way imagine yourself as part of this," Sophia Betancourt told us, "this award is meant for you." The UUA is planning an event recognizing the work of Minnesota UUs in fall 2026.

Rather than a single-site General Assembly, this year the UUA is experimenting with a distributed, multi-site event. In June, Unity members will join with Unitarian Universalists from all 12 metro area congregations for a joint Sunday morning watch party for the General Assembly worship service at the Riverview theater.

## Literary Ministries

The Library-Bookstall Team (LBT) led by Shelley Butler, Barb Foss, and Vicki Kappus with a dedicated group of volunteers manages/staffs the Bookstall and Anderson Library on Sunday mornings, both welcoming places for visitors and longtime members alike. Bookstall sales remained strong this year; with proceeds from book sales fund book purchases for the Anderson Library, Cafe Unity, congregation book reads, LBT book events, and supported the creation of a new library for Project Home.

The team hosted three special, well-attended events this church year: the book launch of Marg Walker's second book, *So Surprisingly Light the Small Suitcase of Certainty: Poems* (Nodin Press); the final stop on the Poetry Bus Tour and launch of their book, *The Sweet*, with poets Sara Douvre Wudali, Athena Kildegaard, Michale Keller-Diggs, and Su Love; and the annual [Cafe Unity: Poetry and Music Salon](#), which was another very memorable evening—if you missed it, you can view it on Unity's YouTube channel.

Also, the Anderson Library had a visit from Patsy Eagan, a Unity member and United Theological School student, who created a flattering video about the library, which you can view here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=99Z-f2lwGQg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99Z-f2lwGQg).

In addition to supporting the Justice Learning Partners program and the Justice Database, the LBT participated in the Community Outreach Ministry Team summit, and reached out to COMTs about partnerships, which we hope will develop into meaningful programming this summer and in the next church year.

## Membership

Submitted by Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant

The congregation certified 783 members to the Unitarian Universalist Association in February 2026.

From May 2, 2025-May 10, 2026, Unity welcomed 26 new and returning members and their families. A significant number of those who signed the membership book this year had been at Unity for many years, and cited the political climate and the church's response to Metro Surge as deciding factors in their choice.

Finding Yourself at Unity continued as a year-round, drop-in weekly Sunday class, led by congregant facilitators with staff information presenters. Over the course of this church year, at least 72 new individuals started through the classes. In this last month, we have refined the class from eight sessions down to five, with the remaining three being recorded and uploaded to our YouTube channel. We continue to explore the ways that people can engage meaningfully with Unity online.

These are the people who joined Unity Church May 2, 2025, through May 10, 2026:

1. Angie Alley
2. Whitney Erin Boesel
3. Abigail Boetticher
4. George Boody
5. Rachel Brown
6. Wendy Crowell
7. John Drews
8. Kris Gorman
9. Jon Gorman
10. Krista Finstad Hanson
11. Eva Hanson
12. Sheri Hird
13. Eric Hove
14. Ann Kearns
15. Jessica Kenley
16. Jason Kenley
17. Wyndy Knox Carr
18. Laura Muessig
19. Philipp Muessig
20. Carter Pease
21. Ann Risch
22. Meg Tietz
23. Viola Tracy
24. Sean Tracy
25. Kim Tyson
26. Michelle Valley

## **Adult Religious Education and Programming**

Submitted by Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant

Adult religious education opportunities at Unity Church continued to span a wide range, from introductory and one-time offerings to more in-depth commitments. These offerings touch on many different areas of the Double Helix Model, encouraging participants to develop spiritual practices, engage more deeply with themselves and their community, and give back to the world in a meaningful way.

Even as congregants engaged in unprecedented levels of volunteering in the broader community during Metro Surge, and had far less free time, their participation in church programs that asked deep and meaningful questions and invited them to discern their next right action remained strong. Small group practices such as UU Wellspring and Chalice Circles both continued to be cornerstone spiritual practices for many.

Now in its ninth year, the Chalice Circle program engaged 64 participants across eight groups. Each group met monthly with a trained facilitator, and discussed the month's worship theme, this year exploring phrases and concepts from our new Ends statements, such as "Abiding Hunger" and "Interconnected Roots." This look into the worship theme was supported by a team of gleaners, who gathered art, spiritual practices, reading recommendations, and more into a monthly packet. Participants in Chalice Circles included both long-time and newer congregants, making them an important way for all to connect.

Also in its ninth year, the ten-month UU Wellspring program engaged 8 participants in twice monthly spiritual deepening rooted in the sources of our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition, led by two trained facilitators. Several participants have been recommended as Teaching Associates, Worship Associates, and Chalice Circle facilitators.

The Teaching Associates program entered its seventh year. This program takes cohorts of congregants on a three-year journey of minister-led education and practice so they can serve as lay resident theologians, equipped to support the collective faith life of the congregation. This year, a new cohort began its three-year journey while a second cohort completed their second. 13 people participated in these two cohorts; 25 Teaching Associates have completed the program.

Sangha practice continued to meet every Tuesday afternoon in Ames Chapel, with a dedicated group of 15-20 who practiced meditation and engaged in this year's dharma study focused on the Heart Sutra.

Offering shorter programs for spiritual growth, Wellspring Wednesday at Unity Church gathered 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. The Wellspring Wednesday experience includes:

- Sharing meaningful time and nourishing food together

- Brief multigenerational worship in Ames Chapel
- Opportunities to play, learn, and practice with one another

Wellspring Wednesday programs focused on spiritual practice, antiracist multicultural practice, and the intersection between them as expressed in our Double Helix metaphor. Spiritual practice programs included:

- Lectio Divina twice a month
- Somatic Yoga
- A six-week series sponsored by the BCST focused on the roots and effects of Racial Capitalism
- Considering Five Theological Questions for adults to go through the five major questions of Coming of Age
- The Dying for Beginners series, and Death Café
- Demonstrations by featured artists, teaching art as a spiritual practice

The antiracism emphasis included the bi-monthly Justice Learning Partners program (formerly Antiracism Literacy Partners program), pairing participants up to discuss books, articles, films, podcasts and other resources and find what actions these resources call them to take.

Deep appreciation goes out to the many Unity Church teams, including Community Outreach Ministry, Library Bookstall, Beloved Community Staff, and Art teams, and other members who help make this rich and diverse learning possible.

## Ministry with Children and Families

### Reflections and Highlights

Submitted by Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation

*“Love of children and fear of the world arrive in stutter-step tandem,”* writes essayist Stephen Marche. *“Cortisol dances with oxytocin from the beginning. Right after the rush of birth, the very next act is to fit the baby into a car safety seat. Here is new life: don’t wreck it. The anxieties are interwoven with our hopes.”* And so stutter-stepping as we may, we as a community of parent-teachers accompanied our children across this past year, hope braided with fear, vulnerability held with love.

From the very beginning, children learn the world through relationship, through presence, through the emotional weather of the adults who hold them. And within this delicate dance, faith formation begins. Using that shorthand of the faith journey, we understand faith formation unfolding across five interwoven movements—faith as caught, taught, bought, sought, and wrought. Faith is first *caught* through the atmosphere of care surrounding our children; then *taught* through story and ritual; *bought* as they buy in and claim their belonging; *sought* as they ask deeper questions; and ultimately *wrought* through lived experiences that forge meaning, purpose, courage, and commitment. This framework grounds our work in Religious Education and reminds us that formation is not merely instructional but profoundly relational, embodied, and communal, shaped as much by the presence we offer as by the lessons we teach.

Over this year, children’s spiritual formation unfolded not only through classroom lessons but especially through the atmosphere of shared life—our “rituals, routines, and relationships.” What they *caught* from our presence and what was *wrought* in them through experience carried the deepest formation and revealed again how teaching is spiritual practice. Children “catch” faith long before they understand it, from absorbing the warmth of community to the steady presence of teachers to the moral imagination expressed in how we treat one another. This year, they caught both the courage and the tremors of our wider world, with fear from ICE activity near schools, uncertainty in neighborhood streets, and the temporary closure of Minneapolis Public Schools. These realities shaped the air our children breathed and the joys and sorrows they shared in chapel. Their sense of safety flickered, reminding us that fear is not only an emotion but a field that alters the space between us.

In response, our teachers practiced presence—quiet, steady, embodied—accompanying our children without rushing to fix anything, but listening, attending, and through the ministry of presence, allowing our children to find themselves again. This was the heart of faith formation as *caught*, children absorbing the spiritual life of the adults holding them close.

Of course, faith is also *taught* through stories, rituals, and practices that give language to what children already feel. It was *bought* as they began to claim their belonging, and *sought* as they learned to wonder and ask deeper questions. These stages remained essential, providing structure, narrative, and agency. But they have never been the deepest layers of formation.

Those developments rest upon what is *caught* and prepare the ground for what will be *wrought*, especially through struggle, justice-seeking, and the work of love made visible.

Our children witnessed adults stepping into the streets to protect neighbors, refusing to let anyone be taken or left alone. They saw neighbors sharing food, offering rides, helping with rent, and keeping watch. In their wide, unblinking way, our children understood that this is what belonging looks like. This is what “we” sound like. This is what interdependence means, and how mutual aid imagines a world where solidarity is not an emergency response but the daily measure of shared life. This was the heart of a *wrought* faith formation, forged in the passion of Minnesotans neighboring one another, hammered into integrity, service, and unaccountable joy.

Contemplating faith formation through these five movements over this past year, it became clear again why teaching is spiritual practice. Our teachers lived intimately in the realms of *caught* and *wrought*, their presence the curriculum, their attention a form of protection and care, and their integrity the promise that the world will feel possible again. Teaching is a spiritual practice because it is the quiet, daily labor of shaping the air our children breathe. It is the ministry of forming souls not by telling children what to believe, but by helping them feel, in their bodies and in their communities, that they are held, that they matter, and that they are part of a “we” that has not abandoned dreaming and daring a world more worthy of their lives.

For our church certification with the Unitarian Universalist Association in February 2026, we included 213 children and youth enrolled in religious education programs at Unity Church plus 172 non-enrolled but participating (visitors, Chalice Camp, Christmas pageant, etc.).

## **Ministerial Intern**

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister

Unity Church values its role as a teaching congregation to future ministers. This year, after several years without an intern during staff transition, the congregation was enriched by Hallman Ministerial Intern Amy Brunell, from the Starr King School for the Ministry. Amy's MIST team members included Andrea Anastos, Ari Giles, Barbara Ford, Tara Messana, and Brad McGarr.

Amy contributed to Unity's ministry in many ways: participating in Executive team and staff meetings, leading Sunday and Wellspring Wednesday worship and programming, engaging in public witness, participating in the work of the Beloved Community Staff Team and much more. At the request of COMT leadership, she developed and led a series on the UUA's Common Read: Deepa Iyer's "Social Change Now." This spring she also taught a section of Starr King's ten week WEAV curriculum for spiritual community engaged in counter-oppressive, sacred social change<sup>9</sup> with congregants from Unity and around the country.

This year Unity Church also purchased a small condo in the building across Portland Ave, to serve as housing for future Hallman interns. This housing, and increased giving to the Hallman Internship endowment, will help to ensure that Unity remains a teaching congregation in the coming years.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.skism.edu/weav>

## Music Ministries

Submitted by Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries

The period from July 2025 to May 2026 has been one of extraordinary musical ambition, deep pastoral presence, and continued community growth for the Music Ministries at Unity Church. In a year shaped by both challenge and transformation, music continued to serve as one of the congregation's most vital sources of connection, reflection, healing, and joy. Across worship, concerts, memorial services, justice-centered programming, and community partnerships, the Music Ministry remained a place where people could bring both their full musical gifts and their full humanity.

The following are highlights of the past year:

- Choir participation has remained steady overall, while the Children's Choir experienced enormous growth this year. The Youth Choir was merged into the Women's Ensemble, creating especially meaningful and powerful intergenerational musical experiences throughout the year.
- The Music Ministry played an important role in helping hold and support the congregation during periods of stress and uncertainty, particularly during Operation Metro Surge, offering spaces for reflection, grounding, lament, and hope through worship and music.
- Music continued to serve as a source of healing and connection during numerous memorial services held this year, many honoring longtime members with deep roots in the musical life of Unity Church.
- This year marked a major transition in our music staff. After many years of devoted service, Kathy Kraulik retired as pianist. We are deeply grateful for her extraordinary contributions to the life of Unity Church. Jared Mikach stepped into the role of pianist and choir assistant and has had an exceptionally successful first year, quickly becoming an essential part of our musical community.
- I am immensely grateful to everyone who contributed to purchase our new Sanctuary piano. I consider it easily the best piano in the Twin Cities (by far my favorite), including those at Orchestra Hall and The Ordway, and I count myself very lucky to have such a wonderful instrument for years to come.
- December traditions continued to thrive, including the holiday concert, Christmas pageants, Carol Shout, and Christmas services, all of which were joyful and exceptionally well attended.
- The Tolling of the Bells service was moved to a new date this year while continuing to feature the Unity Singers prominently as part of this meaningful annual tradition.
- The Unity House Band has continued to flourish and expand, both in size and stylistic range. Their offerings have become increasingly diverse and collaborative, contributing significantly to the musical vitality of worship throughout the year.
- We have continued refining and improving our livestreaming and sound systems, leading to a more polished and accessible worship experience both in person and online.

- The two largest musical undertakings of the year were Benjamin Britten's Saint Nicolas and Craig Hella Johnson's Considering Matthew Shepard. Both projects were enormous artistic and organizational endeavors involving singers, instrumentalists, staff, volunteers, and community participants from across the Music Ministry.
- Saint Nicolas marked the first major project involving Unity Church's new community orchestra, an exciting milestone in the growth of our music program. The ensemble showed tremendous promise, and I look forward to continuing to nurture and expand this fledgling group in the coming years.
- Our Lenten season and Holy Week were deeply shaped by Considering Matthew Shepard, with excerpts and themes woven throughout worship and culminating in an extraordinarily ambitious Foote Music Sunday performance. The project created one of the most unique, moving, and memorable musical seasons in recent Unity history and left a profound impact on all involved.
- Our musical partnerships continue to thrive. Mila Vocal Ensemble, OneVoice Mixed Chorus, and the North Star Viols continue to rehearse, collaborate, and participate regularly in the musical life of Unity Church, helping strengthen our role as a hub for artistic and community engagement.
- The monthly hymn singing and discussion group is currently on hiatus due to inconsistent participation, though there remains interest in finding future opportunities for communal music learning and exploration.
- Member-led musical ministries continue to flourish, including Threshold Choir and the Resistance Singers, both of which reflect the ways Unity members continue to bring their musical passions and commitments into the life of the wider community.
- Beloved Unity traditions remain vibrant and meaningful, even as new traditions continue to emerge. The Music Ministry at Unity Church continues to grow not only in musical excellence, but also in its capacity to foster belonging, creativity, courage, and spiritual connection.

## Unity Consulting

Submitted by Laura Park, Executive Director

Unity Consulting is a program of Unity Church whose mission is to liberate and empower the leadership of progressive religious congregations and institutions to awaken compassion, transform lives, and bless the world. An extension of the church's teaching role in the Unitarian Universalist Association, Unity Consulting helps congregations understand their purpose, the difference they make in people's lives, and then organize to deliver on that promise. Our primary tool is Policy Governance® as we've learned to adapt it for congregations.

Ten percent of Unity Consulting's fees go to support Unity Church's operating budget. Unity Consulting occasionally provides pro-bono services to the denomination through governance consulting with denominational and congregational leaders.

Highlights from this past year's work include:

- Consulting services, retreats and hourly coaching, to four congregations over the course of the year (May 2025-May 2026).
- Continued sales of *The Nested Bowls: The Promise and Practice of Good Governance*. InSpirit, the UUA Bookstore, carries the book and it is also available on Amazon. Sales have been small but steady.
- \$3, 402 went to the Unity Church operating budget from Unity Consulting and Spirit Map fees and book royalties May 2025 through May 2026.

## **Welcome Teams**

Submitted by Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant

Welcome Team members worked at the intersection of hospitality ministry and the multicultural ends of the church. Operation Metro Surge necessitated additional training and readiness, and the Welcome Teams took on new duties with determination and warmth. Several new and established members of the community have begun serving with the welcome team, and we are excited to expand the team beyond the current 40 in the coming year.

Additional team training is planned around the welcome of those with identities that are often "othered," accommodations of disability, and welcome as a spiritual practice. Sunday meetings grounded team members for their ministry of welcome across difference.

## Worship Life

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister

Unity Church's worship services follow monthly themes, shared with the chalice circles and spiritual practice packets developed and printed monthly. At a planning meeting in June 2025, the 2025-26 themes were chosen from words and phrases appearing in Unity's recently adopted Ends Statements, as a way to get the language of the new Ends into the bones of the congregation. The themes from the previous year included:

Month	Theme
September 2025	Dangerous Words
October	To Yoke Ourselves
November	Interconnected Roots
December	Cultivating Faith
January 2026	Break Open
February	Evangelize Love
March	Abiding Hunger
April	Joyful Visions
May	Belonging
June-July	Transformation

In addition to the themed months, this year the "usual" rituals of Unity Church continued, including story and family Sundays, Merging of the Waters, Christmas Eve services and the Christmas pageant, the Tolling of the Bells, Coming of Age, and the Flower Celebration. Notably, we moved Tolling of the Bells from January to late October, to better fit the arc of music rehearsals and holiday planning. The change was well received and will continue in the coming year.

Unity Church has seen consistently increasing attendance in worship both in person and online over the last several years:<sup>10</sup>

Church Year	Fall In Person Average	Fall Online Average	Spring In Person Average	Spring Online Average
2022-23	264	387	278	379
2023-24	294	322	331	411
2024-25	353	368	376	500
2025-26	365	400	449	615

In addition to Rev. Sinclair's preaching, Rev. Shay McKay, Unity Church's Minister of Congregational Care, preached once. Rev. KP Hong, Unity Church's Minister of Faith Formation, led all the intergenerational components of our worship, as well as preaching on May 24 and

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<sup>10</sup> For consistency, fall includes September-December, while spring is January-April. Our summer worship attendance is significantly lower, with only one service on Sunday morning.

leading worship for children in Ames Chapel most Sundays. Guest preachers included Rev. Laura Smidzik, minister of congregational care at First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, Rev. Terri Burnor, Executive Director of the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance, and Liz James, founder of the Unitarian Universalist Hysterical Society.

Also of note, this year Unity welcomed back the Hallman Ministerial Internship program, welcoming our first intern since 2019, Amy Brunell. Amy was a regular presence in the chancel on Sunday mornings, preaching six times over the course of the year, as well as participating in worship planning and Wednesday night chapel

**Worship Associates:**

Betsy Hearn (Chair),\* Meg Arnosti (Vice-Chair), Estelle Brower and Mary Pickard,\*\* Richard Buggs, Charlie Caswell,\* Sarah Cledwyn, Veronica Nordeng DeVillez, Anne Haley,\*\* Isaac Fried,\* Anna Newton,\* Raffie Parke,\*\* Chris Russert,\* Nate Schultz,\*\* Ollie Stocker.

\*Outgoing

\*\*Joined April 2026

**Theme Team:**

Rev. Andrea Anastos, Dr. Ahmed Anzaldúa, Amy Brunell, Drew Danielson, Rev. Karen Hering, Rev. KP Hong, Rev. Shay McKay, Nelson Moroukian, Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair