

Vocation

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.

Vocation is that place “where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need” Frederick Buechner once said. From the same Latin root as the word voice, vocation refers to that which calls us, and so it requires that we listen. Attentively. Like holding an ear open while we sleep, listening for a child’s cries in the middle of the night. Or, like pressing a hand to another’s chest to feel the quiet heartbeat there. Or, like listening to the silence and asking, whose voices are missing — and why? And how might we learn what they are saying?

The problem is, as we try to name our own deep gladness and the world’s deep need, discerning the work we were made to do, it can be hard to separate the voice of our call from a lot of other, louder voices telling us what we should do. The voice of the marketplace telling us how to make a living. The voice of ego telling us what work is worthy of our effort and our name. The voice of friends and family telling us what work is appropriate or desirable. And the voice of practicality. How do we hear the “still, small voice within” amidst the clamor of all these other voices?

The prophet Elijah, in a story from the Bible’s older testament, faced this same question as he fled into the wilderness. All of the other prophets of his day had been killed. Elijah was fleeing for his life and hiding in a cave when God told him to go stand on the mountain to be in God’s presence. When Elijah did, the story tells us, God passed by, and a great wind tore through the mountains, breaking the rocks into

pieces; and after the wind, came an earthquake; and after the earthquake, a fire. But God, we are told, was not in the wind or the earthquake or the fire. After the fire, came the still, small voice within (what some translations call “the sound of sheer silence”), and from it Elijah learned the truth of his own heart and the truth of his calling. It is the first biblical reference to an authoritative inner truth.

In the tumultuous sounds of our own times — of fires and violence, of earthquakes and winds, and so much more — how do we hear the sacred truths spoken by the still, small voice within? How do we find or make an opening in time and a stillness where we can ask ourselves, what is it that I am meant to do? Who am I, and, perhaps more importantly, whose am I? Where does my gladness meet the world’s great needs? Or, as the poet William Stafford says, what is it that “the world is trying to be”? And how can I participate?

We are just beginning our congregation’s interim year — a period between long-term called senior ministers — while also (we hope) returning to the church building for in-person worship and programming. We come together bearing many questions about our congregational vocation. Asking ourselves and one another, what is our congregation called to do? Who are we now, and whose are we? Has that changed? Where does our gladness as a congregation meet the wider needs of the community around us? What is the world trying to be, and how can we participate?

In all the noise and turmoil around us, may our worship and our many other spiritual practices, shared and solitary, help us find our way to the sound of sheer silence. May our congregational life and teachings invite us into a stillness that might reveal who we are now — and what we are called to do and to be in the world around us.

By Karen Hering

*on behalf of this month’s theme team:
Andrea Anastos, Ahmed Anzaldúa,
Drew Danielson, Tom Duke,
Ray Hommeyer, KP Hong, Kathy Hurt,
Shay MacKay and Laura Park (and
adapted from an earlier commUNITY
reflection by Karen Hering).*

Vocation Theme Resources

BOOKS

Let Your Life Speak by Parker Palmer, 1999.

The Overstory novel by Richard Powers, 2019.

Giraffes Can’t Dance illustrated children’s book by Giles Andreae, 2012.

MOVIES

Searching for Bobby Fischer, 1993 drama

Billy Elliot, 2000 comedy-drama.

Just Words



"I dwell in possibility"

— Emily Dickinson

Greetings, members and friends of Unity Church! I am happy to finally be relocated to Saint Paul, moved into the church office, and beginning my year of work with you. That said, an interim period in a congregation is seldom eagerly anticipated, so I understand if you may be feeling less eagerness about the coming year (or no eagerness at all). Transitions of any sort are often difficult for us; transitions in a church, the place we look to for a kind of stability to keep us grounded, a permanence when so much of our experience is transient, can be even more difficult as they seem to take away a constancy we counted on.

Yet I hope we might look towards the coming year, to paraphrase Dickinson, as a time when we collectively dwell in possibility. A key focus for an interim period is experimentation, trying out new ways of doing church, not simply for the sake of change but to discover what best suits the church you want to become when you welcome your next settled minister. In the course of that experimentation, no doubt we will find many of the traditions at Unity still meaningful, still expressive of the particular identity of this congregation. Those traditions will stay, now dearer than ever, as elements of the history of the church that continue into the future. Other traditions will seem no longer aligned with the church Unity is today or intends to grow towards in years to come; those traditions we will set aside lovingly, grateful for what they once meant to us. And through all this sorting and keeping and letting go, guided by your Ends, exploring possibilities, together we will clarify how you will prepare yourselves to live into your dreams for the church under new ministerial leadership.

In the wake of the pandemic and all the adaptations it required, changes are already underway in the church, some easy to accept, some not at all welcome. The uncertainties injected into our lives and our plans for the church year by the rising Delta variant can make it seem as though possibilities are disappearing, not emerging. Yet our engagements with one another in and beyond the church offer us constant openings for creativity, no matter the circumstances in which we find ourselves. We journey together, dwelling in possibility.

In faith, hope, and love,
Kathy Hurt

The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Georgia Lindeke

September 19, 1926 - July 21, 2021

Don Crannell

March 10, 1928 - July 24, 2021

Marv Spears

August 6, 1932 - August 5, 2021

In Celebration

Miles Christopher Lofgren born one more redeemer, August 6, 2021, to parents Chris and Kristina Lofgren, and siblings Charlie, Mae, and Luke.

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. You may also contact Karen Hering, Associate Minister, by email to karen@unityunitarian.org.

Ongoing Pastoral Care Groups

Families Living with Mental Health Challenges: A support group for families living with mental health challenges.

Caregivers Group: Are you a part-time or full-time caretaker of loved ones in your life? Do you need support in order to sustain the care you are giving? Join Pastoral Care Team member Cynthia Orange for an informal support group for caregivers.

Living With Grief Group: A group for people living with grief and loss. All are welcome to come to discuss issues related to the grieving process.

Contact Rev. Karen Hering if you would like to participate in one of these groups.

Meal Train

Can you help with home-delivered meals?

We've all been there: new baby, sick family member, job exhaustion! Several members of our community need support with meals made and delivered with love.

Can you help:

- prepare and deliver a meal?
- prepare a meal for delivery by others?
- deliver meals made by others?
- coordinate a Meal Train for one household?

If so, please email Patt Kelly at pkelly@umn.edu. An intuitive online program makes it easy, and guidance to get you started will be provided.

SUNDAY SERVICES AND OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Sunday Services

Beginning Sunday, September 12, we will move to two in-person services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. We are asking everyone to mask the entire time they are in the building and to sign in as they enter, in case we need to contact trace for Covid-19 illness. The 9:00 a.m. service will be offered via livestream.

September 5: *Back Pay for Stolen Labor*

Livestream only at 10:00 a.m.: <https://youtu.be/EwKp7Kc7Hc0>

An admission that back pay is due for previous exploitation has been implicit in the Labor Day idea ever since this holiday was created, more than 140 years ago, in response to demands from the all-white, all-male Knights of Labor. Since then, Black Americans and our other siblings of color have been systematically deprived of most of the equalizing benefits flowing from collective bargaining. The bold and allegedly radical idea of broad and expansive racial reparation fits perfectly with the Labor Day proposition. It's also not new, but deeply rooted in the world's religious traditions, including Judeo-Christian. Worship leaders Dane Smith and Merrill Aldrich will review how our faith compels us to reparation and they will suggest specific ways we can push for equity in our own vocations and local communities.

September 12: *Down to the River to Pray*

In-person at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Livestream at 9:00 a.m. only: https://youtu.be/KK-9ZLa_PJA

Our annual homecoming service with the Merging of the Waters, this Sunday celebrates our return to a reopened building, our return as a community to worship together more fully — and also notes all that has changed since we last gathered. This is a Family Sunday. Be sure to bring water from your summer adventures for our merging of waters ritual. Please watch for more details about the opportunities to bring water for merging, even if you do not attend the service in person.

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.

September 19: *Lost*

In-person at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Livestream at 9:00 a.m. only: https://youtu.be/yUmXOIfGN_0

The monthly theme of vocation invites reflection on what it means to be called, as an experience of being called often ushers one into a vocation. As we embark on a transitional year, how do we — as a church, as individuals emerging from the pandemic time, as people deepening our antiracist work, as a congregation in search of its next settled minister — understand our calling now: is it the same as it was a year or two or twenty years ago, is it changed, is it gone while we await a new calling? Rev. Kathy Hurt, Ahmed Anzaldúa, and worship associate Rebecca Flood lift up these questions which we may have to live with before finding answers.

September 26: *The Story We Find Ourselves In*

In-person at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Livestream at 9:00 a.m. only: <https://youtu.be/xB45S-aeEps>

While each of us does the work of discerning a personal call to our own path, we are also ever part of a community of some kind that does the work of discerning a collective call. But what if I hear us being called to some path, while you hear us called to another path? Understanding a collective call is not a question simply answered by voting and endorsed by a majority. Rev. Kathy Hurt, Rev. Shay MacKay, and Ahmed Anzaldúa explore the voices calling us as a community, calls that often sound more like a challenge than an invitation.

Offering Recipients

Each Sunday, thirty percent of the offering supports Unity's Community Outreach Ministry and seventy percent is given to a chosen community non-profit. Donate: bit.ly/sundayoffering

September 5: Altrusa International of St. Paul works for the well-being of international families struggling to place roots in St. Paul. Their primary focus is childhood literacy and adult education. This collection will provide food support and housing assistance for families involved in workforce training. Unity Church member Mary Anderson is a volunteer with Altrusa.

September 12: Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light (MNIPL) Line 3 Opposition brings leadership and guidance to Minnesota's faith communities, mobilizing them to promote environmentally sound energy policies. If completed, Line 3 would cross hundreds of waterways in Minnesota and pass across hundreds of miles of treaty-protected land which Native communities depend upon. Unity's Act for the Earth Team partners with MNIPL.

September 19: Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop fosters literacy, community, and devotion to art inside Minnesota correctional institutions. As part of this deeply rehabilitative process, students tell their own stories and challenge stereotypes about incarcerated populations. During the pandemic, all in-person programming was suspended. This collection will support the resumption of 25 in-person classes for the fall of 2021.

September 26: Obama Elementary School serves children in grades pre-K through five. School staff works tirelessly to lead and inspire all scholars to realize their best academic and social selves. The Obama School Sunshine Fund supports both staff and scholars by hiring specialized staff, providing field trips, and honoring staff through recognition events. Unity's Obama School Outreach Team partners with Obama staff and coordinates over 50 church volunteers who serve the school each year.



Returning the Gift of Joy

Mary Hernandez, Trustee

As I prepared to leave for our annual summer camping trip a few weeks ago, a mix of emotions was washing through me. I felt excitement and joyful anticipation at the prospect of a week in the woods, uninterrupted time with my

family and a much-needed break from work, email, media, and the general busyness of life. I also felt a looming sense of doom with news trickling in about the Delta variant and pandemic progress sliding backwards to a place we've been working so hard to leave in the past. Drought and global warming were causing smoke-filled skies due to fires burning in our beloved Boundary Waters, and I worried about my oldest child, who was on the adventure of a lifetime in those beloved Boundary Waters.

However, a week away, mostly disconnected from the media, was truly wonderful. I came back refreshed, feeling reconnected to myself, my family, and mother earth. I recognize what a privilege it is to be able to take a break. I also feel deeply how necessary it is to slow down, to reconnect, to rest and rejuvenate. In doing so, I feel more free to seek and live into joy and to have the energy required to continue showing up and leaning into the important and challenging work in front of me.

Coming back was harder than I thought it would be. Much anticipated time with friends and community is looking less likely, and I wonder how this is going to impact us here at Unity Church. There is much for us to do. We are welcoming our new interim minister, continuing the search for our new settled minister(s), figuring out how to move forward as a congregation amidst new threats from Covid-19, continuing to keep antiracism at the forefront of our engaging and ongoing Intercultural Development Inventory work, and so much more. All of this is so important and requires work from all of us.

This quote from Robin Wall Kimmerer, in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, sums up quite succinctly where my head is at with all this.

Even a wounded world is feeding us. Even a wounded world holds us, giving us moments of wonder and joy. I choose joy over despair. Not because I have my head in the sand, but because joy is what the Earth gives me daily and I must return the gift.

May we all allow the world to feed us, and may we all work hard to return the gift.

Staying Connected at Unity Church

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 or 651-228-1456 x105.

Follow Unity Church on Social Media

Facebook: www.facebook.com/unityunitarian

YouTube: youtube.com/c/unitychurchunitarian

Instagram: www.instagram.com/unityunitarian

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UnityUnitarian>

Church Calendar

All church programming can be found on our calendar at www.unityunitarian.org/calendar.html.

COVID-19 UPDATE: BUILDING, WORSHIP, PROGRAMMING

Here is the church, and here is the steeple. Open the doors and see all the people?

Unity Church Executive Team

We continue with our plans to return to in-person worship on September 12, 2021, but in this time of uncertainty we find ourselves asking, will the people return? The Executive Team, in consultation with staff, continues to update and coordinate Unity's protocols with guidelines from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control. We know that no setting will be entirely risk-free from Covid-19, and so we are balancing the risks and making decisions in the best interest of all, especially those most impacted by the disease. Now that the Pfizer vaccine is fully approved, we strongly encourage everyone who is eligible to be vaccinated.

Masking

- Currently, the building is open to small group gatherings, with everyone — vaccinated and unvaccinated — masking in designated public indoor spaces. We made the decision on July 31 to return to masking in response to the recommendations made by the CDC, given the prevailing Delta variant and its spread in areas of “substantial” or “high” transmission.

Returning to In-person Worship

- We are planning to return to in-person worship on September 12, with our Merging of Waters service. Beginning that day, we will move to two services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. There will be no 4:30 service. These services are both the same, and September 12 is a “Family Sunday,” when families worship together in the Sanctuary. We are asking everyone to mask the entire time they are in the building and to sign in as they enter, in the event we need to contact trace for Covid-19 illness.
- We will livestream the 9:00 a.m. service only, making it available afterwards for viewing at your convenience.

Food Ministry

- Until such time when the church mask mandate is lifted, there will be no food ministry at church. Yes, that means no donuts and no Wellspring Wednesday dinners. We are exploring the possibility of an open-air tent in the green space, where we could have small gatherings and receptions.

Religious Education

- Religious Education classes for children and youth will begin again on September 19 with in-person learning. We are following recommendations from state and local authorities, including our public school system, and the overall weight of available evidence informs our decision. We know that our youngest children will not yet be vaccinated and depending on enrollment, some programs may be offered online. All volunteers will be vaccinated, masking and quarantine practices will parallel those of Saint Paul Public Schools, and ventilation improvements will remain important preventive strategies for RE programs and childcare. We may also designate a separate exterior entrance (directly connecting to Ames Chapel and lower level) for RE volunteers, children and youth.

Staff and Volunteers

- All staff are now fully vaccinated, and volunteers in specific areas of ministry will be required to be vaccinated for in-person ministry, including Religious Education volunteers, worship leaders, welcome teams and choir members.

Building Ventilation

- We have consulted with experts and made adjustments to our heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems to maximize ventilation and safety.

Wellspring Wednesday

- We will resume Wellspring Wednesday evening programming with mostly online offerings (7:00-8:30 p.m.) on September 8 (see listing on page 10). Chapel services will return as in-person multi-generational worship in the Ames Chapel at 6:00 p.m. each Wednesday starting September 15. There will be in-person OWL (Our Whole Lives) classes on Wednesday evenings.

Music Ministry

- In the area of Music Ministries, our Children's and Youth Choirs will follow the protocols of the Saint Paul Public Schools. Adult choirs will begin to rehearse in September, with vaccinations and masking required for all in-person singers. Zoom rehearsals will continue to be offered for those not vaccinated. Choirs will not be performing in Sunday worship at this time, but we may have individual or small group vocalists providing music in the Sanctuary, in addition to instrumentalists. Congregational singing will be allowed, with masks required for all.

Online Programming

- As we return to in-person programming, reasonable accommodations will be made for those unable to participate in specific programs. Some Zoom-only programs will continue to be offered, as well as limited multi-platform options.

To keep up with Unity's guidelines and opportunities, check our website or sign up for church emails with program information and the monthly newsletter (<https://bit.ly/ucuemail>).

This remains complex and challenging work with many moving parts, and as a faith community, we will make our way with care and compassion for one another leading the way.

MINISTERIAL SEARCH TEAM

News from the Ministerial Search Team

The UUA Settlement Handbook

Lia Rivamonte, on behalf of the Ministerial Search Team: Avi Viswanathan, Betsy Hearn, Mary Baremore, Pauline Eichten, Morgan France-Ramirez, Dan Huelster, Jake Rueter, and Marg Walker

It takes intentionality to help a community move toward a 90% majority vote to call a minister whom the congregation hopes will stay for a number of years. The search process requires the congregation to engage in the emotional process of change and to move toward a new future together.

— The UUA Settlement Handbook

If you happened to read last month's update from the Ministerial Search Team (MST) you will have seen the team's covenant. Our fifth pledge to one another and to you, the congregation, is "to honor and abide by the wisdom of The Settlement Handbook." Unless you are yourself a UU minister or extremely well versed in the workings of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), the central organization for the Unitarian Universalist religious movement in the United States, you may have wondered: What is it? Who wrote it? Why do we need it?

The Settlement Handbook (www.uua.org/files/pdf/s/settlement_handbook.pdf) is an exhaustive guide detailing every aspect of the ministerial search process for both congregations and ministers. It was developed by the UUA Transitions Office, regional staff, search committee retreat leaders, compensation consultants, and Beyond Categorical Thinking trainers, and was recently updated in February 2021. It is a manual with clear steps, a timeline, and the collective wisdom of the many congregations and ministers who have participated in this complicated and often anxiety-producing endeavor. We are grateful for the thoughtful work, honest assessments, and many, many hours that have gone into this essential resource.

The wisdom of the handbook is reflected in the quote above. We are forging a new direction together. It is vital that your voice is heard. Please register to participate in one of the many "Listening Sessions" we will be holding in September and October.

More information about the search process and up to date communications from the Ministerial Search Team are available online at www.unityunitarian.org/ministerial-transition.html.

Listening Sessions

with the Ministerial Search Team

The Ministerial Search Team is holding a series of Listening Sessions to gather responses to important questions regarding the search for our next settled minister. Each session will be one and a half hours long, with participants dividing into small groups in order that everyone's voice is heard. This is a chance to have a conversation with others in our community about our future.



Listening Sessions via Zoom (online)

- Tuesday, September 21 • 1:00-2:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, September 22 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.
- Sunday, September 26 • 1:00-2:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, September 29 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Listening Session in the Sanctuary (in person)

- Wednesday October 6 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Register for a Listening Session

www.unityunitarian.org/listening-sessions.html

Contact the Ministerial Search Team

mst@unityunitarian.org

The Superpower of Identity

Angela Wilcox, Beloved Community Staff Team

When I was fourteen, my mother insisted that I take an “Assertiveness Training” course offered by my high school during J-term and taught by a psychologist who was a family friend. The very thought terrified me, but the great irony was that my inability to assert myself to oppose this idea meant I spent a week of January learning how to do all the things I thought I couldn’t do: make a cold phone call to ask for information; return an item of clothing; and hardest of all, enter a space where I didn’t know a single person. This week was one of the most significant in my education because of what it taught me about being human in community; Dr. Warloski gave me permission to feel uncomfortable and do the thing anyway. Her goal was to help us feel the truth that discomfort would not kill us, and that often, our paralyzing fears dissipated once we stepped over the boundary and realized that we were not alone — not in our fears, but also not in our values, beliefs, and wonder. My high school was parochial in all senses; I felt a suffocating need to get away from the sameness of that world. In college, I was surrounded by smart, curious people from all over the world. United by our academic drive and our willingness to live through Minnesota winters, we were rich in diversity of experiences, opinions, and dreams. We reveled in unveiling the quirky regionalisms that shaped us and the ways we spoke, played, and understood the world. I became aware of parts of my identity that had been hidden from me because they were so ubiquitous back home. In this temporary and carefully curated educational community, we took the time to explore our differences and share our stories. In graduate school, I gravitated toward courses and social groups filled with international students. I married one of them, we traveled the world together, and I embraced the feeling that I had finally

stretched beyond the sameness of my hometown and into the world.

After a decade of marriage and a divorce, what I longed for most was a spiritual home where I belonged — someplace where the values and the people felt familiar. From the first Sunday at Unity Church, everything from the religious education program to the music to the flow of the service made me feel like I was home again. And yet, Unity felt like the church of my future, where I had much in common with others, and could raise my children and myself in this new version of my life.

I worked in a junior high classroom rich with diversity of all kinds — age, race, culture, language, nationality, ability, and more. As I tried to connect to my students authentically across our many differences, I was often uncomfortable, and these youth invited and pushed me into spaces that stretched me even further into discomfort. I knew from experience that discomfort wouldn’t kill me, but I learned that it takes ongoing practice to stretch and remain humble enough to stop focusing on my discomfort and start listening. Unity has helped me build and sustain those essential ongoing practices.

One of my favorite “stretch” experiences has been attending the annual RISE (Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment) conference with some of my Muslim students. During a panel discussion



Angela Wilcox at RISE annual conference.

of professional Muslim women, one of my students pulled me aside with tears in her eyes; she’d never met an adult Muslim woman with a career and didn’t know that could be a possibility for her. I’d been so focused on the idea of helping these young women experience a place with other women like them that it hadn’t occurred to me how enormously diverse this gathering would be and what the power of that diversity might be for my students. Where was I missing that diversity in my own life, in spaces that I thought of as being “just a lot of people like me?”

Here at Unity, we have expressed our longing to be a multicultural spiritual home grounded in racial healing. **What if the way we start is by asking what stories, backgrounds, perspectives, and beliefs we might have missed because so many of us share more obvious identity traits? What if our particular, specific identity is our superpower?** That work, along with cultivating ongoing spiritual practices that help us remain humble and resilient in the face of discomfort, might help us live our way into that longing in unexpected and world-altering ways.



Angela Wilcox has been teaching for over 31 years, is a longtime member of Unity Church, has contributed to our community in a variety of ways,

and is currently serving on the Beloved Community Staff Team.

Learn more about RISE on their website: www.revivingsisterhood.org.

WELCOME NEWCOMERS



Welcome Words

Laura Park, Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality

If you're a newcomer to Unity Church, you're probably wondering what it will mean to re-open for in-person worship on Sunday, September 12. It means you can experience the joy that is our community joining together in reflection, gratitude, and song. It means you can get a deeper sense of the congregation and its commitments. It also means you'll have some practical decisions to make, including whether to attend the 9:00 a.m. or the 11:00 a.m. service, whether to request a nametag, how to visit religious education classes with your children, where to sit in the sanctuary, whether to join people for fellowship and conversation in the Parish Hall after services, and whether to participate in Wellspring Wednesday programming.

I'm here to help you answer these and any other questions about congregational life and the pathways you might explore to know the church better and deepen your spiritual life. Contact me at laura@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110. I look forward to getting to know you!

Welcome New Members

For Lisa Wersal and Louis Asher, their membership to Unity Church is a happy consequence of the pandemic, with Lisa first becoming engaged with the online women's group, and Louis two online men's groups. Lisa also joined Chalice Circles and, most



recently, Lectio Divina. They are especially drawn to the Unity's emphasis on spiritual practice. Louis, a former 3Mer, is an avid stamp collector, and Lisa, a former educator, is a quilter. Look for their projects as part of Unity's October community art exhibit. Lisa has also been a life-long musician and dancer; in fact, Lisa and Louis met on the dance floor over 40 years ago.

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 and be available for ongoing questions and advice. If you have questions, or would like to request a mentor, please email Laura Park, Acting Director of Membership and Hospitality, laura@unityunitarian.org.

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 or 651-228-1456 x110.

Finding Yourself at Unity

Sundays • 10:15-11:15 a.m. • Ames Chapel (In person)

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 & the Liturgical Year; Social Justice & Community Outreach; Membership 101 & Congregational Life, and even an online Building Tour! This month's offerings:

- September 5: No class, Labor Day weekend
- September 12: Social Justice and Community Outreach
- September 19: Worship and the Liturgical Year
- September 26: Building Tour

Weekly church emails include the class topic or email laura@unityunitarian.org to receive weekly reminders.

Committing to Unity

Thursday September 30 • 7:00 p.m.

- *Develop personal practice to help you find and keep your balance.*
- *Develop the skills of intimacy that let you go deep quickly with strangers.*
- *Take the compassion that rises from doing the first two and use it to bless the world.*

This is how Unity Church talks about its expectations of membership. Does the invitation into this ongoing work resonate with you? Are you ready to make the membership commitment? This session, for people ready to become members, explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's need meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church! Let Laura Park (laura@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110) know you're interested in participating or to ask questions. She can also arrange a private signing ceremony.

CHALICE CIRCLES / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Chalice Circles

Register soon for circles beginning in October!



Chalice Circles, set to begin in October, will be open for registration by mid-September, again offering a way to stay connected to fellow Unity Church members and meet new friends while exploring the monthly worship themes more deeply. Now available in either online or in person options, the circles are a great way to experience the spiritual practice of conversation — both speaking and listening from the heart with a small group of 6-10 people. If interest supports it, we will again offer partners and spouses the choice of participating in a couples' circle co-facilitated by another couple. NOTE: All other circles are open to individuals and couples both.

Led by trained facilitators, the circles are specially designed to nurture spiritual growth and meaningful conversation. 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 with a practice, a question, and the theme.

Last year's participants especially valued the circles as a chance to experience community while the church building was closed. Now, participants can choose to join an online circle meeting by Zoom or one that will meet in person at the church (currently wearing masks and following Covid-19 protocols if and as they change). If you haven't experienced a circle before, or if you were not participating while they were meeting online, we hope you might give them a try now.

To join a circle, watch your weekly church emails or www.unityunitarian.org/chalice-circles.html for a registration link and information by mid-September. In early October, you'll hear from your circle facilitator with the date and time of your monthly gathering (in the third or fourth week of the month), your first theme packet, and other helpful information. Don't miss this opportunity for monthly connection with Unity friends, new and longstanding, and an invitation into shared reflection on the times we are in. For information contact Karen Hering at karen@unityunitarian.org or lay coordinator Mike Funck at techwriter61@gmail.com.

Fellowship Group Meetings

Please contact the person listed for information about meeting locations. For more conversation about getting connected at Unity Church, contact Laura Park at laura@unityunitarian.org.

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

Caregivers Group meets on the third Thursday of the month. Contact: Karen Hering, karen@unityunitarian.org

Evergreen Quilters: This quilting group meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month. Contact Peggy Wright, 651-698-2760

Families Living with Mental Health Challenges meets the first Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Contact: Karen Hering, karen@unityunitarian.org

Five Animal Kung Fu meets Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Contact Barney Kujawski, barney.kujawski@gmail.com

Living With Grief Group meets on the third Tuesday of the month. Contact: Karen Hering, karen@unityunitarian.org

Men's Breakfast Group meets monthly on the first Saturday for breakfast in the Parish Hall from 8:30-10:00 a.m. Contact Tom Zell, tomzell@me.com

Men's Coffee Group meets every other Wednesday, September 8 and 22, at 10:00 a.m. for light-hearted conversation. Contact Tom Zell, tomzell@me.com

Men's Conversation Group meets Mondays, September 6 and 20, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., to discuss a wide range of topics. Contact Terry McDanel, tmcdanel@gmail.com

Men's Retirement Circle: Monday, September 13 and 27, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Tom Zell, tomzell@me.com

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 meets Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Contact Dayna Kennedy, daynamelissa@icloud.com

Textile Arts Group meets every other Wednesday, September 1 and 15, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc. Contact Johanna Stammeier-Toole, johanna2le@gmail.com

Unity Book Club meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Contact Jack Hawthorne, jack.hawthorne@centurylink.net. Upcoming discussions include: September 14: *Tender is the Night* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
October 12: *The Disappearing Spoon: And Other True Tales of Madness, Love, and the History of the World from the Periodic Table of the Elements* by Sam Kean

Women In Retirement meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Laura Park, laura@unityunitarian.org

Young Adult Group (ages 18-35): To join the YA email list, please email kp@unityunitarian.org.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday

Wellspring Wednesday at Unity Church has long been a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, worship, spiritual deepening and learning. Although the church building has reopened for programming and, in mid-September, we will resume in-person worship, we are not able to serve food at this time because masking in the building is required. We hope to return to Wellspring Wednesday meals in the future as Covid-19 protocols allow.

In-person multi-generational Wellspring Wednesday chapel will resume on September 15, from 6:00-6:30 p.m., each week in the Ames Chapel. It will be led by Unity's Religious Education staff and will include more music, especially from members.

Youth enrolled in this year's OWL (Our Whole Lives) classes will also meet in person on Wednesday evenings.

Wellspring Wednesday adult programming will continue to be offered online in September, starting September 8, and running from 7:00-8:30 p.m. See the listings on these pages for details. If you haven't yet participated in an online program using Zoom, church staff can help you get started. Unless otherwise noted, you can use the registration link right up until the program starts to participate. Please join us — and invite a friend!



September 8

A Spiritual Practice to Feed Your Soul: Lectio Divina **Led by Shelley Butler**

Online, 7:00-8:30 p.m., register: <https://bit.ly/Lectio21-22>

Following a centuries-old Benedictine spiritual practice of contemplative reading, meet online to share in Lectio Divina. In this invitation to receive the wisdom and gifts of poetry, each session engages the group in hearing a particular poem read aloud multiple times, listening for “what is found there.” Rather than analyzing the poem, group members lift up what they heard and how the poem spoke to them. For those who love or are curious about poetry, this practice is a rich way to receive its gifts in a small group setting.

Starting this month, Lectio Divina will be offered the second Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m.: September 8, October 13, November 10, December 8, 2021; January 12, February 9, March 9, April 13, May 11, 2022. Drop-in attendance is welcome. Register once to attend one or all sessions: <https://bit.ly/Lectio21-22>.

***Risking Light*: a film viewing and discussion of forgiveness** **Presenter: author and forgiveness teacher Mary Hayes Grieco**

Online, 7:00-9:15 p.m., register: <https://bit.ly/ForgiveSept>

Author and forgiveness teacher Mary Hayes Grieco has said, “Forgiveness helps us to clear the debris from the past, and it re-sets us and empowers us to step into the present and the future with a lighter heart and more power for our purposes.” Join Mary online for this invitation to learn about forgiveness as a tool for our times. The program (longer than our usual Wellspring Wednesday offerings) will begin with an online viewing of *Risking Light* (www.riskinglight.com), a powerful film that tells the stories of three people in different countries who discovered that they could forgive the unforgiveable. Presenter Mary Hayes Grieco is the author of *Unconditional Forgiveness*, and the director of The Midwest Institute for Forgiveness Training (www.forgivenessstraining.com). She has been teaching people how to forgive for over 30 years and her work has taken her around the world.



September 15

The Thread You Follow: writing as a spiritual practice, on the theme of vocation **Led by Karen Hering**

Online, 7:00-8:30 p.m., register: <https://bit.ly/VocationWriting>

We've often heard Frederick Buechner's definition of vocation as that place “where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need.” This guided writing session explores that meeting point and looks for the thread of vocation woven through the fabric of each of our lives and through the community life we share. For writers and nonwriters alike. Participants bring whatever you need to write (paper and pen or electronic device) and Karen will provide the rest.

A Conversation with Interim Minister Kathy Hurt **Led by Kathy Hurt, interim senior minister**

Online, 7:00-8:30 p.m., register: <https://bit.ly/QandAKathy>

All are invited to meet Unity's new interim senior minister, the Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt, who will lead our congregation through this interim year between senior ministers. Kathy will share her insights into the possibilities and challenges that are often present in an interim year. Bring your curiosity and your questions — and be prepared, as Kathy may have some questions for you.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY / DINE WITH NINE

September 22

Antiracism Literacy Partners: A Next Right Action

Online, 7:00-8:30 p.m., register: <https://bit.ly/ALPSep22>

What does it take to be racially literate and engaged in antiracism 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? Whether you attended previous sessions or are just checking it out now, this program is an easy entry into finding antiracism books, podcasts, and videos, as well as discussion partners for talking about them. Come to choose a resource, sign up for a buddy or small group, and receive discussion guidelines. This program is part of Unity's Finding Our Next Right Action efforts. Questions? Contact Becky Gonzalez-Campoy at beckygc83@gmail.com.

Listening Session

Led by Unity's Ministerial Search Team

Online, 7:00-8:30 p.m., register: www.unityunitarian.org/listening-sessions.html

Please join Unity's Ministerial Search Team for a Listening Session. What is it? An opportunity to respond to important questions, with your responses helping to guide the search for Unity's next settled minister. Each session will be one and a half hours; with participants dividing into small groups so that all voices are heard. This is a chance to have a conversation with others in our church community about our future. See a list of all the Listening Sessions on page 6.



September 29

Listening Session

Led by Unity's Ministerial Search Team

Online, 7:00-8:30 p.m., register: www.unityunitarian.org/listening-sessions.html

Please join Unity's Ministerial Search Team for a Listening Session. What is it? An opportunity to respond to important questions, with your responses helping to guide the search for Unity's next settled minister. Each session will be one and a half hours; with participants dividing into small groups so that all voices are heard. This is a chance to have a conversation with others in our church community about our future. See a list of all the Listening Sessions on page 6.



UU History Program

Covenant and Congregational Polity and the Connection with Ministerial Search

Online, 7:00-8:30 p.m., register: <https://bit.ly/CovenantPolity>

In this session, members of Unity's History Teaching Team will explore the historical roots of congregational polity and covenant, two foundational structures in Unitarian Universalism that shape our faith tradition and our approach to ministerial search. We'll talk about the influence of the Mayflower Compact, John Winthrop's sermon "A Model of Christian Charity," and the Cambridge Platform and how these historical documents connect to our opportunities to participate in the ministerial search process today.

Dine with Nine Returns

Register by September 21

Are you ready to celebrate the end of isolation with fellow Unity members and friends? Have you really missed meaningful conversation in small groups? Do you enjoy meeting new faces and/or renewing prior acquaintance with like-hearted people? Do you enjoy good food and lively conversation? Would you like to extend the hospitality of Unity's community in more personal ways? If so, read on ...

Beginning in October, small groups (approximately nine per group) of Unity Church members and friends will gather once a month for food and fellowship. When you register, you will have a chance to express your preference for a brunch or dinner group, and to let us know if you have other requests or requirements. Each group is self-directed and will choose the dates, times, and places for their gatherings. Often, these are pot-luck meals in group members' homes, but groups may also choose to mix in visits to restaurants, a picnic, or a catered/delivered meal.

Each group will also decide how it wants to respond to the current Covid-19 realities. Zoom links from the church will be available should your group decide to move to Zoom for all or part of your time together.

Visit the Dine with Nine table in the Parish Hall on September 12 and 19 to learn more. You'll be able to sign up at the table, or online at www.unityunitarian.org/dine-with-nine.html. Please register no later than September 21 and complete the form in its entirety; we need the information requested to create appropriate groups. If you have questions or need a hard copy of the registration form, please contact Laura Park (laura@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110).

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Powerful Together: Conversations for Change

Affordable Housing Outreach Ministry Team

Unity Church members have long been committed to working together to address the huge need for more affordable housing. Many dedicated volunteers have staffed the church to provide temporary shelter for families through Project Home. Others help build new homes for low-income families, working with Habitat for Humanity, and another house project is underway this month! And still others have supported the advocacy efforts advanced by the Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, a nonprofit housing provider.



This fall, Unity's Affordable Housing Team will be participating in an important ministry called an "Inreach," coordinated by Beacon Interfaith Housing. The goal of this Inreach is for Unity Church members to listen to one another and strengthen relationships, clarify our vision for community outreach, and deepen our commitment to working in solidarity with and for people who lack the privilege of a secure and stable home.

To quote theologian Rienhold Niebuhr,

Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we must be saved by love.

Much has been done by individuals, groups, and government to address housing needs, and there is always more work to be done, together. More than half a million households around the state pay more than they can afford for rent — meaning they are just one emergency or lost paycheck away from losing their homes. That's why Beacon is working with its 100+ congregation partners on an Inreach. Our goal is to have at least 300 conversations among Unity Church members this fall — and we're hoping you'll be a part of this!

We have recruited almost 30 volunteers to be trained in the Inreach process. Now we need at least ten Unity Church members and friends to talk with each of them! Contact Rev. Shay to get involved and be sure to visit us at the Faith in Action Fair on September 26.

For more information on Beacon Interfaith Housing, visit their website at www.beaconinterfath.org.

A New School Year Begins

Nancy Heege, Obama School Outreach Ministry Team

As the new school year begins, three things to report on:

- We welcome the new principal at Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary, Mr. Elias Oguz, and we look forward to working with him and the other staff.
- We regret that we weren't able to host the teachers on their first day of meetings in the Parish Hall as we have done in the past. The increase in numbers of people ill with the Covid-19 virus in Minnesota just doesn't allow us to host larger group meetings at the church, and we missed seeing them. We were, however, able to provide decorations and food for breakfast for the teachers, which was greatly appreciated!
- We ask you to contribute generously to the Sunday offering on September 26, which will be given to the school's Sunshine Fund, which in the past has been used for field trips, teacher appreciation, and enrichment activities for the Obama scholars.

Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf Donations

Evergreen Quilters Outreach Ministry Team

Each month a list of items needed by the Hallie Q. Brown food shelf will appear in the newsletter. Volunteers will deliver the donations each week starting the week of September 12. Please bring your donations to church and place them in the baskets located at the Holly and Portland Avenue and entrances.



For the month of September Hallie Q. Brown is looking for school supplies. That includes backpacks, pencils, paper, glue and glue sticks, crayons, tissues, and any other basic school supplies.

In addition, brown and long-grain rice, tuna, soup, canned chicken, pasta and pasta sauce, as well as basic toiletries such as toilet paper, paper towels, body wash, shampoo, and conditioner are also needed.

Faith in Action Fair

Sunday, September 26 • Parish Hall following services

Wondering how you can follow the call of your Unitarian Universalist spirit into the world beyond our church walls? Unity's Community Outreach Ministry teams invite you to come find out — discover what each of the teams have been up to, learn more about their plans for this year, and explore ways you can get involved!

Wherever your heart moves, you can find a team that works to create a more just and sustainable world: Act for the Earth, Racial and Restorative Justice, Affordable Housing, Obama Elementary, Mano a Mano, Evergreen Quilters, Indigenous Justice, Gun Sense, and the Partner Church program.

LIBRARY-BOOKSTALL TEAM

The Library-Bookstall Team: Cairns Vol. (lucky) 13

Hey, remember this?



Or this?

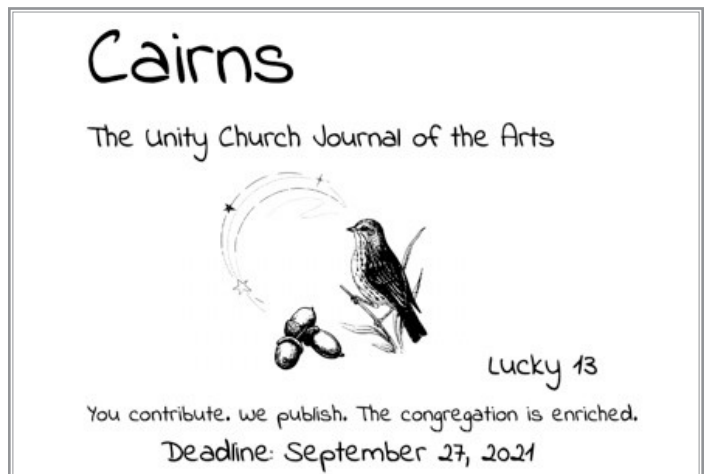
Let's get moving
in the way the universe asks.
We are the stars,
Running in euphoric actions.
Bliss, in the steps we'll take.
Let's move in a familiar movement.
Let's act big,
In ecstatic motion.

If you're new to Unity Church (Welcome, new members!) or returning after an absence (Welcome back, Rev. Kathy and Rev. Shay!), the photo above is "Rose Glitch" by Amanda Rueter and the poem is "Ecstatic Motion" by Parker Lin, both of which were featured on the covers of *Cairns: The Unity Church Journal of the Arts*, Vol. 12, 2020. It was a challenging year to produce our church journal, not being able to meet in person at all, but thanks to all the Unity folk who submitted art and writing, Vol. 12 was yet another great issue!

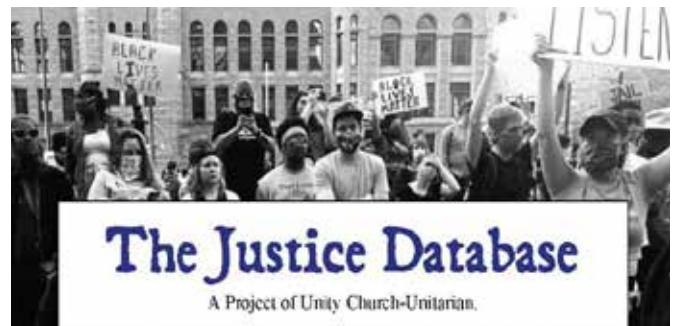
Believe it or not, it's time again! **The editorial staff of Cairns invites you to submit your original poetry, prose, music, and art for the 2021 edition, our lucky 13th!** Cairns has become a rich tradition, a wonderful way to share our talents with each other. Whether you have submitted before, one time or many, or are thinking of offering your work for the first time, we want to hear from you.

Deadline for submission is September 27, 2021.

Find details and the link to the submission form here:
www.unityunitarian.org/cairns.html.



New in the Justice Database



*The 19th** is an independent, nonprofit newsroom reporting on and elevating voices of women and the LGBTQ+ community. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/JusticeData>



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

Fr. Raimon Panikkar, mystic and one of the great scholars of the 20th century in the areas of comparative religion, theology, and interreligious dialogue, offered an arresting insight about the religious life: “[The] majority of human traditions speak of God only in the vocative. God is an invocation.” God becomes real in the vocative case, the call and summons that address us and stir in the marrow of what is evocative, provocative, and advocative, drawing us to be yoked to the focal meaning of our lives and to what matters most. We experience the *holy* or the *numinous* in being addressed in such existential situations, when we look down as far as we dare into the depths of who we are and the pressing truth we can no longer ignore, and an exclamation bursts from the beauty and despair. When our lives are placed at such critical and formative moments of turning, we discover that the nominative form of God is largely a presumption and all other cases but anthropomorphisms or idolatry cut through by the vocative.

Isn't that what cut through the panic and fear of the Israelites in exile, the call of God in their most bewildered hour, to discover the presence of the *holy* in a world they did not recognize? Isn't that what cut through the threat and despair of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the Book of Daniel, when they were bound and thrown in the fiery furnace only to discover that there were not just three figures in the flames but a fourth who was the Holy One of Israel? Israel is not spared exile, not exempted from the rising heat and fires, but finds in exile the presence of the *holy* summoning them to a truth greater than they had imagined. And so too for us, exile, pandemic, polarization, global crises form the very existential situation in which we can discover our vocation as a *people of faith*. When everything feels precarious, and the flames threaten to saturate our imagination with fear and anxiety, this vocative moment may reveal our true colors, of what constitutes the central meaning and purpose of being a faith community, summoning us to be clear as we have not before about the core identity and very character of our faith. That we are a faith community defined not by fear but trust, not by scarcity but generosity, not by anxiety but faith practices that open our lives to wonder, open-hearted engagement, and courageous action.

Faith is meaningful only in the vocative, in being addressed, in an encounter, in searching prayer, in real conversations where we let go of the removed “speaking about” and brave the vulnerability of “speaking with/to.” It is our children who by nature are inimitably acquainted with life in the vocative, their mother tongue, born waiting for that exclamation from the deep structure and grammar of life to call them into being. They are creatures addressed everywhere by this imperiled and precious world, summoned to a creative purpose beyond exhausted scripts, and in that place where peril and promise fiercely embrace, discover their true vocation. And when our children turn to address us in this turning moment, what will our faith have to say?

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

Helpful Reminders

How to do Sundays with Kids

All R.E. volunteers will be vaccinated, everyone masked inside the building, and a designated exterior entrance (wooden doors near the main front entrance) will be available for R.E. families wishing direct access to Ames Chapel and the lower level classrooms. Tracing and quarantine practices will parallel those of Saint Paul Public Schools. Please contact R.E. staff for further information.

Nursery (6 months–3 years)

- Infants and toddlers can be signed in at 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 following worship.

Spirit Play (3 years–Kindergarten)

- Children 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, please stay with your child until they arrive.
- Nametags are in the pocket charts on the door. Please return nametags when you leave.
- Collect your preschooler following worship (after 10:15 a.m., after 12:15 p.m.).

Rotations (grades 1–5/6)

- Children 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.
- Please collect your child following worship (after 10:15 a.m., after 12:15 p.m.).

Junior High (grades 6–8)

- Junior high youth can escort themselves to and from classes.
- Youth should wear nametags while in the church building for reasons of safety and community-building.
- Youth conclude with worship in Ames Chapel. Please designate a meeting location following class.

Children's Garden Farmers Market

Sunday, September 12 • After services, in the garden!

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa

Director of Music Ministries

Before delving into the specifics of how choral singing at Unity will respond to the newest Covid-19 variant, I'd like to start with a more cheerful subject:

Laura Potratz, Unity's part-time organist,

will now be expanding her role at the church. Laura will continue to be our resident organist and will increase her participation in Sunday worship. However, she will also take the lead on our youth music ministry. This new program will begin with a Youth Choir, for grades 6-9. They will meet every Sunday 10:15-10:55 a.m. in the lower-level Music Room. I hope to hear from everyone that is interested in this opportunity! There is an extraordinary level of musical talent in our youth, and I hope that this program will provide opportunities for musical growth and development while also creating the space for our young people to connect their musical skills with their spiritual practice.

Now, onto a less cheerful subject: the Delta variant. As we prepare for a new church year, many at Unity Church are eager to return to choral singing. Our choirs are not only a group that makes music; for many at Unity, they are a vital part of an ongoing spiritual practice and a source of connection and community. While for some the loss of in-person choral music at Unity is simply one missing element in an already rich Sunday worship ritual, for many others it has been a real source of grief and heartbreak over the past 18 months. It is with this in mind that we do everything we can to return to in-person singing at Unity Church, always following the guidelines set for us by the Executive Team, our government agencies, and the available science related to choral singing and Covid-19.

In response to the spread of the newest Covid-19 variant, all adult choir members must now be vaccinated to participate in person. Rehearsals will be shortened and masking and distancing will be required. Singing options on Zoom will continue to be offered for those that are not vaccinated. The choirs will not participate in Sunday worship until it is determined safe by our Executive Team. Congregational singing, for the time being, will continue to be allowed on Sundays, with masks required for all. While the full choirs will not participate in worship for the time being, small groups of choir singers may be part of the music programming on Sundays, especially if it is determined that congregational singing is not safe. Like our Religious Education program, the Children's and Youth Choirs will follow their own set of protocols, based on the guidelines from Saint Paul Public Schools. All of these measures will continue to be evaluated week-to-week, changing as we track the spread of Covid-19 in our community.

Sing in a Unity Church Choir

Email ahmed@unityunitarian.org to get connected. Singing options on Zoom will continue to be offered for those that are not vaccinated.

Unity Choir

Unity Choir is a large choral ensemble (typically between 60 and 80 voices) and is the strong component on which Unity's choral program is built; a vital and energetic presence in our community. Unity Choir rehearses every Thursday, from 7:30 to 9:15 p.m., with the first rehearsal on Thursday, September 23.

Women's Ensemble

Women's Ensemble is a continually growing and evolving group. While this group emerged and continues to function as a space that supports and empowers women, all soprano and alto singers are encouraged to apply for Unity's Women's Ensemble, including transfeminine, transmasculine, and non-binary as well as cis male sopranos and altos. Women's Ensemble rehearses every Sunday, from 10:15 to 10:50 a.m., with first rehearsal on Sunday, September 19.

Unity Singers

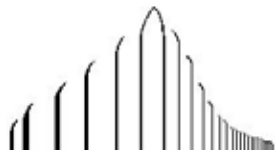
Unity Singers is Unity's auditioned, chamber choral ensemble (typically between 20 and 28 voices). Each singer's involvement is built on a passion for singing and for ministry through music. Unity Singers rehearses every Tuesday, from 7:30 to 9:15 p.m., with first rehearsal on Tuesday, September 21. Due to the requirement for independent learning and the pace of rehearsal and performance, membership in Unity Singers requires a yearly audition, scheduled individually with the director. Applicants are asked to prepare a short song to demonstrate the overall quality of their singing (please limit selections to one minute in length). Each singer will be asked to sing a few vocalises ("warm-up" sequences) and short tonal memory exercises. There will be a callback audition on Tuesday, September 14, at 7:30 p.m. where an excerpt from a choral score and recording will be emailed 48 hours in advance of the callback to determine personal preparation skills and independence.

Children's Choir

Unity's Children's Choir, led by Kathleen Radspinner, is a vibrant group of singers comprised of children from grades one through five. The choir rehearses every Sunday, from 10:15-10:55 a.m., with the first rehearsal on Sunday, September 19, and sing in approximately one service per month.

Youth Choir

New this year! The Youth Choir, led by Laura Potratz, is for youth in grades 6-9. Rehearsals will take place each Sunday (start date TBD), from 10:15-10:55 a.m., in the lower level Music Room.



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
Business Entrance: 732 Holly Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-228-1456 • fax: 651-228-0927 • www.unityunitarian.org • unity@unityunitarian.org

REV. DR. KATHY HURT, INTERIM MINISTER
CLOVER EARL, CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REV. KP HONG, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
BARBARA HUBBARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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**TIME SENSITIVE
MATERIAL**



The Ministerial Search Team is holding a series of Listening Sessions to gather responses to important questions regarding the search for our next settled minister.

Details and registration are on page 6!

Children's Garden Farmers Market

*Sunday, September 12
After services, in the garden!*

Come to the children's garden after services on September 12 and purchase some of the vegetables, herbs, and seeds that have been harvested in our garden this summer. All proceeds support the purchase of supplies for next year's garden, and most of our produce grown each summer is shared with the Hallie Q Brown food shelf.



Coming in October! Details on page 9.