

## Hospitality

*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.*

Hospitality, as a religious principle, has always mattered. Not only to religious communities greeting their guests, but to the very purpose of religious life. As a posture of open-hearted welcome, hospitality insists that only when we warmly greet the stranger will we be capable of receiving God as well. Or, in another way of putting it, every barrier we raise to keep the “other” at arm’s length will also barricade our hearts against the sacred source of life itself.

In countless stories from wisdom teachings, God arrives disguised as the “other” and only reveals a deeper, sacred identity to those who warmly welcome God unaware. The ones who possess little but share without holding back, who open the door without qualifying questions about merit or identity or even political persuasion – these are the ones who encounter the holy.

So how are we to understand this in the pandemic, when our mounting losses give everything a whiff of scarcity? And when safe practices warn us not to open our arms to one another? How do we welcome anyone “in” — friend, stranger or God, disguised or not — when our mutual wellbeing requires distancing and masking and closing our church buildings? What does hospitality ask of us now?

Perhaps one thing we’re learning about hospitality today, is that it is not always about space.

It can also be about time. Although we must hold back from sharing space with one another, we can still share time — online, by mail, by phone, in front stoop conversations, and visits by window. We might not be able to invite one another into our homes and churches, but we are finding so many other ways to welcome one another into our lives.

This can still be challenging. Well before the pandemic, poet Naomi Shihab Nye pointed out how unusual it can be to let down our guard against requests for our time:

*No, I was not busy when you came!  
I was not preparing to be busy.  
That’s the armor everyone put on  
at the end of the century  
to pretend they had a purpose  
in the world.*

For some of us, the pandemic has brought an abundance of free time, so this is a good chance to practice hospitality by sharing that bounty. For others, with children or other loved ones needing care at home or working in demanding frontline jobs, the pandemic has required all the waking hours of each day and then some. How do we practice hospitality when it feels like we have nothing to give?

This is a second learning about hospitality, driven home by the pandemic but important in every time. Hospitality’s generosity has never depended on how much one can spare. It has always been shaped more significantly by a willingness to share whatever is there, bountiful or not.

In the biblical story of Elijah and the ravens and the widow, a long drought has brought fear and famine. God directs the prophet Elijah to go to a brook where he will have water and where ravens will bring him bread and meat each day. When the brook dries up, God sends Elijah on to Zarephath, where he’s told a widow will provide him with food. At the town gate, Elijah meets a widow and asks for a piece of bread. She explains she has only enough flour and oil for a single loaf, which she is preparing to bake as a last meal for herself and her son before they die. Elijah tells her not

to be afraid. Then he asks her to go home and do as she had planned, but to first make him a small loaf before baking another for her and her son. Doing this, he assures the mother, her flour and oil will be replenished by God until God sends rain.

Think about it. There, in the midst of a drought, Elijah first receives hospitality from God and nature, delivered by the brook and the ravens. Then, hospitality comes from a starving mother willing to answer Elijah’s request for his own small loaf of bread despite her scarce supply. And, indeed, when she does, her flour and oil do not run out. She and her son and the prophet are nourished and survive.

Perhaps what hospitality asks of us today, as always, is to notice where a sense of scarcity is locking our hearts down, guarding us from a willingness to share. If we cannot safely open our doors to each other, maybe we are asked to remove our armor of busy-ness and to open our hearts and our days to one another. To show up — on Zoom, on the phone, or on the front lawn. To be present — through the window, in the mail, on social media, in the park. To share what we have — even if it is just this one moment, just this one hour, just this one day.

What a sweet welcome that can be.

*By Karen Hering on behalf of this month’s theme team: Drew Danielson, Ray Hommeyer, KP Hong, and Laura Park*

### Hospitality Theme Resources

For further reflection on this theme, a variety of resources including books, poems, video, and audio, are listed in this month’s Chalice Circle packet, online at [www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html).

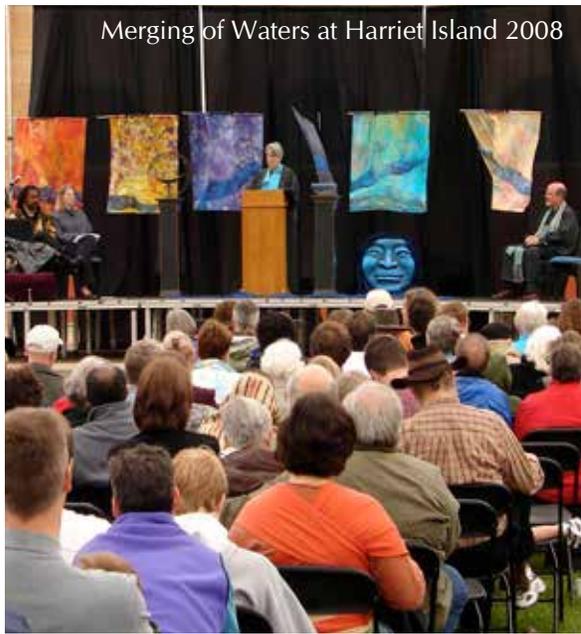
# JUST WORDS / MERGING OF WATERS

## Just Words



In a gathering in 2008, large church consultant Stefan Jonasson gave the following advice: "Every congregation that has multiple worship services on a weekend should find a way, at least once a year, to gather the entire community." I immediately knew he was onto something. He went on to say, "Unless the congregation doesn't experience itself in its fullness and capacity, they won't really know who they are and what they are capable of."

Soon after that gathering, we received an unexpected thank you gift from a Unity friend who felt well served by the church. We knew immediately what we would do with the gift: we would plan an all congregation opening service at Harriet Island. Known by some of the staff as "Janne's folly," we made plans to bring hundreds of chairs and supplies to Harriet Island for a Sunday service. We got masks loaned to us from the generous folks from Heart of the Beast. We designed a service and brought our entire sound system down. Some were skeptical that folks would show up. I knew some would come but when the cars kept pouring into the parking lot, I was simultaneously thrilled and very much relieved. If memory serves me correctly, 760 members and friends of Unity Church showed up that Sunday. I remember asking folks to stand up and look around. "This is who you are as a congregation. Look at how strong you are. Look how many are here to sing, to worship, to pray, and work for justice and love."



Peter Mayer accompanied the service playing numerous tunes to inspire and encourage. "Everything is Holy Now" was that poetic reminder that the holy isn't out there but inside and all around us.

As much as I wish that we could all gather at Harriett Island again this September, I know that we can't because we take our responsibility to each other seriously. It is part of being in a caring community — that we find all kinds of ways to care for each other and the earth we live on.

So what do we do instead? We face this liminal time of not knowing, of not gathering holding on to patient faith and the belief that someday we will sing together again, pray together again, laugh and cry together again, and march for justice.

"Keep the Faith" was a popular phrase from the 60s. This is what I want us all to do: to keep the faith and the flame of our shared faith alive so that when we meet again in the flesh we will see the flame within each of us burning brightly. And we will be inspired once again.

Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs

## Merging of Waters



### Water Collection

**Saturday, September 12, 2020**

**1:00-4:00 p.m. • Portland Entrance**

We know that gifts of healing and renewal flow from simple gestures that we share in the presence of one another, even while physically distanced. You are invited to our Merging of Waters ritual on Saturday, September 12, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Bring water that represents your experience of summer, whether from the tap at your home or from much farther away. If you have a photo of the place where you collected your water, please email it to [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org). We'll use the water in Sunday's Merging of the Waters ritual to remind us that we come together to renew ourselves in each other's presence, even if only in spirit right now. Please wear a mask (some will be available) and be prepared to follow the distancing and other safety directions as requested.

### Sunday Service

**Sunday, September 13, 2020**

**Live stream at 10:00 a.m.**

We lean into the fall with a ritual merging of waters from all around the world to remind us that we are profoundly interconnected. The service will feature Unity Church ministers and musicians and will be offered via live stream.

# SEPTEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

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## Sunday Worship and Coffee Hour

While our building remains closed, multigenerational Sunday Services are being live-streamed from the Sanctuary at 10:00 a.m. Religious Education programming is available for families and information about 2020-21 registration is on page 11. Details and links, including access to past services, are available online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org).

Each Sunday, everyone is welcome to join a virtual Zoom coffee hour after the service. To participate in the coffee hour, please refer to the link in our weekly Sunday service email. If you would like to receive our congregational emails, visit [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) and click on "Join our email list."

### **September 6: *The Minnesota Cold Shoulder: We Have Not Done Our Part***

This momentous year of reckoning for our systemic racist history is building our resolve to practice radical hospitality and at Unity Church to take the "Next Right Action" against racism. We must also continue to learn deeply about how similar resolve has faltered in the past, and among religious liberals too. Unity Church member Dane Smith and Louis Porter II, former executive director of the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, will reflect on lofty promises that were followed by cold shoulders, indifference, and paternalism. They also will offer constructive counsel on what we all must do to cause "good trouble" and sustain a sweeping new movement for racial and economic justice. Shelley Butler will serve as worship associate.

### **September 13: *Merging of Waters***

We lean into the fall with a ritual merging of waters from all around the world to remind us that we are profoundly interconnected. We will offer an in person water collection ritual on Saturday and the service will feature Unity Church ministers and musicians and will be offered via live stream on Sunday (see box at left for details).

### **September 20: *Welcome and Entertain Them All!***

This title, taken from the well-known Rumi poem, "The Guest House," reminds us to be spiritually hospitable to all that comes our way, "even if they are a crowd of sorrows." Worship associate Richard Lau and Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs will explore the nature of welcoming inspiration and new learnings even when they lead us into unfamiliar lands. "Be grateful for whatever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond." What is the beyond they are guiding us to? Join us as we walk this unchartered but guided path together.

### **September 27: *To Begin Again in Love***

Our Jewish friends are wise to start each new year by confessing their shortcomings, making amends and starting over. A truly hospitable religious community makes room for confession, reconciliation, and brave new beginnings. Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs and worship associate Erika Sanders will frame and inform our annual recitation of the Litany of Atonement.

## 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. Donations are gratefully accepted online at <https://bit.ly/sundayoffering>. Offering checks, payable to Unity Church, should be sent "Attn. Song Thao."

### **September 6: Sarah's Oasis**

As part of the ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Sarah's Oasis is a home dedicated to safety and dignity for a diverse community of women where they are empowered to begin new and productive lives. Sarah's welcomes women in need of resources or support who have often survived significant trauma including violence, abuse, torture, war, discrimination, and other difficult circumstances. Since 1996, more than 600 women have called Sarah's home.

### **September 13: Frogtown Food Resource**

Frogtown Food Resource has teamed up with Second Harvest to serve approximately 150 Frogtown households through its twice-monthly food distribution at two neighborhood churches. Preparations are being made for fall and winter when the triple whammy of Covid-19, unemployment, and the underlying poverty of the Frogtown neighborhood will make the distribution of food and household items an even greater necessity. This collection will buy masks, gloves, and sanitizer for volunteers, waste hauling services at distribution centers, as well as diapers, personal hygiene items, and household essentials not supplied by Second Harvest. Unity's Patricia Ohmans and her husband Tony Schmitz are Frogtown residents and volunteers at both food distribution locations.

### **September 20: Quatrefoil Library**

Founded in 1986, Quatrefoil Library of Minneapolis is among the largest and longest-running LGBTQ+ libraries in the United States. Its completely volunteer staff manages the circulating collection of 30,000 books and DVDs along with an extensive archive of queer history. This collection will support its scholarship program, offering \$1,000 individual grants to students focusing on LGBTQ studies. Unity Church member Nanette Stearns is the board president of the library.

### **September 27: Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light**

Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (MIPL) believes that passionate care of creation is an integral part of spiritual life and social justice. MIPL works in partnership with faith communities to build transformative power and to bring the light of collective insights and gifts to addressing climate change. MIPL strives to create a deeply rooted community voice for the rapidly growing climate justice movement. Unity's Sustainable Living Team partners with MIPL and this collection will support Unity's membership as a MIPL sustaining congregation.

To nominate an organization to receive the offering, please visit [www.unityunitarian.org/generosity-ministry.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/generosity-ministry.html).

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES



## 2020: The Year of Ultimate Reimagining

**Nila Gouldin, Trustee**

As summer 2020 comes to a close, I am reminded of all the landmark dates that we had to reimagine this year. The events that we look forward to each year are the threads that weave the fabrics of our lives. Initially, we had to find different ways to work, study, socialize and worship. Personal highlights such as birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, weddings, funerals as well as the broader commemorations of Mother's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Juneteenth, July 4th and Labor Day were no longer celebrated as the traditional social gatherings. Of course we can't forget our local events: Twin Cities Pride Celebration, The Minneapolis Aquatennial, and our renowned annual get together, the Minnesota State Fair, became subject to either cancellation or a creative way to capture their essence without endangering the community's health. In quite a few instances, technology has provided viable solutions.

In addition, temporary changes in our day to day connections shifted: hugs from friends and relatives, an outing with the kids, date night, or a trip to the library to simply be around those who quietly choose to expand their mind. We thought these changes would be temporary but as time goes on, they have become our new normal.

It has taken creativity and inner reflection to reimagine the practices that maintain connection with those around us and honor the dates or events we hold significant. We've had to view our lives from a different perspective. Contemplating our essence and the values that we hold dear. Doing so calls one to contemplate the true meaning of these events.

*What does it mean to me?  
What does it mean to my family?  
What does it mean to those that I hold as community?*

In the midst of this collective and personal reimagining due to a health pandemic, the reality of two different Americas was displayed. The world became audience to the death of another Black man, George Floyd, at the hands of law enforcement right here in the Twin Cities. For some, it was a shock, for others, it was a recurring injustice. Despite its newness for some or the predictability for others, it struck a chord not only in the Twin Cities but across the globe.

Personally, my childhood memories have been interrupted with this event. George Floyd's murder happened in the neighborhood where I grew up. I remember the hundreds of times I went into the then Wilharm Pharmacy — now Cup Foods. The myriad of times I got off the city bus on that same northwest corner of the street, only a few feet away from the last 8:46 of George Floyd's life.

These overlapping crises provide us with an extraordinary opportunity. Our ongoing practice of thinking outside the box due to Covid-19 can be applied to creating a new normal for society in areas other than health. Until now, it has been difficult to even imagine a different societal framework. For those who understand racial inequities still exist, I recall their sense of defeat.

*How can we change a system that has a 400 year head start?  
What are the steps needed? I don't know what they are, do you?  
Where does one start? It's so overwhelming!*

Ideally, we can ask the same questions we asked ourselves during this health pandemic. It just requires expansion. Instead of limiting our thoughts about ourselves, our family and our community, we can expand it to a broader audience.

*What does it mean to Individuals (me)?  
What does it mean to families (my family)?  
What does it mean to communities (those who I hold as community)?*

We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to reimagine and transform our state and nation.

*I believe that here will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation.*

— el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz

### Trustee Nominating Process Update

As you know, 2020 is a year of large transitions and commitment. Not only are we learning how to be together through technology, finding new ways to communicate and share our lives with each other, but we are also adjusting to a new ministerial search timeline. Additionally, the board is engaged in the process of soliciting and promoting opportunities for lay leaders to serve on the Ministerial Search Team. Not surprisingly, these concurrent developments have compounded the work of the board and, more specifically, the process for recruiting and interviewing potential trustee candidates.

For these reasons, the board has decided to return to the 2019 applicant pool for the slate of three new trustees, to be presented to the congregation at the November 2020 annual meeting. We have made the decision to approach some of these individuals, instead of having an open application process, noting the quality of applicants, challenges to the nomination process posed by social distancing, and that other opportunities for lay leadership will be appreciably present this year, including the Ministerial Search Team. We do anticipate returning to an open application process in 2021.

# BUILDING CLOSURE UPDATE



## Church Building Will Remain Closed

Barbara Hubbard, Executive Director

### Our Decision

Unity's primary source of authority throughout the pandemic has been and will continue to be the Governor's office. Their website says that "Moving to the next phase of reopening will require a vaccine, an effective and widely available treatment, or the elimination of new cases over a sustained period of time." We are supportive of and grateful for the guidance of Governor Walz and Commissioner Malcolm.

*The Executive Team at Unity Church has decided that our building will remain closed through December, and likely into next spring or summer. We are placing ultimate value on the health and safety of the members and the staff of this beloved congregation and the wider community of which we are a part.*

Exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis by the Executive Team and may include memorial services with a small number of guests in attendance, monthly in-person gatherings (see below), and contributions to civic life like opening the Parish Hall for a blood drive or for the general election in November. For each of these exceptions, we have developed protocols that allow for the highest levels of safety.

### Monthly Opportunities for In-Person Gatherings

We know that gifts of healing and renewal flow from simple gestures that we share in the presence of one another, even while physically distanced. We are planning a series of in-person and safely distanced monthly gatherings while the church building is closed.

You are invited to our Merging of Waters ritual on Saturday, September 12, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Bring water that represents your experience of summer, whether from the tap at your house or from much farther away. We'll use the water in Sunday's Merging of the Waters ritual to remind us that we come together to renew ourselves in each other's presence, even if only in spirit right now.

Watch for announcements of additional gatherings and rituals this fall and winter.

### Your Virtual Participation

We will continue to provide online worship and programming as a means to keep us connected and to provide hope, inspiration, and spiritual guidance during this challenging time. Please visit our website at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) to participate in our Sunday live-streamed worship services and for information about the many other opportunities we are offering.

### A Peek in the Windows of Unity Church

If you were able to peek in the windows and see the daily activities that are happening in the church during the pandemic, you would see staff members coming and going, facilities vendors onsite for inspections and repairs, and the regular visits by our much celebrated mail carriers and delivery folks. On Sundays, our worship leaders, musicians, the bell ringer, and the tech team come to make our live-streamed worship services happen.

We have safety protocols in place. Anyone entering the building is required to sign in, wear a mask and sanitize hands. All daily activity is limited to the main floor of the building and doors to common areas are left open so that we aren't touching surfaces. Masks are required in all common spaces, and we sanitize our common spaces daily. Staff meetings and board meetings are done by Zoom.

On the exterior, the robust children's garden and the pollinator garden are tended per a schedule that spaces people out, and our dedicated garden team tends to the other flower gardens and plants.

## Congregational Database Sign in today!

Members are invited to log in to ShelbyNext, the online congregational database that includes the ability to update and review your own membership and giving account, access the membership directory, and view the calendar.

### To access from your PC:

- Open a browser (Chrome works best) and navigate to this URL: <https://unityunitarian.shelbynextchms.com/>
- Choose "Forgot Password?"
- Enter the email address you use to communicate with Unity Church
- You should receive an email with your username and password
- Log in, **upload a photo to your account**, and explore!

### To download the App:

- Go to your App store: Google Play for Droid and App Store for iPhone/iPad (iPad users make sure to choose iPhone app)
- Download ShelbyNext Membership
- Enter the domain: unityunitarian (full domain: unityunitarian.shelbynextchms.com)
- Choose "Forgot Password?" if it is your first time accessing ShelbyNext Membership (or just log in if you have already accessed it on your PC)
- Enter the email address you use to communicate with Unity Church
- You should receive an email with your username and password
- Log in and explore!

Questions? Contact Martha Tilton at [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x105.

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



## Welcome Words

**Laura Park, Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality**

I've been reflecting recently on Rumi's poem, "The Guest House." His encouragement to welcome and entertain all that arrives in our lives, whether joys, depressions, or meanness, is a challenge and particularly now. What could it mean to be hospitable even to a "crowd of sorrows who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture"? Can we "Meet them at the door laughing and invite them in... because each has been sent as a guide from beyond"?

Whatever you're working to be hospitable to in your own life, we're so glad you're here, whether from near or far in these times of online ministry. We hope to be a place where you can deepen your connection to your guides from beyond. My virtual door is always open for conversation, information, and exploration of your pathway into deeper meaning in our religious community. The best way to contact me right now is email, if possible, [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org). Or call the church office and leave a message: 651-228-1456 x110. I look forward to getting to know you!

## Pathway to Membership Classes

The offerings below invite you to explore a deeper connection to Unity Church and the commitments and opportunities of membership. If you have questions or would like one-on-one conversation about getting connected or about membership, please contact Laura Park, Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality, [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110.

### *Finding Yourself at Unity*

**Sundays Online • 1:00-2:00 p.m.**

Finding Yourself at Unity includes eight classes that you can attend in any order to better understand how Unity Church supports our faith journeys, our work to build Beloved Community, and our efforts to bless the world. Topics include: UU History; Religious Education for Children, Youth, and Adults; Pastoral Care; Q&A with a Minister; Worship and the Liturgical Year; Social Justice & Community Outreach; Membership 101 and Congregational Life, and even an online Building Tour! Weekly emails include the class topic and a Zoom link to get connected, or email [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).

September 6: No class, Labor Day weekend

September 13: Pastoral Care

September 20: Q & A with a Minister, with Rev. Rob

September 27: Virtual Building Tour

### *Committing to Unity*

**Wednesday, September 30 • 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

Have you been considering membership at Unity Church? This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's need meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book (virtually if necessary) and officially join the church! RSVP by email to Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).

## Sunday Coffee Hour

After the service, whether this is your first time with us or you've been here all your life, you're invited to participate in a virtual Zoom coffee hour, where we share a bit of our lives with each other and get to know one another more deeply. Stay for a few minutes or stay up to 45 minutes to connect in smaller break-out rooms.

Unity Church staff and volunteers lead the sessions, and will suggest questions both light-hearted and deep for discussion. To participate in the Zoom coffee hour, please refer to the link in our weekly Sunday service email. If you do not currently receive our Sunday service emails please sign up here: <https://bit.ly/sunday servicemail>.

## Mentoring at Unity

### *A Path to Deeper Connection*

Would you welcome having a guide to congregational life at Unity Church? Request a mentor! Your mentor will meet with you at least once a month face-to-face and be available for ongoing questions and advice. You can decide together what connection would be most helpful. You might attend Sunday services together or meet to discuss Unitarian Universalism and your spiritual journeys, or attend a church event together, or find another way to connect. Each pair makes a commitment to work together for at least six months.

If you have questions, or would like to request a mentor, please email Laura Park, Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality, [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org).

## Mix with Six

(This year's Dine with Nine.)

Even in a pandemic, we still want opportunities to know one another better. This year, to give folks a chance to connect with more people, instead of Dine with Nine, we're offering Mix with Six.

Fill out the registration form at [www.unityunitarian.org/mix-with-six.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/mix-with-six.html), and we'll put you into a group of six that will meet once a month on Zoom. We'll give you conversation starters, ideas of things to do together from your singular rooms, and even, if you're really brave, a few fun games to play. You'll get the chance to know five other people from all parts of the congregation and hopefully make some new friends. **DEADLINE to register: Sunday September 27.**

After four months, we'll remix the groups so that you can get to know another group of people. People at virtual coffee hour tell us how wonderful it is to talk with people they otherwise would never have known in the church. Don't miss your opportunity to connect with some of the terrific congregants at Unity, particularly if you have been at the church for a while. Bring your stories and wisdom to a new group!

Questions? Contact Teresa Wernecke at [teresa475@gmail.com](mailto:teresa475@gmail.com) or 651-226-8953, or Laura Park at [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x110. Email works best for contact.



## Sign Up for a Chalice Circle

Looking for a way to stay connected to fellow Unity Church members and meet new friends while exploring the monthly worship themes more deeply? Chalice circles, hosted online while the church building is closed, are a great way to do this and registration is now open: [www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html). An added option this year offers registering partners and spouses the choice of participating in a couples' circle co-facilitated by another couple. NOTE: Most circles remain open to individuals and couples both.

The circles are small groups of 6-8 people, led by trained facilitators and specially designed to nurture spiritual growth in community. Each month, participants receive a packet on that month's theme with readings, podcasts, short videos, and other resources related to the theme. Each person chooses one spiritual exercise and a deep question from the packet to spend time with over several weeks. Near the end of the month, the group gathers to share their experiences.

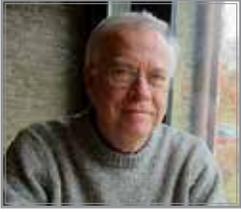
In the past half year, the circles have been especially valued by participants for the chance to have meaningful conversations with others during the pandemic building closure; and this year, the circle process has been slightly modified for online meetings. If you haven't experienced a circle before, or if you were not participating last year when they began meeting online, you might want to give them a try.

To join a circle, register online at [www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html). Early in September, you'll hear from your circle facilitator with the date and time of your monthly online gathering (later in the month), your first theme packet and other helpful information. Don't miss this invitation to a monthly connection with Unity friends, new and longstanding, and an invitation into shared reflection on the times we are in.

## Pastoral Care

If you have a joy or sorrow, life-cycle event, or concern you would like to share with the ministers and Pastoral Care Team, or have shared in the embracing meditation during Sunday service, please complete the online form at [www.unityunitarian.org/pastoral-care.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/pastoral-care.html) or send an email to [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org) and a minister will contact you.

# BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM



## A Journey on Race, Relationships, and Community

Bill Doherty on behalf of the Beloved Community Communications Team

*Unity Church member Bill Doherty is a co-founder of Braver Angels (<https://braverangels.org/>). The name was inspired by the words of Abraham Lincoln, who not only called on Americans to summon the “better angels” of our nature — but also to find the courage to pursue a more perfect union, “with malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right.”*

After the 2016 election, I got involved with Braver Angels (formerly Better Angels) to help bridge the red/blue divide. At the same time, I also helped to start two projects with African American men in Minneapolis.

The first project was at South High. I was the designer and note taker for a group of young Black men and two Black adult facilitators in the Relationships Project, sponsored by the Office of Black Male Student Achievement. The idea was to improve academic success by working on two principal relationships in the school: with teachers and with young women. The young men interviewed teachers and did focus groups with young women on the topic of how Black young men could take the lead in improving those relationships. Then they developed goals and strategies to which they held one another accountable during their weekly meetings.

I saw the power of these young men, who were no strangers to racism in the school and community, taking responsibility to work on something they could control: their part in important relationships. I also experienced their cultural pride in being Black, something that transcended the hardships they faced in a White world. It struck me that these two elements — cultural pride and a sense of agency to make changes on their own, without waiting for White people to change — were missing in many of the racial reconciliation programs I was familiar with.

My second involvement was with the Police and Black Men Project (<https://bit.ly/policeandblackmen>), which I co-founded with Guy Bowling, a Black colleague and head of the FATHER Project for low-income fathers. We pulled together a group of five police

officers (three White and two Black) and six Black men from the community. We hoped to build relationships of trust and see what we could contribute to better partnerships for community safety. We’ve done community conversations and become involved in police training. We have developed a new narrative to go beyond finger pointing across the conservative/progressive divide on police and race, based on the common goal of safe communities.

For me, the Police and Black Men Project has been another experience in the power of taking time to build relationships. We began with storytelling — early experiences with police, with Black men, and with White men. We talked about our fathers. We then moved into more conflictual conversations, with everyone committed to returning to the table over and over, no matter what, because the stakes were so high. This bond of trust, even brotherhood, was necessary for the extremely painful conversation after George Floyd’s killing, first as the community members vented their anger, fear, and despair. The officers listened and condemned what their fellow officer had done. Two weeks later the community members were there to support the officers, who were experiencing ridicule and abuse, particularly from White progressives in the community, even extending to harassment of their families.

Out of these experiences have come two new Braver Angels programs on race. First is a 1:1 Black/White Conversation process (two one-hour conversations online or in person) in which two individuals meet to share and understand each other on the topic of race. No one is there to teach the other; instead, they both listen and learn from each other. I did the initial pilot with a Black colleague. I found it

the most impactful experience of any conversation about race in my life. My conversation partner expressed a similar level of enthusiasm and impact.

Of note, I designed the process so that anyone could fully participate without fear of being called out for expressing the “wrong” opinions or using “wrong” terminology. Braver Angels is nearly ready to launch these 1:1 conversations nationally.

The other new program is still under development: a skills workshop (online for now) on depolarizing conversations about race among White people. The premise is that the conversation about race among White people is nearly as broken as the conversation between the races, often degenerating into White progressives teaching or reprimanding conservatives, and conservatives arguing that they are not racist. The result is national paralysis on a path forward. This workshop will teach skills for respectful dialogue in which neither person assumes the higher moral ground or a defensive posture.

Braver Angels offers a way for people of different races (Black/White), different political worldviews (red/blue), and different geographical areas (urban/rural) to connect personally and as citizens concerned for their country. Each conversation follows a structured process. For more information, or to get involved, visit our website: [braverangels.org](https://braverangels.org).

One of  
**Our Next Right Actions**  
Equity and Justice 7-Part Series  
Hosted by  
Unity Church & Team Dynamics

# EQUITY + JUSTICE SERIES

## Equity + Justice Fall Series with Team Dynamics

### About the Series

Building on the Next Right Action initiative, expert facilitators and trainers gathered by Team Dynamics will lead seven Tuesday evening workshops to explore critical concepts to equip us as champions for racial justice in our own lives, in our communities, and in our spiritual growth and development.

### Series Learning Goals in Service to Unity's Multicultural and Racial Healing Ends

- Increase self-awareness to understand how our experiences of race, gender, and more inform the choices we make in pursuit of our personal and collective justice goals
- Explore tools for deeper practice as a champion for racial justice
- Understand how movements for social change work and how we experience them
- Situate ourselves within a movement for justice and consider when and how to deploy our tools and take actions

### Sessions Overview

This is a seven-part series. It is our intention that participants attend session one and/or two as prerequisite in order to participate in sessions three through seven. Additionally, we ask that you attend as many as your schedule allows. This is a sequential series and a cohort experience, with each session building on the previous session's concepts and learning. Sign-up is required for each session. An RSVP will be sent to confirm attendance.

All sessions are on Zoom, Tuesday evenings, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., September 15 – October 27, 2020. Each session will be hosted by Alfonso T. Wenker from Team Dynamics with various faculty participating throughout the series.

### Seven Sessions

**Please watch future communications for links to register.** All sessions are on Zoom, Tuesday evenings, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., September 15 – October 27, 2020. Participants should attend session one and/or two as prerequisite in order to participate in sessions three-seven. Each session will be hosted by Alfonso T. Wenker from Team Dynamics with various faculty participating throughout the series.

#### SESSION 1

##### **September 15: Identity + Bias**

Explore how our beliefs are connected to our experiences of culture + identity and how those beliefs influence our actions. Faculty: Mark Pineda, Sara Wernick Schonwald

#### SESSION 2

##### **September 22: Intercultural Conflict Styles + Strategies**

Explore conflict through the lens of culture. Understand your preferred conflict style and increase capacity to manage conflict across culture. Faculty: Pearl Dobbins, Levi Weinhausen

#### SESSION 3

##### **September 29: Understanding + Utilizing Power**

Power is an underlying force in relationships and organizations; however, we tend to treat power as a "have or have not." This session explores power as ever present in all bodies. We will dive into the connections between position, identity and power and explore ways to responsibly exercise power toward equity goals. Faculty: Tyrai Bronson-Pruitt, Anil Hurkadli

#### SESSION 4

##### **October 6: Constructions of Race + Racism**

Race impacts every relationship, system and interaction in our daily lives. While concepts of race are a social construct, the impacts (racism and white supremacy) are real in their consequences. This session allows participants to get grounded in their experience of race while noticing patterns and preference for whiteness. Faculty: Trystan Reese, Tyrai Bronson-Pruitt

#### SESSION 5

##### **October 13: Social Change + Social Movements**

What are social movements? What makes movements move? How do we utilize this movement moment to create the transformational change we seek? Together we'll unpack what are the elements of a movement to understand how each of us is situated in a movement. Faculty: Beth Zemsky

#### SESSION 6

##### **October 20: Organizing + Action**

"But what can I do about it?" Building from the first five sessions, we'll talk about how community organizing works in pursuit of justice and how to choose your actions wisely. Faculty: Liz Loeb, Trina Olson

#### SESSION 7

##### **October 27: Using these Tools in Your Practice**

This will be an open, guided time to ask questions and test out ideas for application of the topics covered in sessions one through six. Faculty: Tyrai Bronson-Pruitt, Levi Weinhausen

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday at Unity Church has long been a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun. While the church building remains closed due to the pandemic, we are unable to share a meal together but we continue to gather online for programming. Multi-generational chapel services are prerecorded and posted on the church's YouTube channel each Wednesday for viewing anytime that afternoon or later; and Unity's Religious Education program offers Our Whole Lives (OWL) classes for youth and periodic Tweens gatherings on Wednesday evenings starting in September.

For adults, one or two live online programs each Wednesday will begin at 7:00 p.m., offering enrichment, spiritual practice and fellowship. I hope you'll join us. If you haven't yet participated in an online program using Zoom, church staff can help you get started. Descriptions and registration links for September's programs are listed below. (Unless otherwise noted, you can use the registration link right up until the program starts to participate.) Also watch your daily email from the church for additional program options that may be announced as the month unfolds.

September 2 • 7:00-8:30 PM

### **A Time to Learn:**

#### **Teaming Up to Learn About Anti-racism**

Register: <https://bit.ly/ucutimetolearn>

What does it take to be racially literate and engaged in anti-racism in



a day-to-day way? Where do we find resources and support in our ongoing learning about systemic racism and the work of dismantling it? This program will highlight useful books, podcasts, and videos and invite you to team up with others to choose a title and make plans to read, listen to, or watch it individually and then discuss it in the weeks that follow. Come to choose a resource, sign up for a buddy or small group, and receive discussion guidelines. Questions? Contact [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org).

September 9 • 7:00-8:30 PM

#### **Getting Out the Vote in a Time of Divisive Politics**

Register: <https://bit.ly/ucugotv>

We know how important the November elections will be! This is a chance to learn about tools for getting registered; for voting in person, by mail or absentee; and for helping your friends and neighbors do it, too. Spread the word; invite a friend! Presented by members and friends of the Sustainable Living Team.

September 16 • 7:00-8:30 PM

#### **Reflecting on Hospitality**

Register: <https://bit.ly/ucuhospitality>

Senior Co-Ministers Revs. Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs will each reflect on the meaning of hospitality in this pandemic time. How do we, personally and as a congregation, welcome others with hospitality when we cannot gather side by side? In breakout groups, participants will be invited to similarly share with one another.

#### **Gentle Grounding Stretch and Meditation – Yin Yoga**

Register: <https://bit.ly/ucuyinyoga>

This yoga class will focus on floor based poses to ease tension from the day. The class is 45 minutes and will begin and end with seated meditation. Have some pillows and blankets handy.

September 23 • 7:00-8:30 PM

#### **Open Page Writing: Hospitality that Bridges Social Distancing**

Register: <https://bit.ly/ophospitality>

Hospitality, Henri Nouwen said, creates emptiness that is friendly, "a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy." In this time of required social distancing and in our polarized landscape often fenced off by unbending opinions, how can the practice of hospitality create free and open space where we might meet one another and become friends? Open Page writing sessions, led by associate minister Karen Hering, are open to writers and nonwriters as an invitation to engage writing as a spiritual practice and a tool for healing and social action.

September 30 • 7:00-8:30 PM

#### **Creating Better Government**

Register: <https://bit.ly/bettergovernment>

Unitarian Universalists are frequently advocating for social change, but like most Americans we find that our government can be unresponsive. But why? What is it about our political system that allows elected representatives to ignore "the will of the people?" Using the incisive 2017 analysis of Michael Porter and Katherine Gehl (*Why Competition in the Politics Industry is Failing America*), Chico Hathaway will lead an exploration of the causes of the problem, and what can be done about it.

#### **Queer Community at Unity**

Register: <https://bit.ly/ucunqueer>

Come help finalize plans for our LGBTQA virtual church year. We will meet together and then break into small groups for more personal conversation exploring the concept of what it is to be a welcoming church community. We will then rejoin as a large group to discuss hospitality and community. Our goal is to collectively help make Unity Church a more welcoming place for people of all genders and orientations.

## Masked Cairns and Teaming Up for Anti-racism

Shelley Butler, Unity Library and Bookstall Team

So, I was walking with a friend down at Hidden Falls this summer and came across some rock cairns. Looking closer, we saw that one had a blue paper surgical mask attached to its "face." I couldn't help remembering all the cairns I've seen over many years and how less than a year ago, I wouldn't have known what that masked cairn meant. A sign of our recent facts of existence (synonym for "new reality"). What new things have emerged for you?

Will there be a **Cairns Vol 12, 2020**? We editors and our journal designer are here and ready to go. We rather think it's more important this year than ever before to put out an issue that allows Unity folk to stay in touch with Unity folk. But we can't do it alone. If you submit, we'll publish, and the congregation will be enriched. More information is on the church website or contact us with questions (we like mail) at [cairns@unityunitarian.org](mailto:cairns@unityunitarian.org). **Final deadline: September 28, 2020.**

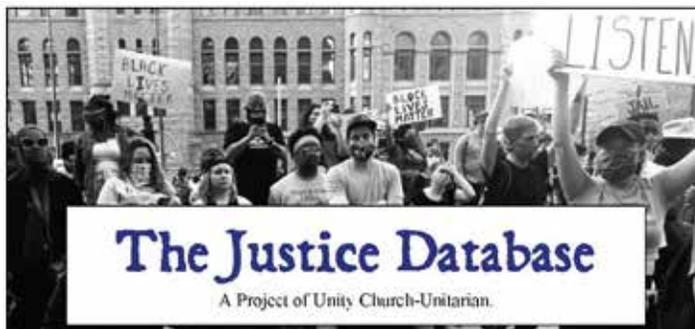
### One of Our Next Right Actions

As a "next right action," the Racial and Restorative Justice Team asked the Library and Bookstall Team to team up to search for, vet, and organize resources related to anti-racism, defunding/reforming police, legislation around policing, etc. In trying to make sense of it all, we decided to create a one-stop location for information about and links to books, articles, news, podcasts, films, events, organizations, and more. The Unity Justice Database is that one-stop location. Find the link to the database on the BCST blog page or access it here: <https://bit.ly/UnityJusticeDatabase>.

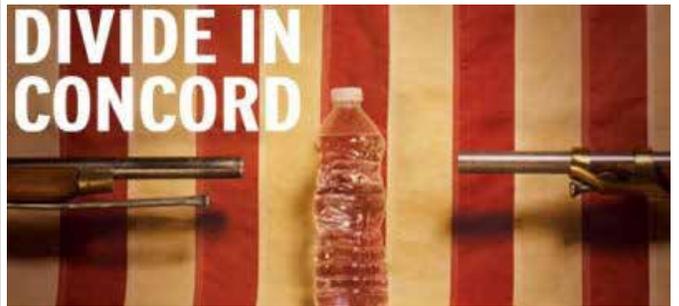
If you know of a good resource that is not already in the database, please do request that we add it. A database like this is a dynamic thing only made better by input from knowledgeable people like you all. To request an addition, use the form found here: <https://bit.ly/addaresource>.

### A Time to Learn: Teaming Up to Learn About Anti-racism

If you are looking to take a next right action by looking more deeply into white privilege and how you can be anti-racist, please come on September 2 to learn more. The Library and Bookstall Team is focusing efforts now on anti-racism resources. See the description on the Wellspring Wednesday page (10)



## Sustainable Living Team Film Series



*Divide in Concord* (2014)

Friday, September 4 • Discussion at 8:00 p.m.

Register: <https://bit.ly/divideinconcorddiscussion>

*Please watch this documentary (available on iTunes) and then join the online discussion, facilitated by the Sustainable Living Team, on September 4.*

A grassroots revolution against bottled water begins with a conversation between Jean Hill and her grandson. Who has power in Concord, MA? How do they wield it? How would you respond?

## Racial Justice Movie Night



*American Son* (2019)

Friday September 11 • Discussion at 7:00 p.m.

Register: <http://bit.ly/rjmoviediscussion>

*Please watch this 2019 docudrama (available on Netflix) and then join the online discussion, facilitated by Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs, on September 11.*

Based on the Broadway play, *American Son* follows Kerry Washington and Steven Pasquale as an estranged couple whose son goes missing. The couple spends the night at a Miami police station in search of answers about their missing son, Jamel. With themes of police brutality and unconscious bias, *American Son* showcases the treatment of the families of victims and the system's failure to aid Black families in the aftermath of a murder.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## News from Unity's Sustainable Living Team

Anna Newton, Sustainable Living Team

**How would you react if you suddenly discovered an endangered species in your front yard?** When Unity Church member Kathy Sidle found rusty patched bumble bees on wildflowers in her yard, it launched this shy scientist on a campaign to teach others about the habits of these gentle and native bumble bees. She had already turned her East Side St. Paul yard into a native plant haven for birds and bees, now she teaches others to do the same. She speaks of the need for changing how we manage gardens, leaving leaf litter and small dead branches in place as nest sites. She has spent countless hours inventorying bumble bees across Ramsey County, including at Unity Church. Thanks to Kathy and church volunteers, the children's garden now hosts a **Pollinator Demonstration Garden** along its north and east sides. This is a lovely space in which to rest and recharge, and it has already attracted lots of bees, butterflies and goldfinches. A self-guided tour is available now!



Your Sustainable Living Team has been busy since the Gather for the Earth (GFE) event in February.

**Your Sustainable Living Team has been busy since the Gather for the Earth (GFE) event in February.**

- We have reviewed participant responses and organized them into the GFE Outcomes and Strategies document [available online at <https://bit.ly/gfteresults>]. Look for announcements in November to assemble in teams and make these dreams, of environment and climate justice and sustainability, real.
- The children's garden continues to supply healthy food to nearby food shelves.
- A pollinator garden now surrounds the children's garden. Many thanks to church families and individuals who help weekly!
- We have begun an audit of church building and maintenance practices, celebrating our substantial achievements while also identifying areas for improvement. Unity is applying for a BizRecycling grant to improve operations.
- Fall programming will be dedicated to environment and climate justice and sustainability, including getting out the vote.

### Friday Film Series Discussion: *Divide in Concord*

Friday, September 4 • Discussion at 8:00 p.m.

Register: <https://bit.ly/divideinconcorddiscussion>

A grassroots revolution against bottled water begins with a conversation between Jean Hill and her grandson. Who has power in Concord, MA? How do they wield it? How would *you* respond?

Unfortunately, we are unable to stream this film. We encourage participants to view it ahead of the discussion (runtime 82 min.) It is available for \$3.99 from iTunes (<https://bit.ly/appledivideinconcord>). Watch the movie and then join the discussion (via Zoom) on September 4.

### Wellspring Wednesday: Getting Out the Vote in a Time of Divisive Politics

September 9 • 7:00-8:30 p.m. • Register: <https://bit.ly/ucugotv>

Sustainable Living Team members and friends will speak to the importance of voting and present tools you need to get registered, and vote in person, by mail or absentee, and to help your friends and neighbors to do it, too.

### Team Meetings

The SLT meets via Zoom every other week (September 6 and 20), at 11:30 a.m. Get involved! To join team meetings or help with gardens or projects, contact us at [unitysustainabilityteam@gmail.com](mailto:unitysustainabilityteam@gmail.com).

## Obama School Outreach Team Update

Nancy Heege, Obama School Outreach Ministry Team

Have you been moved and touched by all you've learned about problems in our society since the death of George Floyd? Are you looking for ways to join other Unity Church members, led by Unity's Beloved Community Staff Team, in Committing to Our Next Right Action? Then we invite you to consider joining those who volunteer at Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary School. Our work with the school offers us the chance to live out our deepest values while making a real difference in the world. It provides us an opportunity to deepen our commitments to the future by serving the current needs of children in our neighborhood school. We are people who are finding ways to grow spiritually as we take effective action at the local level.

By the time you read this newsletter, our team will have met with the principal of Obama School, to hear how classes will be conducted this fall and what the anticipated needs of the scholars and teachers are. Last spring, the pandemic shut down our in-person efforts. Now we'll be looking for ways to continue the support for which the school has come to rely upon. Keep reading the church's newsletter and updates to see how you can join us in making a difference!

## Donations Needed

Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf

Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf is currently in need of non-perishable food donations as well as shampoo, toilet paper, and small bottles of dish soap. Donations should be delivered to the front desk at the food shelf: 270 North Kent Street, St. Paul, 55102.

# ONLINE FELLOWSHIP

## Community Outreach

### Fostering Connections Within, Among, and Beyond

If you've been looking for a way to stay connected to others in the congregation and to be involved in the larger community in these challenging times, Unity's Community Outreach Ministry Teams can be a good place to start. Whether you're interested in volunteering, organizing and advocacy, or learning, these teams offer many different opportunities.

Each team has a focus (sustainability, racial justice, affordable housing, etc.) and partners with one or more organization in the community to engage education, service, and advocacy within the context of our spiritual development and lives.

To get connected, contact Rev. Karen Hering at [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org).

## Church Calendar

All virtual church programming can be found on our calendar at [www.unityunitarian.org/calendar1.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/calendar1.html).

## Flowers for Worship

If you would like to provide flowers for Sunday worship, contact Martha Tilton at 651-228-1456 x105 or [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org).

## Social Media

### Follow Unity Church!

#### Facebook

[www.facebook.com/unityunitarian](http://www.facebook.com/unityunitarian)

#### YouTube

[youtube.com/c/unitychurchunitarian](http://youtube.com/c/unitychurchunitarian)

#### Instagram

[www.instagram.com/unityunitarian](http://www.instagram.com/unityunitarian)

#### Twitter

<https://twitter.com/UnityUnitarian>

## Online Group Meetings

*The following groups have committed to meeting online while our building remains closed.*

**Afterthoughts** offers time to discuss the service. Contact Paul Gade, 651-253-1493

**Caregivers Group:** An informal support group for caregivers. Meets on the third Thursday of the month from noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Children's Choir:** For youth in grades 1-5. Contact choir director Kathleen Radspinner, [kathleenr395@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenr395@gmail.com)

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

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

**Kung Fu:** This 60 minute practice strengthens the body, calms the mind, and lifts the spirit. Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Contact Barney Kujawski, [barney.kujawski@gmail.com](mailto:barney.kujawski@gmail.com)

**Living With Grief Group:** A group for people living with grief and loss. Meets on the third Tuesday of the month, from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs, [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Men's Breakfast Group** meets on Saturday mornings at 8:30 a.m. Contact Tom Zell, [tomzell@me.com](mailto:tomzell@me.com)

**Men's Conversation Group** meets September 7 and 21, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., to discuss a wide range of topics. Contact Terry McDanel, [tmcdanel@gmail.com](mailto:tmcdanel@gmail.com)

**Men's Retirement Group:** Monday, September 14 and 28, 1:00-3:00 p.m., and informally for coffee on Wednesdays, 10:00-11:00 a.m. Contact Tom Zell, [tomzell@me.com](mailto:tomzell@me.com)

**Music Ministry:** Children's Choir, Unity Choir, Unity Singers, Women's Ensemble, and Thresholds Choir are all meeting and singing virtually. Contact Ahmed Anzaldúa, [ahmed@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ahmed@unityunitarian.org).

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

**Recovery from White Conditioning:** Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Contact Dayna Kennedy, [daynamelissa@icloud.com](mailto:daynamelissa@icloud.com)

**Single Parenthood Support Group:** A single parents group building community together. Meets every other Wednesday, September 2, 16, and 30, from 7:00-8:00 p.m. Contact Laura Park, [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org)

**Sustainable Living Team:** Meets every other Sunday (September 6 and 20), from 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Contact the team, [unitysustainabilityteam@gmail.com](mailto:unitysustainabilityteam@gmail.com)

**Textile Arts Group** meets every other Wednesday, September 2, 16, and 30, from 7:15-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc. Contact Johanna Stammeier-Toole, [johanna21e@gmail.com](mailto:johanna21e@gmail.com)

**Unity Book Club:** Second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne, [jack.hawthorne@centurylink.net](mailto:jack.hawthorne@centurylink.net)

September 8: *Safe from the Sea* by Peter Geye

October 13: *The Happiness Hypothesis* by Jonathan Haidt

November 10: *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

**Women In Retirement:** Meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Laura Park, [laura@unityunitarian.org](mailto:laura@unityunitarian.org)

**Young Adult Group (ages 18-25):** Watch for details about meetings. To join the YA email list, please email [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org).

# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH



## Pitter-pattering Questions

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

**Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation**

The celebrated philosopher Jacques Derrida suggested something more radical when he asked “Is not hospitality an interruption of the self?” Does not absolute hospitality require that I surrender security, control, and welcome the arrival of

what overturns the sovereignty of the self? Does not hospitality precede property? I think of a Buddhist nun who shared this from her retreat:

*Something was troubling me, and I went to seek guidance of the monk leading our retreat. We sat down in the garden, under the full moon. He looked for a moment at the moon, then folded his robes under and assumed the lotus position. He closed his eyes and said, "Now I am ready to listen." I must have talked for over an hour, and when he opened his eyes, he said, "I understand what you are saying."*

*She concluded, "When someone listens like that, your life is up for grabs."*

When was the last time someone attended to your life with such radical and disciplined hospitality that your life felt up for grabs? That you were welcomed out from behind gated lives and made available to be recruited by a great, wild mystery waiting to carry you away? When was the sovereign self overthrown by such unqualified hospitality that your life was up for grabs?

Children exemplify lives that are continuously (and indiscriminately) up for grabs, irresistibly drawn to the immediacy and intimacy of each moment, beckoned by its intensity like bears to honey. And if we are honest, isn't this what overwhelms us as grownups: their constantly shifting, mercurial, erratic selves that have little in common with our adult longing to exist more reliably in the long stretch of identity? Watch the *sacramental* chemistry of children playing together, mutually absorbing and becoming for one another the outward signs of each other's inner reality. Educational theorists like Robert Coles and Edward Robinson have researched the rich *inner life* of children and its essential authority for their learning and growth. Contrastingly, my suspicion is that we grownups would rather put our faith in the powers of knowledge, lesson plans, and pedagogy than trust in the capacity of our own inner spiritual lives. Far easier to simply import spirituality into pedagogy — a moment of Quaker silence here and Buddhist breathing there in the lesson plan — than to consider that our spirituality *is* our pedagogy. Far easier to default to more “legitimate” forms of spirituality — call it religion, psychology, or art — than staying close to that great, wild mystery that keeps our spiritual attentiveness vibrant and luminous.

Without idealizing one or the other, or segregating one from the other, I wonder what might happen if we risked the human heart above pedagogy? That as spiritual guides of children, what we really offer them is a glimpse of that great, wild mystery that has moved in with us. And when our children feel their lives up for grabs by all that they are encountering in our far-fetched world, what will grab hold of them and never let go is a sacred, relentless love made known in our hospitality.

And so we begin again in love, with gratitude for teachers who risk the interruptions of love in which our children's lives are wondrously up for grabs.

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

## 2020-21 R.E. Enrollment

As R.E. staff and members of the Religious Education Ministry Team look to the coming church year, we continue to follow the guidance from the State of Minnesota and leaders in education about distance learning and hybrid models. Even as the reopening of the church building and in-person programming will not be likely until 2021/second semester, we will continue to monitor best practices and emerging options. As you complete your enrollment online, a few notes and reminders:

- Zoom classes and online learning is greatly helped by established relationships, and so we ask children and teachers to stay with their classes/roles from last year as much as possible.
- As older children have engaged with Zoom classes more meaningfully than younger children, first and second graders may choose to enroll in Spirit Play for its asynchronous, pre-recorded lessons; then return to Rotations classes whenever in-person programming resumes.
- Your generous financial support and pledges continue to support substantial investments made toward online technology, including live streaming and dedicated staffing. We are also very aware of changes in financial conditions for many in our congregation. Please let us know of scholarship needs so that every child is enrolled.
- Please use the comment box in the online form for questions/comments or email [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org).
- Please take time to carefully complete the online enrollment, and we will follow up to confirm classes, roles, and schedule for teacher orientation.

**Enrollment link:** <https://bit.ly/ucuenrollment2021>.

# MUSIC MINISTRY



## Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa Director of Music Ministries

Christopher Small, influential music educator and musicologist, coined the term “musicking” in his book of the same title. He argues that music is not a noun but, rather, a verb. According to Small:

*To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing. We might at times even extend its meaning to what the person is doing who takes the tickets at the door or the hefty men who shift the piano and the drums or the roadies who set up the instruments and carry out the sound checks or the cleaners who clean up after everyone else has gone.*

Right now it is not safe to gather our choirs in person. Nevertheless, our music ministry continues. As we share videos of musical performances with each other, sing on Zoom, and wrangle with recording and streaming technology, it is clear that a pandemic and civil unrest cannot stop us from musicking. To quote the conductor Robert Shaw: “In this time of political, economic and personal disintegration, music is not a luxury, it is a necessity; not simply because it is therapeutic, nor because it is the universal language, but because it is the persistent focus of (our) intelligence, aspiration and good will.”

Music is relationship. Music connects people in the same room, on separate ends of a Zoom call, or people that are centuries and continents apart. To music is to behold and to navigate the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Small expresses this concept better than I ever could:

*The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organized sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance; and they model, or stand as metaphor for, ideal relationships as the participants in the performance imagine them to be: relationships between person and person, between individual and society, between humanity and the natural world and even perhaps the supernatural world.*

All of Unity’s choirs have continued to meet regularly online through the summer, and will continue to do so until it is safe to again meet in person. We are singing hymns, having interesting conversations, learning about music theory and singing technique, singing new songs, attempting recording projects, and meeting choirs from other parts of the country. We are musicking. Those of you in need of relationship and connection, especially during this current period of physical isolation, are welcome to join us!

## Sing with a Unity Choir

Unity’s choirs are meeting online every week! In addition to learning new music, we are also meeting to sing familiar songs and maintain our connection to each other and to the church. All newcomers are welcome and encouraged to take part! If you are interested, contact Ahmed at [ahmed@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ahmed@unityunitarian.org).

**Children’s Choir** is for youth in grades 1-5. Contact children’s choir director Kathleen Radspinner, [kathleenr395@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenr395@gmail.com)

**Unity Choir** is our non-auditioned ensemble of 60 to 75 voices. This singing community is the strong component on which our music program is built.

**Unity Singers** is Unity’s auditioned, a cappella chamber choir.

**Women’s Ensemble** is a continually growing and evolving group with members bringing tremendous creative energy, commitment, and joy!

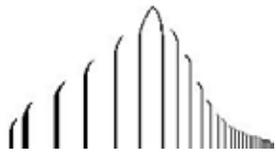
Unity Church houses the Twin Cities chapter of **Threshold Choir**, an ensemble that sings for those at the thresholds of life. Small groups of singers bring music to the bedside of people as they die or endure illness or other suffering.

## A Call for Music

Given the depth of musical talent in this congregation, Ahmed is extending an invitation to individuals and families to share their music making. Please send a video of your singing, playing a musical instrument, or doing anything else that’s musical! The only request is that this is a video of you or your family making music — please do not send prerecorded music made by someone else. So, turn on your phone camera, record yourself singing a song or playing something, and send it to Ahmed at [ahmed@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ahmed@unityunitarian.org).

## Unity Children’s Choir

The Unity Children’s Choir is for youth in grades 1-5 and is meeting virtually with choir director Kathleen Radspinner. If you have a child that might be interested in musicking with the choir, please contact Kathleen at [kathleenr395@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenr395@gmail.com).



# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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JACKIE SMITH, CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REV. JANNE ELLER-ISAACS, CO-MINISTER  
REV. ROB ELLER-ISAACS, CO-MINISTER  
REV. KP HONG, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
BARBARA HUBBARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

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**TIME SENSITIVE  
MATERIAL**

## ONE OF OUR NEXT RIGHT ACTIONS

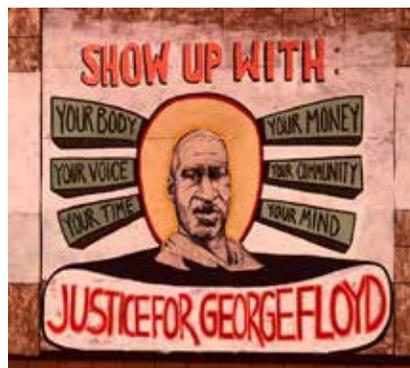
### Equity and Justice 7-Part Series

Hosted by  
Unity Church and  
Team Dynamics

Tuesdays  
6:30 – 8:30 PM

September 15 – October 27, 2020

More information on page 9.



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