

Belonging

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

It was winter, snowing and slippery in downtown St. Paul. As I walked down the sidewalk, I could see in the distance a small, older woman in the crosswalk, moving slowly and carefully into the street with the green light. Not reaching the midway point before the "Do Not Walk" sign began flashing red, she turned and just as slowly retreated to the curb. This happened twice before I got close enough to notice that I knew her.

"Ruth," I called out. "Can we cross the street together?" She was almost 90 and even shorter than I. I knew her to be a vibrant and courageous person, but I imagined how vulnerable and invisible she might feel in the middle of the wide street with the snow coming down and the lights changing and the cars eager to move on. She smiled and slipped her hand into the crook of my elbow, and together we stepped into the crosswalk, doing our best to be visible when the light turned red and we were still slowly making our way toward the opposite curb.

On the most basic level, belonging begins with being seen. Not just with the eyes, but with understanding and recognition – and acceptance of our right to be where we are and who we are and how we are.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs, that pyramid stacking human needs in order of importance, starts with physiological needs (food, shelter, sleep, etc.) as the basics that must be met before all others. Then it moves on to safety, and only in the third tier does it get around to naming our need

for love and belonging. But a growing number of voices today are pointing out that it might not be as simple or sequential as that.

What about the person so isolated by despair and depression they stop caring about eating or living or dying? Or indigenous people anywhere, but at this moment, especially in Brazil's burning rainforest where their homelands and health are at risk because they have not been seen as belonging in Brazil's economic interests? What about the transgender person for whom it is sometimes not safe to be seen as their true self? Or refugees seeking the protection of asylum only to be locked up in the terrifying conditions of detention centers? Or what about the black driver pulled over for a broken taillight, just trying to be seen as a nonthreatening fellow citizen when the officer approaches his window?

It has always been true that we humans need one another. But in a world increasingly and dangerously divided between haves and have-nots, it becomes easier for those with resources and privilege to forget that belonging is often a basic requirement for survival.

Are we fostering a sense of belonging in our congregation that honors what is differently at stake for each of us when we gather and create community with one another? When we are not in danger ourselves, are we noticing when events, near or far, may impact others more harmfully because of their identity, language, beliefs or lived experiences? And when we notice, do we avoid assuming we know what that

impact is, instead taking time to simply and compassionately ask, "How are you?" Or when we are experiencing risk or danger ourselves, do we have ways of letting others know? Are we cultivating belonging that helps us all show up and be seen as our true and vulnerable selves?

When we find ourselves at any of the many dangerous intersections of our stormy and troubled times, are we helping one another become more visible by asking, "Can we cross this street together?"

*From Literary Minister Karen Hering on behalf of this month's theme team:
Ahmed Anzaldúa, Janne Eller-Isaacs,
Rob Eller-Isaacs, Lisa Friedman,
and KP Hong*

Belonging Theme Resources

BOOKS

Go, Went, Gone, novel by Jenny Erpenbeck (2017)

Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny by Amartya Sen (2006)

The Golden Compass, novel by Philip Pullman (1996)

Belonging: Remembering Ourselves Home by Toko-pa Turner (2017)

MOVIES

Mulan, 1998 animated movie

The Point, 1971 animated movie

Just Words



*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

Words on the Statue of Liberty by Emma Lazarus

I am the child of immigrants. My ancestors came from England, Germany, Scotland, and Ireland. I do not know much about the various ancestors who braved the journey across the ocean. I only know that they did, and eventually found their way to the farmlands of Iowa. I wish I knew more. I don't know what caused them to leave. Were they starving? Were they escaping poverty and disease? I do know that the great majority of Americans are here because some desperate and brave ancestors left their homes and traveled to unknown lands seeking a better life and greater opportunities for themselves and their descendants. Those journeys often involved trauma, of which most of us are unaware.

I fear that many in this country have forgotten that we are immigrants as well.

I have interviewed people about what it was like to arrive on Ellis Island, what it was like to see the Statue of Liberty shining as a beacon of welcome. I remember talking with a woman who had gone blind and could hardly hear telling me at the end of her life about the power of that moment for her as a young girl. Her mother insisted that she and her brother come up and see it as the boat came closer to land. "This is our new home," she reported her mother as saying, "a place where we are welcome and will make a new life." It wasn't easy but they were always filled with the certainty that they had a place here.

Just recently we were asked by an immigration attorney to perform a wedding at ICE headquarters at Fort Snelling (sacred site of the Dakota people). She knows from experience that having the undocumented partner (in this case a husband to be) get legally married to his citizen wife might influence the judge's decision. He might be able to stay. It was the only strategy left for the immigration attorney. Without hesitation we said yes. The time of the wedding better fit with my schedule, so I performed the wedding. I arrived with all of my documentation and was told that I was performing the 40th wedding this year at ICE. I met the wife to be and their three children. Her parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles were there as well. She and her husband to be have been together for 12 years. We were all ushered into a small room. We crowded around and then Martin, the husband to be, was brought in. His feet were chained to one another. His preadolescent son looked at him and burst out crying. Everyone, including me and the attorney, began to cry. The room was filled with sacred love, commitment, hope, and great fear.

I don't know how things will unfold. I will hope to attend Martin's deportation hearing. Immigration judges are under great pressure to deport as many as possible now.

I can only attest to the love I witnessed between the members of this one family. I know that if Martin is deported back to Mexico, his family will suffer greatly. He will suffer. He has been fully employed for all the years he has lived here. I hope and pray that they will find a way for him to remain here, in his chosen community and family.

There has to be a better way than how immigrants are being treated these days. Unity's Sanctuary Team is hoping to reorganize this fall and find ways for more of us to be involved in changing the face of immigration in our beloved home.

Yours in Faith,
Janne Eller-Isaacs

Hallman Intern Update

From Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs

Unity Church has been a teaching congregation since its earliest days. Many influential ministers have been loved into ministry by our church. For more than a hundred years, the commitment was integral but the funding was sporadic. Then in 2001 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the ordination of the Rev. Dr. Laurel Hallman who had been called to ministry while a member of the church staff, an endowment was established to help to fund an annual internship. Since that time, we have welcomed many interns who have enriched our church life beyond measure.

In the fall of 2018 we began to prepare for the retirement of our Co-Senior Ministers scheduled for June of 2020. Among the questions the Executive Team considered was whether to invite an intern to join the ministerial team during the Eller-Isaacs' final year. Given the demands inherent for both the professional and lay leadership as we move fully into the period of transition, we decided it would be challenging to provide proper oversight and support to an intern in the 2019-20 church year. In the end, we decided to temporarily forgo having an intern on staff.

Rest assured we are still committed to being a teaching church. It is in our bones. It is part of who we are. The Executive Team is already in conversation about the possibility of having an intern in 2020-21. Though we will not have a Hallman intern this coming year we want to acknowledge all those who have been involved in the Ministerial Intern Support Teams, and those who have supported our interns by attending programs, worship services, and sharing words of love. The Unity interns serving with grace and impact in a wide variety of settings testify to the many ways your ministry extends beyond our walls to touch the world.

SEPTEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday Worship

Sunday worship services are held at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. except where noted. Sermon podcasts and archives are online at www.unityunitarian.org.

September 1: *That's (Not?) Funny!* • 10:00 a.m. only

We can be such a dreadfully earnest and serious people. Our faith also equips us with open minds and a keen appreciation for irony, incongruity, absurdity, and the stuff from which humor is made. We know how laughter can be medicine, and how the causes of social justice have often been served by pioneering comedians, from Lenny Bruce through Dick Gregory to Ellen DeGeneres. We also know how sarcasm and ridicule is used too often to belittle and bully the vulnerable and the oppressed. We'll reflect on how to draw boundaries and appreciate humor that is a tonic, and not toxic, in our struggle for justice, and our everyday lives. And we'll parse some of the best and worst Unitarian Universalist jokes! Dane Smith, worship leader; Shelley Butler, worship associate. Musicians: Dan Schwartz, guitar and vocals; Bryan Janssens, bass

September 8: *Everybody In* • Merging of Waters Family Sunday

As we gather to begin the formal church year with the entire church community, we will sing together and imagine a world where everyone is welcomed and has a sense of belonging. Musical guest: Peter Mayer

On Family Sundays, children experience the entire worship together with their families in the Sanctuary. A children's message and activity books related to the stories and sermon help children to engage in the experience of worship. The nursery is open for children under three years of age.

- Bring water from your summer adventures for our merging of waters ritual!
- Students are encouraged to bring their backpacks for our Blessing of Backpacks!
- Soup supper after the 4:30 service! Soup: White chicken chili/veggie chili

September 15: *Return Again*

Belonging is a leap of faith. It takes real courage to say yes without knowing where your commitment may take you. Ambivalence easily gets in the way. The joys of belonging can outweigh the risks involved. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Lia Rivamonte will reflect together on the meaning and the measure of belonging to Unity Church. Musicians: Unity Choir (9:00/11:00), Unity Singers (4:30). Soup supper: Chickpea and sweet potato stew with chermoula

September 22: *Getting to Ellen: A Journey of Gender*

As we seek to become a truly multicultural home for all people, we must remember that means everyone, not just people of color. One of the most marginalized groups in our country are those that identify as transgender or not part of the gender binary. Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Erika Sanders will talk about gender and how we can be more welcoming to all people. Musicians: Unity Singers (9:00/11:00), Unity Choir (4:30). Soup supper: Corn chowder

September 29: *You Are the New Day*

One learns in working with small groups that every time a person joins or leaves the group is, made new. Given what we know about fractals, the same is true no matter what the scale. Though there are enduring values, clear intentions and a congregational culture (for good and ill) at Unity Church, the church is made new each time someone arrives, bright faith flying, and each time someone departs, all too often disappointed that the church was not all they had hoped it would be. Belonging is a continuum that moves in starts and stops. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Jake Rueter will help us to move from belonging to forgiveness. Musicians: Women's Ensemble (9:00/11:00), Unity Choir (4:30). Soup supper: Chicken/veggie noodle

Offering Recipients

Each Sunday, thirty percent of the offering goes to support the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church and seventy percent is given to a chosen community non-profit recipient.

September 1: **East Side Elders**

East Side Elders serves the Dayton's Bluff, Payne-Phalen, and Conway-Battle Creek neighborhoods. Its primary mission is to enable seniors to live safely and independently at home. This collection will support the Act of Kindness fund, helping seniors who are struggling to make ends meet.

September 8: **Obama School Sunshine Fund**

Obama Elementary School is across the street from Unity Church. Its spirited staff works from the heart, each a tender gardener of the dreams that invite students to shine brightly. This collection will be used for field trips, staff recognition, hiring of specialized staff, and short-term artists in residence.

September 15: **Exodus Lending**

Exodus Lending is Minnesota's only non-profit dedicated to helping Minnesotans get out of payday lending debt. The program model allows enrolled participants to "gift" their past-due payday loan to Exodus Lending who then pays off the loan in full. Program participants re-pay Exodus in twelve monthly installments.

September 22: **The Family Place**

The Family Place is a daytime center located in Saint Paul providing intake and assessment services to homeless families with children. Meals, showers, housing and employment services are also available to families.

September 29: **Casa Guadalupe**

Casa Guadalupe is a home providing safe, dignified, stable housing to women and children who have been displaced from their countries of origin and are seeking a safe place to live while they navigate the complex immigration system. Unity Church members volunteer at Casa Guadalupe and are connected through Unity's membership in the St. Paul Sanctuary Coalition.

Leaning Forward

Jill Van Koolwijk, Trustee



"Stand firm on your two feet, then put your weight on the balls of your feet, so that you feel ready for whatever comes at you. Next, breathe deeply into your belly, so that you feel calm in the face of what may be awaiting you." These are the words of Alfonso Wenker, co-founder of Team Dynamics during a recent meeting in preparation of the upcoming Multicultural Training Event held at Unity Church on September 7. Alfonso continues to explain that he learned this "personal practice" from his spiritual leader Arif Mamdani (former Hallman Intern at Unity Church). Its significance is that if something

unexpected or threatening happens to you, the blow will push you from your forward stance to your heels. If you were standing on your heels, you would likely fall over backwards.

In our work within, among, and beyond Unity Church, this firm stance will be a pertinent practice: as we live into our Ends statements and welcome an ever widening circle of newcomers into our congregation; as we volunteer at Obama Elementary School, helping to create a strong school community; as we strive to stand up for racial justice and equity; as we struggle together through the multifaceted immigration crisis; as we demonstrate against ICE deportations and speak out against the inhumane treatment of asylum seekers; as we grieve, rage, and demand action towards right relationship with our planet. Recognizing our many vulnerabilities, this power stance allows us to ground ourselves in the personal and collective strength, courage, and persistence to stay our course.

Team Dynamics, a strategy consulting firm dedicated to transformational work in the area of intercultural competence, has been helping the Beloved Community Staff Team and Unity's Executive Team to address many areas of our congregational life. At the September 7 training, these two following End Statements are at the heart of what Team Dynamics will be tackling with us:

- Create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships.
- Create brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture.

When we met in August, we brainstormed about how to make changes in the areas of worship, education, communications, and welcome, and outreach. Team Dynamics reminded us that using words like "diversity," "inclusion" and "equity" are only as helpful as we are clear in our collective understanding of these terms and realize them in our practices and actions.

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is a tool which was developed by Dr. Mitchell Hammer to assess intercultural competence. The IDI measures the complexity with which we notice, name, think, and behave related to cultural differences and similarities. The stages of the continuum are denial, polarization, minimization, acceptance and adaptation, and the Unity congregants who have completed the assessment fall somewhere in the middle. In the future, we will continue to use the IDI to reflect on Unity's development towards our Ends. Team Dynamics will help us identify strategies to inch closer to the final stages of acceptance and adaptation and this work will be shared with the broader congregation this church year.

"Building Capacity" is a term I have heard at Unity Church more often in the last year than ever before. To develop authentic relationships requires capacity. So does dismantling dominant culture. It will mean stepping outside of our comfort zone with all the people that we want to include in our lives. We must practice what we intend to do to reach our Ends and pursue our path to multiculturalism.

Where are you in your practice of leaning forward into this work? Have you reflected on the steps you need to take towards our Ends, towards intercultural competence? Are you working on your capacity to include, to respect, to welcome? This will be challenging but necessary and rewarding work. I look forward to our work with Team Dynamics and hope we will all soon be practicing our power stance with a forward tilt.

Staff Changes Support Ministerial Transition

Anticipating the church's ministerial transition, a few temporary changes in staffing have begun this fall.



Rev. Karen Hering

Unity Church will not have an intern in the 2019-20 church year, and Karen Hering will take on several added responsibilities, joining the staff as part-time associate minister for the next two years. Unity's important work as a teaching congregation for ministerial interns will resume in the future as we move into and through this time of transition.

In the current church year, Karen will begin as less than half-time, coordinating the Chalice Circles program and weekly chapel services on Wellspring Wednesdays, while continuing to offer the monthly guided writing sessions of her literary ministry. In January she will be phased into coordinating Unity's pastoral care program under Janne Eller-Isaacs' leadership and in collaboration with Unity's full ministerial team. Karen will again offer the annual Thresholds series for people on the cusp of significant personal change, but the timing of the series in 2020 will shift to April and May.

Next summer, when Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs retire, Karen's role will increase again as she assumes primary responsibility for pastoral care. Working with and in support of the new interim minister in the 2020-21 church year, she will also coordinate a new small group ministry focused on living well with change. You can reach Karen at karen@unityunitarian.org or by phone at extension 109. She would be especially delighted to hear from you with your registration for Chalice Circles (see page 8)!

BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

The Anti-Racism Leadership Team Passes the Baton

From Pauline Eichten, Past ARLT member and current member of the Beloved Community Staff Team

In 2002, a few people thought that Unity Church, a worthy institution, could do better around the issue of racism. They presented a proposal to the Board of Trustees that resulted in the church commissioning the Anti-Racism Leadership Team in January 2003. Made up of church members, the team's stated mission was to help lead the church into becoming an actively anti-racist institution. This meant organizing from the inside, looking at policies and practices that would need to change to realize that mission. With institutional endorsement and mandate, these "leaders without authority" worked in an uncharted area, reporting to both the Board and the Executive Team and relying on them to execute team recommendations.

The first significant piece of work of the team was to look at church history through an anti-racist lens. We asked, "Was Unity Church part of the resistance to racism in this country or was it complicit in supporting white supremacy and thus racism?" In spring 2005, after much research — going through archives, interviewing people, and reading and discussion — the team produced a 53-page document titled "The History of Race Relations and Unity Church-Unitarian, 1850-2005" (<http://bit.ly/racerelationshistory>). The team's final assessment of Unity Church and its stance regarding racism was that we "engage[d] in charitable works instead of initiating a deeper exploration of racism and how we might be complicit in its continuing existence. That work would have forced us to feel a great deal of discomfort, and to be willing to be changed."

Over the following years — and many programs, educational opportunities, sermons and workshops later — changes began. In summer 2005, the Board of Trustees developed a new definition for moral owners as those "who yearn for the Beloved Community and see Unity Church-Unitarian as an instrument for its realization. The Beloved Community ... is community at the highest level of reality and possibility, where love and justice prevail."

Then in 2009-2013 the Ends Statements, the guiding documents for the work of the church, spoke to a commitment to anti-racism and racial healing. It was noted that the multi-million dollar construction project, proposed in 2011, had no stated commitment to the use of minority businesses for goods and services. A group of concerned church members initiated policy language to spell out how the church could address that issue with this project and into the future. The Board of Trustees used that as the basis for Policy J, added to its governing policies in the fall of 2012 (<http://bit.ly/ucgovpol>).

The new Ends Statements, adopted in 2018, included the following commitments to:

- create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships, and
- create a brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture.

Over the years the Anti-Racism Leadership Team has continued to work on influencing the progress of Unity Church toward becoming an actively anti-racist institution. Most recently, it had been serving in a strictly monitoring role. In its 2018 report, the team noted that it was the Board's job to measure and evaluate the implementation of the church's Ends. Given the new Ends Statements, and the strategy and implementation work envisioned with Team Dynamics, the team recommended bringing this monitoring task back to the Board. In February 2019, the Board passed such a motion and the Anti-Racism Leadership Team was dissolved.

This past June the Board and the Executive Team hosted a gathering, inviting anyone who ever served on the team. The event was both to thank everyone for their work and to solicit input to help guide the Board going forward. There are plans to have a congregational recognition sometime this fall of the Anti-Racism Leadership Team and the 60-some church members and staff who served on it over the past 17 years.

Asking for Help is Powerful!

From Erika Sanders, Beloved Community Staff Team

In order to fulfill one of Unity's new Ends Statements, to "Create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships," the church has engaged outside help! We're delighted to be working with Team Dynamics, a firm of consultants guiding us through processes of deep discernment and groundbreaking work.

First, Team Dynamics is working with church congregants and staff to investigate our current culture, including potential points of bias, resistance to change, and exclusivity. Team Dynamics created an inventory of our policies, communications, and other information about us, in order to assess our day-to-day patterns of awareness and behaviors.

Next, Unity Church and Team Dynamics will work together to co-design a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Roadmap in support of our End Statements. Why diversity, equity and inclusion, you ask? The three key components shaping the roadmap are distinct and work in concert:

Diversity – a fact of human difference, not an outcome

Equity – recognition that one-size-fits-all solutions do not work for everybody

Inclusion – different people get to contribute and make decisions in ways that may change systems

Creating the DEI Roadmap involves defining our vision for the future; clarifying our values; determining shared, measurable goals centered on bridging across "differences that make a difference" (such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, and more); and engaging a greater diversity of perspectives. In Team Dynamic's words, the DEI Roadmap will help us "slow down and really consider the difference between what we know, what we think we know, and where we are just guessing."

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WELCOME WORDS

Welcome Words



Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement

Life in community is a spiritual practice — it is a commitment to our shared humanity and to a nobler vision for our world, and then a recommitment to them again and again throughout our lives. We belong, not just to a community, but to a way of living, one that continually reminds us we are not alone in our joys and struggles.

As a new church year begins, I invite you to take up this practice with fresh eyes and renewed intention. What do you hope to receive from this community and its ministry? How do you hope to engage and be a part of it? What is moving in your spirit and your life that you can bring here with you? We are ready to journey with you, to practice with you, to grow with you. On the cusp of a new year, may we be present to the adventures, possibilities, and blessings that await.

If you are new to Unity Church this summer, I want to share the changes to our worship times and other opportunities to be more deeply involved. On September 8, we return to three services each Sunday at 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. The morning services are followed by a coffee hour and the afternoon service is followed by a soup supper in the Parish Hall. Each service is the same in topic and service leader, and religious education classes are held at all three times. We encourage you to try each service and see what fits best for you. On September 11, Wellspring Wednesdays begin again with a weekly, delicious homemade dinner at 5:45 p.m., chapel worship at 6:45 p.m., and programs at 7:15 p.m. (see pages 10-11 for more details). You will find many invitations in this newsletter as our programs, choirs, religious education, and outreach teams begin a new year of ministry. All are welcome! See you in church!

Pathway to Membership Classes

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

Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Inquiry

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

September 1: No class on Labor Day Sunday
September 8: Unitarian Universalist History
September 15: Pastoral Care
September 22: Q & A with a Minister
September 29: Worship & the Liturgical Year

Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church Wednesday, September 25 • 7:15-9:00 p.m.

Have you been considering membership at Unity? This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's needs meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church!

"Asking for Help Is Powerful" continued from page 5

The Roadmap will work in concert with the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Unity has used the IDI developmental model in recent years to expand our ability to understand and work across cultural difference. The IDI model offers practical guidance on how organizations and individuals can improve their intercultural competence, and grow along a continuum.

Finally, Team Dynamics will support Unity in building its capacity to reach its goals, and will give us guided opportunities to try out new practices and reflect on what we are learning. These opportunities will include retreats, learning seminars, and practice sessions.

Unity's Beloved Community Staff Team will work to ensure that these opportunities for growth are integrated into all areas of church ministry — for example, in worship, community outreach, welcome teams, religious education, and communications.

Questions about this exciting work? Contact Rev. KP Hong, Director of Religious Education, at kp@unityunitarian.org.

Mentoring at Unity

A Path to Deeper Connection

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

Request from Your Ministers:

Read this Book

After the Good News: Progressive Faith Beyond Optimism by Nancy McDonald Ladd

From Shelley Butler, Library & Bookstall Team

Forgive me in advance, for oversimplifying and attempting to pare down this thoughtful book into the restrictive space of a review, but I have to tell you about it. Hopefully, you will read the book to discover so much more than what follows. But here goes...

Nancy McDonald Ladd was born and bred among the “ideological and archeologic remains” of two “once-heralded and later-lamented attempts at utopian communal living.” Why does she tell us about this New Harmony, Indiana heritage? Because, she says, “the creative, artistic, and mostly white environment of liberal Protestantism in the twenty-first century looks and feels very much like the compromised capitalistic remnants of the dead utopian in which I was raised.”

In *After the Good News*, Ladd challenges the assumptions or faith or story, pervasive in Unitarian Universalism, that we are on an upward trajectory of progress led by fundamentally good human beings, that “we ourselves, acting primarily for ourselves, still have the power to make the arc of history bend toward justice.” The problem is that this story tends to be paternalistic, morally superior, somewhat delusional, and centered around whiteness.

Instead, she calls for greater authenticity within and among ourselves, willingness to name and atone for privilege that comes from oppression of others, and to put it bluntly, to get off our high horse in order to relate to real people as equals. She tells us that the answer to these issues has been there all along: “It is, and has always been, relationship.”

Ladd combines personal story with history with a rare examination of UU values; quoting many prominent theologians, including our own Rob Eller-Isaacs. And she does it with some beautiful writing:

We have the right to expect some illumination...Even if we cannot expect to stand in the sunshine of pure promise, we can expect that both hope and meaning are evident in our interconnected lives. We are bound always to the ground of our being, the truth of our deeper selves, and the network of accountability we form with one another.

Mark your calendars for October 12–13, in which you will have two opportunities to meet and hear Rev. Ladd: a Saturday morning talk, and a Sunday sermon. If you read *After the Good News* in advance, Rev. Ladd’s visit in October will mean so much more to you. Available in the Unity Bookstall on Sunday mornings and in the Anderson Library.



Open Page Writing Sessions

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering and held at Unity Church, Open Page writing session participants use stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, and provided prompts, to reflect on the monthly theme. No writing experience is necessary. Bring something to write with and on; the rest will be provided!

Free; RSVP requested to karen@unityunitarian.org.



Belonging

Wednesday, September 18 • 7:15–8:30 p.m.

“The bird belongs to the sky, even though it cannot sleep there; the egg belongs to the nest even though it will not stay there.” To whom and to what do you belong? We’ll explore the many forms and faces of belonging and the many ways we find it in our lives.

Forgiveness

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

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

Gratitude

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

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

Reverence

Sunday, December 8 • 2:00–4:00 p.m.

*Note different timing and length of program.

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

Other literary programming: For more information or to receive periodic e-mail notifications of Karen’s upcoming programs, contact karen@unityunitarian.org.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Sign Up for a Chalice Circle

Chalice Circles are small groups of 8-10 participants who come together with a trained leader, once a month from September–June, to nurture spiritual growth in community. At the beginning of each month, participants receive materials based upon the monthly worship theme. From these materials, each participant chooses one spiritual exercise and a deep question to sit with for the course of the month. At the end of the month, participants gather with their group to share their experiences. Details and sign up are available online at www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html.



Dine with Nine

Are you interested in getting to know more people at Unity Church? Do you enjoy good food and lively conversation? Beginning in October, small groups of church members and friends will gather in each other's homes once a month for food and fellowship. The self-directed groups will choose dates, times, and places for their gatherings. Visit the Dine with Nine table in the Parish Hall through September 22, to learn more. Sign up to participate online at www.unityunitarian.org/dine-with-nine.html or by email to Teresa Wernecke at teresa475@gmail.com. Please include your contact information and let us know if you would like to sign up for a family or adult only group.

Join a Welcome Team

We are looking for 15 generous souls to join our Welcome Teams for Sunday services. It is a great way to meet new people and make a positive impact at Unity Church. The Welcome Team commitment is 1.5 hours per month. Training will take place on Sundays in September. Sign up for training online at <http://bit.ly/ucsundaywelcome> or contact Madeline Summers at madeline@unityunitarian.org.

Volunteer with Unity's Food Ministry

Soup Supper: Sundays, 4:00-5:30 p.m. or 5:30-6:45 p.m. Help prep soup, set tables, clean up. Sign up at <http://bit.ly/soupsupper2019>

Tuesday Night Chopping: Tuesdays, 4:00-6:30 p.m. Help prep the Wednesday night meal. Sign up at <http://bit.ly/choptuesdays>

Wellspring Wednesdays: Wednesdays between 4:00-7:30 p.m. Cooking, table setting, serving, dishwashing, etc. Sign up at <http://bit.ly/ucww2019>

Empowerment for Women

Self-Care and Self-Defense Workshop Series

September 14 and 28, October 12 and 26 • 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Unity Church • Cost: \$45 single workshop; \$160 series

Because both protecting yourself and thriving in this world begin on the inside. Each two-hour workshop is unique. Attend one afternoon or build your skills throughout all four workshops. Inclusive. Ages 15 and up. Registration is online at www.jessicagallostudio.com/workshops. Questions? Contact Jessica Gallo at jessica@jessicagallostudio.com.

First Saturday Men's Breakfast

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

Parish Hall Artist

Cynthia Starkweather-Nelson

Cynthia Starkweather-Nelson's work is about very specific times, spaces and places. She is currently focusing on three diverse ecosystems: the formidable harsh and beautiful Sonoran Desert; the fresh water biome of northern Wisconsin with the lakes and the prairies; and the temperate deep, lush rainforest of Washington State.

She finds unlimited beauty in these diverse landscapes and her paintings highlight what she finds. Capturing how light affects the forms and shapes in nature is important in her paintings. Is the form reflective or absorptive of the light? Reflections and shadows define the specific structures. Finding ways to express the depth, the presence or absence of water, and the relationships of color is key in the paintings.

Cynthia was born in Moline, IL, received a BFA in painting and drawing from Northern Illinois University (DeKalb, IL) followed by an MFA in printmaking at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN).

Upon graduation she was employed as the intaglio printer with Vermillion Editions in Minneapolis. She also taught painting, drawing, and printmaking at St. Thomas Academy in Mendota Heights, MN.

She has been a member of Unity Church since the 1980s, serving on many committees within the congregation. She has studios in northern Wisconsin and Tucson, AZ.

Her work is included in many collections including Prudential Insurance, 3M, Bank of America, Piper Jaffery, Hopwood, Inc., and General Mills.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Families and Politics

How to Talk with Loved Ones on the Other Side

A Better Angels Workshop

Presenter: Bill Doherty, Unity Church Member and Co-Founder of Better Angels

Saturday, September 21 • 9:00 a.m.-noon • Parish Hall

Family relationships are becoming casualties of our toxic political environment. Family members are having nasty political arguments, avoiding each other, and even cutting off lifetime relationships. If you want to preserve important family bonds while still being true to your values and political beliefs, this workshop will offer you:



- Insight into why family differences over politics are uniquely challenging
- Recognition of common roles that family members play in political conversations (for example, the Gladiator, the Defender, and the Sniper).
- Strategies and skills for handling family political differences in a constructive way

Although the focus is on family relationships, you can apply the skills to any important relationship.

You'll laugh and have some fun in this workshop — it won't be all serious. After all, we all come from quirky families.

To register visit <http://bit.ly/baucufampol>. Better Angels is a national nonprofit with a mission to depolarize America. www.better-angels.org

Black Lives of UU presents

The Harper-Jordan Memorial Symposium

October 30-November 2 • St. Paul, MN

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

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

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

Fellowship Groups

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

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

Caregivers Group: An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (September 19), noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Evergreen Quilters: The group meets the second Tuesday of the month (September 10), 7:00-9:00 p.m. (at Unity Church), and fourth Saturday of the month (September 28), 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (offsite). Contact: Peggy Wright, 651-698-2760

Families Living with Mental Health Challenges: A support group for families living with mental health challenges. Meets the first Saturday of each month (September 7), 9:30-11:30 a.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Living With Grief Group: For people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (September 17), 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, janne@unityunitarian.org

Men's Conversation Group meets the second and fourth Monday of each month (September 9 and 23), from 7:00-9:00 p.m., in the Gannett Room, to discuss a wide range of topics. Contact: Terry McDanel, tmcdanel@gmail.com

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, September 9 and 23, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Tom Zell, tomzell@me.com

National Alliance on Mental Illness support group for young adults with a mental illness meets the first and third Sunday of each month (September 1, 15, 29), 6:30-8:00 p.m., COA/OWL room.

New Look at the Bible: Meets the second Thursday of the month (September 12) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade, 651-253-1493

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

Textile Arts Group meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month (September 4 and 18) from 7:15-8:30 p.m. and is open to textile creatives of all ages. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc. Contact: Linda Mandeville, lindamandeville41@gmail.com.

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

Women In Retirement: Meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month (September 12 and 26), 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Friedman, lisa@unityunitarian.org

Zen Meditation: Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Ames Chapel. Instruction offered September 3 at 4:30 p.m. Contact KP Hong, kp@unityunitarian.org.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Welcome Back, Wellspring Wednesday!

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

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

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

September 11

Dinner: Taco bar! Chicken, beans, and all the toppings.

Mapping a Path to Belonging — Rev. Lisa Friedman

A new church year brings new opportunities to connect to our religious journeys — in our spiritual lives, in our community, in our neighborhood. Tonight's session will help us to reflect on what is moving in our lives and to set some intentions and practices for the coming year, with the support of your church.

SteppingStone Theater

Join SteppingStone Theatre to celebrate the launch back into the church year! Collaborate on an original performance using ideas from the group for story, character, dialogue, and setting. Supported by a SteppingStone Teaching Artist, each group will learn skills in theatre elements like acting through voice and movement, improvisation, and exploring different expressive styles. Work together and share the creative process with the other groups at the end of the evening! This workshop includes youth in grades K-8.

Getting Scrappy — Madeline Summers

Come learn a few different ways to use up your leftover kitchen scraps. This month's theme is coffee grounds. We'll learn a little about what you can do to use up this common scrap. Please bring your own reusable container to bring home your coffee body scrub and coffee air fresheners.

Religious Education Teacher Orientation

September 18

Dinner: Pork chops with peach and tart cherry compote, roasted sweet corn with herbed Hope Creamery butter, green salad with basil balsamic vinaigrette, rolls, and cookies.

Open Page Writing Session: *Belonging* — Rev. Karen Hering

RSVP requested to karen@unityunitarian.org

"The bird belongs to the sky, even though it cannot sleep there; the egg belongs to the nest even though it will not stay there." To whom and to what do you belong? We'll explore the many forms and faces of belonging and the many ways we find it in our lives.

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, Open Page writing sessions are invitations to correspond with the "still, small voice within." Using stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, and provided prompts, participants reflect on the month's theme in their own words and on their own pages. No writing experience is necessary. Bring something to write with and on; the rest will be provided!

Great College Search — Craig Allen *This class will run from 7:15-8:45 p.m.

Can't tell the SAT from the ACT? Got your Wheatons mixed up? Experiencing FAFSA freak-out? For high school families, finding a college can be a stressful for the whole family. Learn how to optimize the process and become a critical consumer of colleges. The four weeks will cover these topics:

- September 18: Getting ready for the college quest. Conducting a search.
- September 25: Creating a list of schools. Applying to the schools you select.
- October 2: Financial aid basics.
- October 9: Competitive Colleges: What, Why (or Why Not), and How

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

Adult Our Whole Lives Information Session

Unity Church will offer the adult (18+) version of Our Whole Lives, the UUA's outstanding human relationship and sexuality program, this fall. This course will be offered over 12 Wellspring Wednesday evenings from October 9 through early February. It will be amazing! If interested, please attend this informational meeting. Questions? Contact Drew Danielson at drew@unityunitarian.org.

September 18 continued ⇨

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

September 18 continued

Gardening as a Spiritual Practice

Gardening has the capability to not only beautify and feed us, it has the capability to heal the body, mind and spirit, and also to play a part in healing the earth. We will start with learning the process of seed saving and gathering ideas for the monthly group.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Gentle Yoga — Suzanne Burr

This session will offer mindfulness through movement with a focus on balance/equinox. We will nourish awareness through breathing, moving slowly, and noticing. Paying close attention to internal sensations through somatic movements and gentle yoga, we will focus on creating ease, open-heartedness, and presence. Dress comfortably, bring a mat and a small blanket if you have one.

Textile Arts

This group meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 7:15-8:30 p.m and is open to textile creatives of all ages. Bring your knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, etc. Contact: Linda Mandeville at lindamandeville41@gmail.com.

September 25

Dinner: Roasted chicken, creamy summer squash casserole, roasted apples and sweet potatoes, chopped salad, strawberry rhubarb bars.

The Kellogg-Briand Pact: Choosing Peace over War — Veterans for Peace

Frank Kellogg, the only Minnesotan to win the Nobel Peace Prize, was instrumental in denouncing war. Frenchman Aristide Briand and Kellogg led the signing of the pact on August 27, 1928. This resolution, agreed to by over 60 nations, stated that conflicts between nations need not lead to war. It is still on the books. Come learn more about this important history and its possibilities for today. Each year, Veterans For Peace chooses an organization to honor with a copy of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. As part of the evening, Unity Church will be honored in a small ceremony, including the ringing of the bell for the Armistice following WWI.



Committing to Unity — Rev. Lisa Friedman

This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's needs meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church!

Great College Search Session Two

Creating a list of schools. Applying to the schools you select.

Embodied Spiritual Practice: Yin Yoga — Madeline Summers

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

Tween Group: Grades 5-7

Mark your calendars! The Tween Group will be meeting on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

Get Cooking!

Help Prepare a Wellspring Wednesday Meal

Tuesday Night Chopping

Tuesdays, 4:00-6:30 p.m.

Help prep the Wednesday night meal. Chopping, baking, fellowship! Sign up at <http://bit.ly/choptuesdays>

Wednesdays Night Service

Wednesdays, 4:00-7:30 p.m.

Cooking, table setting, serving, dishwashing, and fun!

Sign up at <http://bit.ly/ucww2019>

Questions about food ministry? Contact Madeline Summers at madeline@unityunitarian.org.

Share a Recipe

Have a favorite recipe that you think would be a good addition to the Wellspring Wednesday dinner menus? Cooking leaders are always looking for new, tasty recipes and it is helpful if someone has already tried them out. Bring them with you when you come to volunteer or send a note to Madeline Summers at madeline@unityunitarian.org.

This food is the gift of the whole universe: the earth, the sky and much hard work. May we live in a way that makes us worthy to receive it.

— Thich Nhat Hanh

Suggest a Program

Is there a program or class you would like to see offered — or that YOU would like to offer — at Wellspring Wednesday during the 2019-20 church year? Submit a proposal! Proposal forms are online at www.unityunitarian.org/wellspring-wednesday.html or by contacting Rev. Lisa Friedman at lisa@unityunitarian.org.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Opportunity Saint Paul Kick Off Event!

Thursday, September 12 • 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Saint Paul

As part of a city wide effort, Unity Church is joining other faith communities to rally an army of volunteers to combat poverty. Unity is becoming an anchor house of worship for Opportunity St. Paul, which matches volunteers with nonprofit organizations that have proven records of effectively addressing barriers to economic mobility. Opportunity St. Paul also offers volunteers learning events that build community and advance understanding of how to make a meaningful dent in poverty. As a key part of the effort, Unity Church hopes to get at least 10 volunteers to participate. What this means is that you will:

- Commit to volunteering once a week for a year with one partner organization. You will receive all the support and resources you need to be successful in your role.
- Attend bi-monthly learning community events, which include dinner and fellowship, presentations, and interfaith dialogue. These events provide context for volunteers and help build community.
- Join a group of dedicated volunteers who are passionate about working to make a meaningful impact in our city.

To learn more, contact Ann Russell at annjd83@gmail.com or Sherri Knuth at sknuth001@msn.com. They will coordinate Unity's team of volunteers. They are eager to get started!

Mano a Mano 25th Anniversary Celebration

On Sunday, September 15, from 2:00–4:00 p.m., you are invited to join friends of Mano a Mano as they celebrate their 25th anniversary! There will be food, welcoming comradery, a brief program, and an opportunity to help fund Mano a Mano's work. Unity Church member Ray Wiedmeyer will offer tours of the warehouse where volunteers meet to palletize mobility aids and sort and pack hundreds of thousands of pounds of mostly new but surplus medical items that would otherwise end up in landfills. For event details and to purchase tickets please visit www.manoamano.org/mano-a-mano-is-turning-25/. We hope to see you there!

Mano a Mano, founded by longtime Unity Church members Segundo and Joan Velasquez, works to create partnerships with impoverished Bolivian communities that improve health and increase economic well-being. The Mano a Mano Community Outreach Team was commissioned by Unity Church to support this social justice work.

Generosity Ministry

Nominate an Organization!

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

Obama School Team

Because of You

Nancy Heege

Unity's Obama School Ministry Team



Because of the great response from members and friends of Unity Church, we're doing more than ever before to support the scholars, teachers, and staff of Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary School across the street from the church. The school motto, "Give Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day" includes a commitment to the whole community being necessary to educate children. We benefit from having a strong school in our community, developing strong leaders.

On August 26, Unity Church hosted the teachers' day-long meeting, serving coffee and muffins in the morning and a make-it-yourself sandwich and salad lunch. And some of you contributed dozens of cookies and juice boxes as hospitality and welcome for the school's August 29 open house for families. Thank you!

This fall, forty-seven Unity volunteers will be working with scholars on math and reading or enrichment programs, or working in the library to be sure books are ready to be checked out by scholars. Some will be providing snacks to teachers at a monthly after-school staff meeting. Some will be working at the book fairs in the fall and spring. This is an all-time high in number of volunteers, and it's great to have so many friendly adult faces encouraging and assisting the Pre-K through 5th grade scholars in learning! Thank you!

Because of you, we're in the third year of our Friends of Obama School program, purchasing Cub Food gift cards to be given out to support families at the school. In the past two years, due to your generosity, we've raised more than \$20,000 for food assistance. Please contribute again this fall by sending a check for \$100, or whatever you want to give, made out to Unity Church, with "Friends of Obama School" in the memo line. Or make your contribution online through Unity's website by going to <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=1aadb6> and selecting "other payment" at the bottom of the page. Then be sure to put "Friends of Obama School" in the comments section, so your donation reaches this fund. Thank you to all past and future donors!

On Sunday, September 8, the Sunday worship offering will be designated for Obama School. The money collected will be given to the school's Sunshine Fund, which supports field trips and other school activities. It's another way we, at Unity Church, support the great work the school is doing for the scholars! Thank you!

Thanks to you and others like you, we're putting into action Unity's stated values and enhancing the educational experience of the Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary School children.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Sustainable Living Team News

Our House Is on Fire

From Dale Howey, Sustainable Living Team

Have you ever been in a situation that seemed impossible, but somehow you made it through? We are in such a situation now. In the words of Winston Churchill, “The time of half measures and debate is over; we have now entered a time of consequences.” Global warming is here. You know this is true. You have seen the headlines: fires in the arctic, hurricanes, rising sea levels, flooding coasts, and extreme temperatures. Even Fodor’s, the travel guide, lists 13 cities, including Athens, Greece, that will be too hot to visit in 30 years. The fuel that ushered in the modern age is now fully on display as our demise.

Greta Thunberg, an articulate 16-year-old movement-leader from Switzerland, knows it too. As she said in a Guardian interview: “Our House is on Fire... Solving the climate crisis is the greatest and most complex challenge that Homo sapiens have ever faced... and we are failing, but there is still time to turn everything around. We can still fix this.”

What are you waiting for? You would jump in front of a moving train to save your kids, right? The main solution to this complex problem, as Greta says, is simple: we have to stop our emissions of greenhouse gases. However you do it, reduce or stop burning fossil fuels, and demand that businesses and our government work collectively to move to a clean, green economy. History has its eye on us. Just as we needed the greatest generation’s resolve to rush into enemy fire on the beaches on D-day, we need the same resolve now. We need to plant trees to lock in carbon from the air, become healthier by growing our own food, and bike more so your children can breathe the air. If you can’t get an electric car, car pool in one, bike, or take public transport. Live into the future.

Join us on Friday, September 20, at 11:00 a.m. at the Capitol and answer Greta’s call for a global climate strike. In hundreds of cities around the world, youth and adults will demand that their government leaders take drastic action to avoid life-threatening global warming. For more info, visit the Unity Sustainable Living team’s table after services at the Parish Hall, email unitysustainabilityteam@gmail.com, or sign up at <https://mnipl.org/event/global-climate-strike-twin-cities/>. Join the movement to make this earth a place to last for another millennium. Raise your voice! In the words of Greta, “Homo Sapiens have not yet failed!”

The Sustainable Living Team meets on the first Sunday of each month between morning services, and the third Sunday of each month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Next meetings are September 1, at 11:15 a.m., in the Gannett Room, and September 15, at 1:00 p.m., in the Center Room.

Sustainable Living Fourth Friday Film Series

Downsizing

Friday, September 27 • 6:30 p.m. • Robbins Parlor

When scientists discover how to shrink humans to five inches tall as a solution to overpopulation, Paul (Matt Damon) and his wife Audrey (Kristen Wiig) decide to abandon their stressed lives in order to get small and move to a new downsized community — a choice that triggers life-changing adventures.



ST. PAUL, MN
THE HARPER-JORDAN
MEMORIAL SYMPOSIUM

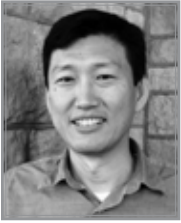
PROCLAIMING
A BLACK UU
THEOLOGY

OCT 30 - NOV 2

BLUU
Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism

See page 11 for details!

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Pitter-pattering Questions

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

From KP Hong, Director of Religious Education

The field of *Childhood Studies* may seem relatively new, but the field has evolved considerably, informed by the human sciences from sociology, anthropology, and developmental psychology to education, law, and cultural studies. We are now familiar with debates over the degree to which the well-being of children is bound up with the well-being of families and marriages, of whether childhood is better understood through generalized stages of cognitive, emotional, moral development or through critical constructions of childhood in history, society, and culture. But perhaps the most consequential claim from Childhood Studies literature is that children should be understood as social agents: that children are the best informants of their own lives with *agency* in creating their social worlds, exercising their own social competencies, acting diversely rather than stereotypically, with their own voice to act on their behalf, if only grownups would grant.

The appeal of children having agency is hardly surprising, as it offers an alternative to ways children have been negatively understood throughout history. We can finally start from the perspective of what children *are* rather than what they are *not yet*, namely developed adults. Simplistic adult preconceptions about children as passive recipients of adult socialization, without distinctive moral voice and capabilities of their own, can now give way to an unprecedented appreciation for children's agency in all its complexity and creativity. Children can finally be placed on a shared continuum of agency with adults, instead of being subordinated or sentimentalized.

Yet as important as this shift has been, the modern notion and accent on agency as constitutive to being human has profound limitations. For agency has always presupposed a corresponding *belonging*, together establishing two fundamental modes of being human. Without the friction and traction of belonging to the people and world around us, agency is set adrift from any real responsibility, deprived of consequence and dignity. What if agency needs to be regrounded not in further autonomy, freedom, entitlement, or other strong *rights-based commitments*, but in the strong embrace of belonging? If there is a correlation between our language and the environment structured by that language (à la "Inuit have so many words for snow" trope) what strong *belonging-based commitments* do we have in our vocabulary that structure the environment in which our children learn and grow? Belonging by *affinity*, or *compliance*, or *dependency*, or *transaction...* or *covenant*?

If childhood reveals in the strongest possible terms that human beings are responsible for one another, what does being in "right relationship" ask of us? And what practices of belonging will ground and animate our engagement with that pressing question everywhere about us?

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

Helpful Reminders

How to do Sundays with Kids

Nursery (age six months–three years)

- Infants and toddlers ages six months (and sitting up) through three years can be signed in to the nursery starting 15 minutes before each service.
- No registration required.
- Label all personal belongings.
- *Please leave your cell phone number and set phone to vibrate.*
- Collect your little ones immediately after worship.

Spirit Play (age three–K)

- Registered children ages three years-kindergarten (and out of diapers) can be signed in to their Spirit Play class beginning 10 minutes before the service.
- Check to make sure two teachers are in the room; if not, stay with your child until they arrive.
- Nametags are in the pocket charts on the door. Leave nametags in the pockets when you leave.
- Collect your preschooler immediately after worship.

Rotations (grades 1-5/6)

- 9:00 a.m., 4:30 p.m.: Registered children in grades 1-6 should be escorted to the Ames Chapel starting 10 minutes before worship. Check to make sure at least two teachers are in the Chapel; if not, stay with your child until they arrive.
- 11:00 a.m.: Children begin with worship in the Sanctuary with their families, then go with their teachers to class.
- Collect your child from their Rotation class (10:15 a.m., 12:15 p.m., and 5:45 p.m.).

Junior High (Grades 6-8)

- Junior high youth can escort themselves to and from classes.
- Youth should wear a nametag while in the church building for reasons of safety and community-building.
- Youth end with worship in Ames Chapel. Parents are encouraged to designate a meeting location with their youth following class.

Religious Education classes begin on Sunday, September 15. The final enrollment session before classes begin will be held on Wednesday September 4, at 6:30 p.m. Childcare provided. Questions? Contact michelle@unityunitarian.org.

Enrollment has concluded for Coming of Age (program for 9th grade youth) and Our Whole Lives (sexuality education program for 7th-9th grade youth). If you have questions, please email drew@unityunitarian.org.

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music Notes

From Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries

My first month on the job at Unity Church has consisted mainly of spreadsheets, emails, telephone calls, and meetings. Stepping into Ruth Palmer's shoes has been quite a learning experience; I admired her before coming here, but now that I have had a glimpse of her work behind the scenes, I am completely in awe.

The development of the music ministry at Unity Church during Ruth Palmer's tenure is nothing short of miraculous. She is a very hard act to follow, especially in a congregation such as this one, where music plays such an essential role.

Some background about me: my full name is Ahmed Fernando Ben-Mohammad Anzaldúa El Samkary. I was born in Mexico City; my father was Mexican and my mother Egyptian, and my ridiculously long name comes from my parents attempting to adhere to the naming customs of both cultures. I was raised in a very conservative Shi'a Muslim household until my parents passed away, and then was raised by my grandparents in a conservative Catholic environment. While I am no longer a practicing Muslim or Catholic, I firmly believe in music as a tool for spiritual ministry, as a force for societal change, and as an essential aspect of the human condition. My family and I fled Chihuahua, Mexico, in 2012. At the time, this region was known as the "murder capital of the world," plagued with extraordinary levels of drug cartel and gang violence. While we love the Twin Cities, it is also an unfortunate reality that those perceived as Muslim Latinxs are not very well liked in this country at the moment. This environment, however, was also what has inspired much of my music in recent years, leading me to found Border CrosSing and work with Abbie Betinis and Tesfa Wondemagegnehu to create the *Justice Choir Songbook*.

I believe that music is ultimately about people. Every piece of music tells a story about its creator, its performer, and its listeners, about all the people throughout history that have been connected to it and found it meaningful... or irrelevant. The music that we choose to perform and the way we perform it is a reflection of what we think of ourselves and others, of the way we wish to relate to other people, and of the kinds of stories that we want to tell. As Director of Music Ministries, I want to make sure that the music at Unity Church is intentionally telling this community's story, that it is an accurate reflection of who we are and who we want to be. To do that, we need to get to know each other. While much of my workday is spent making schedules, preparing rehearsals, planning music for worship and learning it, the most important part of my work is to listen to your stories, to learn about this community, its concerns, and aspirations.

I invite you to share your stories with me and other musicians at Unity Church. I also invite you to take part in the music ministry directly by joining a Unity choir, volunteering your musical gifts in other ways, or just by singing with abandon during worship (and being open to clap on 2 and 4 when the music requires it.) Please consider adding your voice to this extraordinary singing community that Ruth built over the years; I will do my best to honor her work and not disappoint.

Sing in a Unity Choir!

For information on joining one of the choirs at Unity Church, contact Ahmed Anzaldúa, Director of Music Ministries, at ahmed@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x118. All the choirs begin rehearsing after Labor Day:

- **Children's Choir** (grades 1-5), Sundays 10:15-11:00 a.m., in the Robbins Parlor. Kathleen Radspinner, director (kathleen395@gmail.com)
- **Unity Choir** (high school, adult), Thursdays 7:30-9:15 p.m., in the Parish Hall
- **Unity Singers** (auditioned), Tuesdays 7:30-9:30 p.m., in the Parish Hall
- **Women's Ensemble**, Sundays 10:15-10:45 a.m., in the Foote Room

Share your Musical Gifts!

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

New Choir Forming at Unity Church!

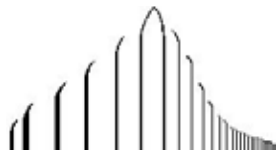
Threshold choirs are beginning all over the country just like justice choirs. A group of members of the adult choirs met with Ahmed and Janne to discuss the possibility of creating a threshold choir here at Unity Church. Threshold choirs are designed to learn a common repertoire and then sing for those experiencing threshold moments. They are most commonly utilized when people are transitioning from life into death. The first rehearsal has been set for Saturday afternoon, September 21, from 1:30-3:00 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. For more information please contact Janne Eller-Isaacs at janne@unityunitarian.org.

Unity Children's Choir Open House Rehearsal

All children and grades 1-5 are invited to come to the first rehearsal of our Unity Children's Choir, Sunday September 8, 10:15-11:00 a.m., in the Robbins Parlor.

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

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



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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

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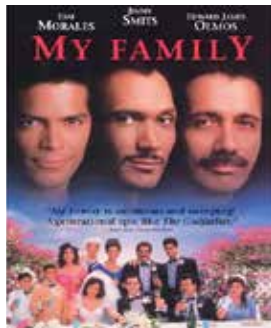
Racial Justice Film Series

My Family/Mi Familia

Friday, September 13

7:00 p.m. • Robbins Parlor

Mi Familia (1995) is the story of the Sanchez family's experience of life in the United States. Spanning three generations, this film shows the various relationships that each family member has living in Los Angeles.



Join Unity Church members and friends for an ongoing film series to further our growth in the understanding and challenging of white supremacy and structural racism. Popcorn will be served and there will be time for conversation.

PHOTOGRAPHERS, ARTISTS, POETS, & WRITERS:
We need your gifts and talents!

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Meet the Author in October

After the Good News
Progressive Faith Beyond Optimism
by Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd



After the Good News
Progressive Faith Beyond Optimism
by Nancy McDonald Ladd
Skinner House, 2019

Available in the Unity Bookstall
and the Anderson Library

**Two opportunities to meet and hear Rev. Ladd
at Unity Church:**

1. Saturday, October 12 • 9:00 a.m. • Parish Hall
2. Sunday October 13 • Preaching at the 9:00, 11:00, and 4:30 services