

Dangerous Words

At the end of Unity Church's Executive Team retreat in August, we took a moment to reflect on the conversation we had over three days, informed by our reading of Dougald Hine's 2022 book *At Work in the Ruins*. Reflecting on the retreat felt like surfacing after a long swim in turbulent water; to dwell "in the ruins" as an extended metaphor for religious life in 2025 felt challenging, fatiguing and uncertain, even as it was a jumping off point for hope and energy for what we will build together.

The retreat was a chance to start to unpack Unity's new Ends Statements, the three statements the congregation and your board articulated last spring to answer the question, "What difference will Unity Church make, and to who?" Every five years we articulate new ends, laying out the direction we will go together. The language of this iteration of the ends, written in the months after the 2024 election, jumps off the page. Time after time, the board and congregation chose the most complicated, weighty, even dangerous words in their theological vocabulary: yoke, transform, evangelize, joy, broken open. This is a weighty moment in the world, and the message the Executive Team heard from the congregation was that we would use our language to reflect and meet the moment.

At Work in the Ruins describes the spiritual, moral, and economic crisis of the early 21st century. The certainties that the last 80 years of civic life have been built on (economic expansion, moral progress, open borders, low regulation, trust in institutions) are crumbling around us, and the task of moral people in this moment is to chart an alternative path, or story, that will carry us into whatever comes next. In his text *After Virtue*, Alasdair

MacIntyre describes the task of religious communities in an earlier era of societal uncertainty and collapse this way:

A crucial turning point in that earlier history occurred when men and women of good will turned aside from the task of shoring up the [empire] and ceased to identify the continuation of civility and moral community with the maintenance of [empire].

What they set themselves to achieve instead — often not recognizing fully what they were doing — was the construction of new forms of community within which the moral life could be sustained...

This is what Dougald Hine describes as the "small path," an alternative narrative about how to live a moral life, critiquing and stepping outside the dominant narrative of power-over, resource extraction, genocide and hatred.

Words carry weight in 2025. The power of dangerous words to affect the world is no longer hidden — surely contemporary politics in America show us the power of words to feed hatred and division. But if words are dangerous because they can so often collude with power to buttress systems of oppression and extraction, they can be equally dangerous to those systems, by offering a critique of the world as it is and pointing us toward the world as it could be. In an era of dangerous words, we are not going to be afraid to use ours.

Over the next ten months, our worship themes will draw on the dangerous words of our ends statements:

September: Dangerous Words

October: To Yoke Ourselves

November: Interconnected Roots

December: Cultivating Faith

January: Break Open

February: Evangelize Love

March: Abiding Hunger

April: Joyful Visions

May: Belonging

June/July: Transformation

Our theme for September, "Dangerous Words," serves as an overture of a sort, introducing ideas and voices that we will return to throughout the year. In worship, we will hear from our new Hallman Ministerial Intern, Amy Brunell, our acting Minister of Congregational Care, Rev. Shay MacKay, and the minister of our partner church in Homorodszentpeter, Rev. Kinga Réka Székely. In small groups, we will start to consider the possibility of engaging with language that challenges us, even as it challenges the dominant narrative of power and oppression. And we will attend to our spiritual practices, finding and keeping our balance for this work.

I'll end this column, and begin this year, with the most dangerous word in our ends statements: Joy. To be joyful in 2025 is to reject the nihilism and pessimism of so much of the world around us. Joy is not the same as happiness — it is an orientation of the spirit, not a passing emotional reaction to external events. As we go through this year, holding weighty, dangerous words, we must also practice and cultivate joy. When we surface for a long discussion of the ruins, we take a moment to pause, notice each other and the delight of poet T. De Los Reyes: "But here I am, still alive in this broken world, daring to still love it despite everything. Can I do it? Here is my heart, it is whispering: oh but we must, we must."

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair
with this month's Theme Team

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



JUST WORDS



Just Words

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair, Senior Minister

How do we live a moral life, even as we are embedded in immoral systems? This is an old question: Rheinhold Neibuhr grappled with it nearly a century ago in *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, and a decade ago Unitarian Universalist-adjacent writer and producer Michael Schur built the hit TV show *The Good Place* around the same moral question. Any of us can aspire to live a just and moral life, but when something as simple as buying flowers for our beloved embeds us in morally questionable practices across multiple continents (unjust wages for farmers, chemical fertilizer, and tons of carbon to ship fresh cut lilies to Minnesota in February, for instance), it is challenging to exist in a way that does more good than harm, on balance.

Emerging moral voices, from Dougald Hine, to Vanessa Machado de Oliveira and Greta Thunberg ask us to consider how our individual actions are based on and in a system that is inherently immoral — and increasingly unstable. For instance, in my economic life, two things are simultaneously true.

I know modern capitalism is based on an inherently extractive model that uses labor to turn limited resources into currency and capital, often exploiting labor in the process. There are straight causal lines between a rising stock market and diminished natural resources, falling commodity prices and rising sea levels.

It is also true that ten percent of my paycheck goes into a 401(k) retirement account, held mostly in that same stock market, so that I will be able to afford medical care and housing after I retire. My whole economic plan for the next 40 years depends on the performance of that inherently extractive thing we call the market. My own financial security, in this system, is based on an immoral, unsustainable system. This is an uncomfortable realization. I am temperamentally an incrementalist, I am skeptical of calls for revolution. But I cannot see how to separate the system of constant growth that the American financial system depends on from its immoral, unsustainable features. So I live in a place of ambiguity, between my own personal behavior and the systems I exist in.

Religion, at its best, does not resolve these ambiguities for us. But religion does ask — and Unity Church will ask — us to sit with ambiguity. In this place we sit with dangerous words, ideas we would rather leave out of focus, and we begin to imagine a different world.



Unity's Partner Church friends enjoying their time at the Minnesota State fair. See page 12 for more information about this wonderful visit.

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Walt Gordon and Michelle Valley
married Sunday, July 20, 2025.

Congregational Care

Request Care

Do you have a concern or celebration you wish to have shared in the Embracing Meditation during Sunday worship? Would you like to request a call from the Minister or a helping hand or listening ear of a Care Team member? Send an email to pastoralcare@unityunitarian.org. If you are experiencing an urgent need for pastoral support, call 651-300-9123.

Unity Church Ends Statements

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

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

SUNDAY SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Sunday Services

Beginning Sunday, September 7, we will return to two in-person services at 9:00 and 11:15 a.m. The 9:00 a.m. service will be offered via livestream. Find the livestream links at unityunitarian.org/sunday-services.

September 7: Merging the Waters

Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair | Betsy Hearn, Worship Associate



We begin our congregational year joined by representatives from our partner church in Homoródszentpéter. Together we reflect on the long journey from our first meetings to now, and look forward to what comes next in our friendship. Bring the water you have collected from your time away this summer (or from your own home) for our ritual of reunion.

September 14: Dangerous Words

**Rev. Dr. Oscar Sinclair
Veronica Nordeng DeVillez, Worship Associate**

2025 is a dangerous time in the world. When the foundations of so many of institutions and assumptions shake, we embrace the power of words to heal, as well as to harm. Even as we recognize the danger in language used to hurt, we use our own dangerous language to imagine a different way of being.

September 21

Rev. Shay MacKay | Anna Newton, Worship Associate

Rev. Shay MacKay joins Unity Church this year as our Acting Minister of Congregational Care. Watch for more information about this Sunday's service!

September 28

Amy Brunell | Dick Buggs, Worship Associate

From 2000-2019, 24 Unitarian Universalist ministers trained as interns at Unity Church. After a hiatus during the interim period, Unity's Hallman Internship program has re-launched, bringing Starr King student Amy Brunell to St. Paul for the 2025-26 congregational year to learn and to share her gifts with the congregation.

Offering Recipients

Each week, sixty percent of our Sunday offering is given to a community non-profit and forty percent supports the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church. Donations are gratefully accepted online at bit.ly/sundayoffering.

September 7: Partner Church Ministry Team

Unitarianism is alive and well in Transylvania, Romania, where it has been an active faith for more than 450 years. Unity Church has had a partnership with the Unitarian Church in the village of Homoródszentpéter for more than three decades. The Partner Church Team will use this annual offering to subsidize travel expenses for church members from both communities, so that our relationship continues to grow. This financial support will also fund language and cultural enrichment classes and an afterschool program which helps keep their local multi-grade, single room school open.

September 14: Friends of the Mississippi River

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) engages people to protect, restore and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities region. FMR envisions a river that is recognized and celebrated for its intrinsic values, a river where residents and visitors can escape the rush of daily life to find solitude in a hidden backwater, wonder while paddling past towering bluffs, and slip into the embrace of this mighty river. This collection will support youth development programming and the development of functional pathways into environmental professions for young people and particularly BIPOC youth.

September 21: Barack and Michelle Obama Montessori and Middle School

Help us welcome the Barack and Michelle Obama School community to our neighborhood! After two years of renovation, the school across the street from the church has reopened and children's voices once again fill the halls. This collection will help fill any gaps there may be as they make this beautiful building their new home.

September 28: Hallman Intern Endowment Fund

Unity's Hallman Intern Endowment supports Unity's role as a teaching congregation by underwriting an annual stipend that is awarded each year, bringing a ministerial intern to the congregation. This year we are excited for the return of the Hallman Ministerial Internship and warmly welcome Amy Brunell as the 2025-26 Hallman Ministerial Intern. This offering is an annual collection for the endowment fund.

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

BELOVED COMMUNITY STAFF TEAM

Witchcraft Masking the Interconnected Roots of Oppression

Rev. KP Hong, Beloved Community Staff Team

We no longer believe that witches ride on broomsticks or that witchcraft was at work in the mysterious illness and the contagion of panic that swept throughout Salem in 1692. But for false accusations to gain traction, go to trial, and result in imprisonment and executions, there had to be widespread complicity from public officials and institutions willing to give legitimacy to spectral evidence. Physicians pointed to witchcraft as the cause of illnesses, ministers publicly confirmed signs of the devil, magistrates conducted interrogations and pushed for prosecutions, judges and the apparatus of the government gave the go-ahead, all enabling the escalation of mass hysteria and the very real consequences of the Salem witch trials.

In their seminal work, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (2012), sociologist Karen Fields and historian Barbara Fields draw a compelling analogy between witchcraft and racecraft. Both are systems of belief, a form of social alchemy, that explain real events through imaginary causes. Just as witchcraft attributes misfortune to malevolent acts of imagined witches, racecraft rationalizes the unequal distribution of privilege and disadvantage by constructing race. This sleight of hand turns the aggressor's action of domination and exploitation into perceived traits of the victim's racial *identity* — a kind of "magic" that disguises systemic inequities by attributing them to supposedly inherent characteristics of racial groups. Racism conjures race, not the other way around:

As the social alchemy of racecraft transforms racism into race, disguising collective social practice as inborn individual traits, so it entrenches racism in a category to itself, setting it apart from inequality in other guises.

Racism and those other forms of inequality are rarely tackled together because they rarely come into view together. Indeed the most consequential of the illusions racecraft underwrites is concealing the affiliation between racism and inequality in general. Separate though they may appear to be, they work together and share a central nervous system.

We do not first have "race" and then "white/black" and "red," with "yellow" and "brown" thrown in later. Rather slavery invents race to justify exploitation, designating some as temporary indenture and others as permanent chattel; and through the official apparatus of slave codes, race serves to entrench racial hierarchies and protect the political economic interests of slaveholders and elites. Even in the aftermath of slavery, the genius resides in manipulating racial designations through divide-and-conquer strategies to redirect dissatisfaction and, more worrisome, uprisings and revolution. Before anything else, race was a category of labor. Racial oppression and economic exploitation have always been entwined in capitalism, as insightfully and powerfully recognized by the Trinidadian-American sociologist Oliver Cromwell Cox in his groundbreaking work *Caste, Class, and Race: A Study in Social Dynamics* (1948):

Sometimes, probably because of its very obviousness, it is not realized that the slave trade was simply a way of recruiting labor for the purpose of exploiting the great natural resources of America. This trade did not develop because Indians and Negroes were red and black, or because their cranial capacity averaged a certain number of cubic centimeters; but simply

because they were the best workers to be found for the heavy labor in the mines and plantations across the Atlantic... This, then, is the beginning of modern race relations. It was not an abstract, natural, immemorial feeling of mutual antipathy between groups, but rather a practical exploitative relationship with its socio-attitudinal facilitation... As it developed and took definite capitalistic form, we could follow the white man around the world and see him repeat the process among practically every people of color.

Too often, antiracist work narrowly emphasizes *identity* — prioritizing diversity, inclusion, representation, multiculturalism — while subordinating deeper questions of political economy. As a result, it fails to ask the critical questions, like exclusion from or inclusion for *what*? Predatory capitalism and a gig economy that offers no labor protections? A narrow *identitarian* framework that treats race as the cause of racism, rather than its consequence, reinforces the very category of race it seeks to dismantle. Racial identities are not standalone truths. They have always served as ideological cover for an underlying racial capitalism working to maintain hierarchies of labor and wealth. By narrowly focusing on identity without interrogating the structures that give it meaning, we obscure the actual interconnected determinants of systemic oppression.

Does our current conversation on race and racism get us further or does it instead leave us cornered? Increasingly, the dominant identitarian framework, which narrowly treats identity as foundational for shared life, feels limited in its explanatory power.

Continued on page 5...

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

... *Beloved Community* continued from page 4.

It feels at once too easy (collapsing vital, wide-ranging conversations about our political economy into questions about personal identity) and too rigid (unable to account for how race operates within the broader complexities of racial capitalism). But without that wider context, we risk losing both moral clarity and strategic direction for actual change.

What if identity, when divorced from a wider liberative practice, actually stands in the way of liberation itself? What if identity is less about essential qualities that determine who belongs where and more about discovering how we are interconnected, *in and through all our differences*, and actually belong to one another? What if identity only arrives as an achievement from such shared struggle and solidarity, forged from revolutionary forms of love? What if the so-called race-class debate is a ruse grounded in notions of American exceptionalism, bewitching us into believing that unlike other nations shaped by class struggle, America is a case apart? That here, class exerts minimal influence compared to individual hard work and opportunity, while racial identity somehow bears the weight of history, exercising a singular and transhistorical axis of inequality? Witchcraft indeed. What is the discourse and prophetic vocabulary more capable of unveiling the interconnected roots of oppression and illuminating a way forward?



To Be in Community with One Another

Molly Flattum, Trustee

As summer begins to give way to fall, the mornings become cooler, the leaves begin their dramatic transformation from green to deep red, orange and golden yellow, the streets are again filled with the yellow school buses and Unitarian Universalists head back to church. While some have been attending throughout the summer, September invites others to reconnect after a summer away.

At Unity Church, September begins with the Székely Gate dedication — a gift from our Partner Church in Homoródszentpéter. It's an intricately carved gate that honors the relationship between the two congregations — Unity Church–Unitarian and the Unitarian Congregation of Homoródszentpéter. The Partner Church Team has done a beautiful job documenting the history of Homoródszentpéter and our relationship with the congregation. I encourage you to visit the exhibit in Robbins Parlor to understand more deeply the connection between the two congregations. As I looked at the pictures, I was struck by the artistry of the Székely gates and the depth of our relationship but also the metaphor for the transition of summer into fall, of starting a new church year and immersing ourselves in our new ends statements.

As we step into another church year, we stand at the threshold, a moment that invites us to reflect on this past year, where we are and where we are headed together as a congregation. Like the Székely Gate being dedicated in our green space, this symbolic entryway offers more than just a physical structure. It calls us to pause; to gather and to reflect on what it means to be in community with one another.

Each new church year brings a fresh opportunity to deepen our spiritual practice, strengthen our connections and engage more deeply within the church community and the world around us. Whether you are new to Unity or a longtime member, this moment offers us all a chance to step forward with renewed intention. The Székely Gate will remind us that every threshold we cross whether in our individual lives or as a congregation has the potential for new understanding, new relationships and new experiences.

At the beginning of the new church year, we are invited to reflect on how we might step through this threshold together. How will we show up for ourselves, for each other and for our broader community? How will we continue to build a place of deep belonging, compassion and justice — both within our church and in the wider world? The Executive Team was on retreat in mid-August where they spent three days discerning the new ends statements, crafting their interpretation of the ends, and discussing programming for the coming year. The next few months will provide an opportunity for us to engage further with the new ends together as a congregation.

This church year also invites us to think about what it means to be stewards of the gate, carrying its significance beyond our doors and into the broader world. Like the Székely Gate, which carries deep cultural meaning and serves as a link between communities, we too are called to open our hearts and minds to new connections and deeper understanding. As we cross the threshold of the new church year, may we each do so with an open heart, compassion and love for one another.

For more information on the Partner Church visit and the Székely Gate and upcoming dedication on Saturday, September 6, please turn to page 12.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



Welcome Words

Philippa Anastos
Membership Coordinator
and Program Assistant

In our visitor classes, we discuss "going deep quickly." What does it mean to go deep? In the past, we have spoken about connecting with others on the level of shared human experience — joys, sorrows, hopes, and the search for meaning. This month's worship theme gives us a more impactful way to understand that phrase: going deep means we connect on the level where we speak dangerous words to one another. We name both the brokenness and the possibility we see in the world. This can be frightening, but we do not do it alone. Dangerous words are best spoken together.

Finding Yourself at Unity

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

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

September 7: Membership 101
September 14: Pastoral Care
September 21: UU History
September 28: Faith Formation

Volunteer to Give Rides

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



Wellspring Wednesday returns
September 10. See page 8 for details!

Fellowship Groups

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Men's Conversation Group: Monday, September 1, 15, and 29, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Zoom. Discuss a range of topics, offer support, and connect.

Men's Retirement Circle: Monday, September 8 and 22, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Robbins Parlor

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

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

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

Unity Book Club: second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Zoom.

On August 12 the group will discuss *Lone Dog Road* by Kent Nerburn. On September 9 the group will discuss *An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us* by Ed Yong.

Unity Gardeners: Join other Unity Gardeners and sign on for a few hours of weeding/watering during the summer. No experience necessary!

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

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



Upscale Sale a Success!

Heidi Birkholz, Events and Technology Coordinator

Now that we've had a chance to pack up remaining treasures, put tables away, clear the Sanctuary of art, rugs and furniture, we are happy to report that Unity's Upscale Sale was a smashing success! Roughly 40 volunteers gave over 400 hours of their time to accept, sort, clean, price, merchandise, re-merchandise, box and haul items away. Our goal was to raise \$10,000 for our operating budget, and we are thrilled to report that our gross receipts were over \$14,000!

Although there are much easier ways to raise funds, our friends and neighbors were appreciative of the chance to purchase quality products for a fraction of the original price. Additionally, the sale provided an outlet for many of you that are downsizing.

Lastly, I want to give a special thank you to Joan Maclin. Joan was here every moment volunteers were scheduled, and she had a vision that elevated the sale. Joan prefers to work in the background, but I simply couldn't let her creativity and expertise go without naming.

We are in discussion whether this will be an annual or biennial sale. Stay tuned, and as always, I am so grateful for Unity Church and the people who show up to do the work of our community.

Dine with Nine

Registration: bit.ly/dinenine25

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

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

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

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

Re-igniting Our UUSC Connection

Krista Finstad Hanson and Clover Earl, UUSC Partner Team

Guest at your Table, the multigenerational fundraising initiative of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), celebrates 50 years and returns to Unity Church this fall.



Unity's UUSC Partner Team seeks to re-ignite our congregation's connection to this human rights organization. Learning more about and financially supporting them gives us a chance to put our "faith in action."

The number of congregants at Unity Church who are also members of the UUSC has dwindled from 300 ten years ago to around 75 now.

Unity Church recently introduced new Ends Statements (see page 2) and the UUSC's Guest at Your Table initiative weaves beautifully into the second one: *Cultivate a multigenerational community of joy, care, and belonging, and evangelize love to meet the deep and abiding hunger in all of us.*

According to the UUSC website, the UUSC is a "nonprofit, nonsectarian organization advancing human rights together with an international community of grassroots partners and advocates." The UUSC is grounded in Unitarian Universalist values and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The UUSC's work in WWII-era Europe was supported by Unity's minister emeritus Rev. Frederick May Eliot (1917-1937), who in 1939 was serving as the president of the American Unitarian Association. News of Nazi Germany's onslaught on the people of the Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia, and the persecution of Jewish people, raised concern from our Unitarian leaders.

Rev. Eliot had the idea that our denomination needed to do something about this! Many Unitarian ministers were asked to help, but it was Rev. Waitstill Sharp who answered the call. Along with his wife, Martha I. (Dickie) Sharp, they journeyed to Prague and later France to assist in many courageous operations to help hundreds of refugees, children, and prominent Jewish intellectuals and artists escape to safety from 1939 to 1940. Their amazing story is retold in the 2016 book and the PBS/Ken Burns documentary *Defying the Nazis: The Sharp's War*.

If you believe that we are now in a crisis very similar to the start of World War II (which ended 80 years ago on August 15, 1945), and you would like to learn more about how to make a difference to those at risk of persecution in a fractured world, there is hope.

Check out the UUSC's website and watch future communications to learn more about how to connect with and support Unity's partnership with the UUSC.

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

Wellspring Wednesday



Wellspring Wednesday gathers a multigenerational church community to nourish right and holy relationship among us and deepen our life of faith, grounded in spiritual practice and antiracist multicultural work. Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. in Parish Hall, a short chapel service begins at 6:45 p.m. in Ames Chapel, and programs begin at 7:10 p.m. Childcare is available and advance registration is not required.

The cost for dinner is \$10/adults, \$5/child (ages 5-12), \$3/child (ages 2-4), and \$25/family. If you need financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner, please email Philippa Anastos at philippa@unityunitarian.org. If you plan to join us and need a special dietary preparation (vegetarian, dairy-free options are available), please email Heidi Birkholz at heidi@unityunitarian.org.

Food Ministers

Welcome Here

As we prepare to welcome back Wellspring Wednesday on September 10, we also welcome back returning Food Ministers and those of you who are interested in becoming food ministers. No previous experience is required as we give on-the-job training. We only ask you have a collaborative spirit and are willing to put love into the food we prepare and serve. If you are interested, you can sign up here bit.ly/wwfood25 or you can email Heidi at heidi@unityunitarian.org.

September 10

Dinner: Enchiladas verde, corn salad, snickerdoodle bars

Q&A with the Executive Team | Parish Hall

As we begin a new program year with new ends, join a conversation with the Executive Team about how we can work together to make our ends a reality. What transformation do our new ends invite in us? What could help us, within, among, and beyond, to enter into that transformation? What do we have planned this coming year to help us do that work?

Young Adults Group | Center Room

Unity's Young Adult Group is a fun, reflective group of people working to build multi-faith and multi-cultural community. They come together to ask the questions that are consuming us, to practice sharing what is sacred, and to try to live consequential lives as we navigate the complexity of being an adult. All are welcome. To be added to the Young Adults email list, email kp@unityunitarian.org.

A Spiritual Practice to Feed Your Soul: Lectio Divina

Gannett Room | Zoom: bit.ly/UnityLectio24-25

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

September 17

Dinner: Roasted chicken, squash with Brussel sprouts, brown-butter blondies

Picking Sweetgrass | Parish Hall | Zoom (watch for link)

Kent Estey is one of the five indigenous artists exhibiting at Unity Church during September and October. He will give a 45-minute PowerPoint presentation and talk about his grandmother's artistry. She was a black ash basket maker and a boarding school survivor. She attended three boarding schools over the years and was one of the first families to reside on the newly established White Earth Reservation. Estey will tell her story, his family's story about black ash basket making, and speak to her resilience through it all. He will talk about his book *Picking Sweetgrass* that he has written about her. There will be time for questions and discussion about Estey's art.

September 24

Dinner: Brats, not dogs, dilled potato salad, coleslaw, raspberry streusel bars

Activism for Beginners | Parish Hall

Does the Beloved Community we yearn for seem to be receding? Do you worry about the world we live in and are leaving to our children and grandchildren? Are you ready to do something about this? Activism for Beginners is designed for you. Experienced members of the congregation will help you break down the vast world of possible actions, and help you find the right first action steps for you. We will be working on timely, actionable issues... there are plenty! Buddies and mentors will be available to follow up with you as you begin your journey to support the implementation of Unity's first Ends Statement — doing the hard work necessary to build the Beloved Community. Together, we can transform our world.

Young Adults Group | Center Room

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

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Sign Up for Chalice Circles

Monthly Small Group Spiritual Practice

Register by September 18: bit.ly/ucucc25

Chalice Circles bring together groups of 8-10 committed participants with a trained leader to listen — to each other, to the world, and to their deepest selves — and develop a more intentional and authentic life. Each month, a packet of spiritual practice content related to the monthly theme is published for use by circle participants, and anyone in the congregation interested in reflecting more deeply on the theme. An opening retreat will be held on Saturday, September 20, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. From October through June, your circle will meet monthly. Questions? Email Philippa at philippa@unityunitarian.org.

Weekly Moving Practice Circle

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

All are welcome to attend this weekly embodied practice circle! The circle, led by Revs. Karen Hering, Ruth MacKenzie, and Kate Tucker, includes guided gentle movement and breath, silence and poetry and song, grounding us in the energy and resilience needed to meet the growing challenges of this time. Drawing from qigong, tai ji, tao yin, yoga and more, each week will share simple embodied practices, tapping into our aliveness and courage. Learn movements that can regulate an unsettled nervous system and help access the body's natural resources for resilience and resistance. No previous experience is necessary. The practices can be modified for sitting or standing. Wear comfortable clothing, bring a water bottle and a curiosity in mind, heart and body.

Sangha Practice

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

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

Lectio Divina

Second Wednesday and Fourth Tuesday of Each Month

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

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

Active Hope Offerings

Direct questions about these offerings to Jean Hammink at jeanhammink@gmail.com.

Active Hope for the New Now Practice Gathering

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

This monthly practice will feature a pressing issue as a focus for the each session. Moving through the Active Hope Spiral in response to the issue will prevent our hearts from deadening with the news of the day, and fortify us in resilience and action. All are welcome, no experience or registration needed.



Active Hope Book Group

Mondays, September 15, 22, 29, October 6

7:00-8:30 p.m. | Foote Room

Registration: bit.ly/ahbg202

Join Unity Church and Twin Cities Work That Reconnects in reading *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in with Unexpected Resilience and Creative Power* by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. Read the book, discuss learnings and reflect in facilitated small and large groups, engage in some experiential practices, and connect with others who care deeply about the earth and our future.

Nature's Path: Embrace the Spiral Journey in Forest Therapy
Sunday, September 28 | 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

House of Hope Park (corner of Grotto and Portland, St. Paul)

Registration (limited to 20 participants): bit.ly/ahforest

In this guided forest therapy session, participants are invited to slow down and reconnect with the natural world through the lens of the Spiral Journey of Active Hope. Through group sharing and solo reflection, the natural world becomes a companion in exploring gratitude, honoring difficult emotions, perceiving fresh possibilities and stepping into purposeful action. Whether you're seeking restoration, peace or deep listening, this experience beckons a return to walk with nature as a companion on your life's journey.

Community Gathering: Remembering Joanna Macy

Joanna Macy's long life was a weaving of many actions and convictions: environmental and social justice activism; scholarship, writing; contributing to the development of deep ecology and systems theory; Buddhist studies and teaching. That web she wove also manifested as the Work That Reconnects (WTR) and Active Hope, which have a home at Unity Church through Act for the Earth (AFE), and in the form of ongoing, donation-based workshops held at Unity and throughout the Twin Cities.

Join a community celebration of Joanna Macy's life and work on Sunday, September 28, 4:30-5:30 p.m., in Ames Chapel. Conveners from Unity Church and Twin Cities Work that Reconnects will offer readings, a video clip, and gratitude practices. Come honor this visionary woman and the gifts she shared with the world.

We Tell Our Stories

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

Parish Hall and West Hall Exhibit September-October 2025

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

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

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



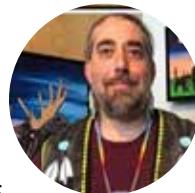
Gordon Coons is a member of Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Band of Lake Superior Indians of Wisconsin and Ottawa/Potawatomi. He is a largely self-taught painter, printmaker, and fumage artist. He paints in the Ojibwa Woodland style and creates fumage, smoke art, by burning cedar. He incorporates playfulness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



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



Sam Zimmerman's art explores his Ojibwe heritage as well as his learnings and experiences in nature after he returned to is ancestral homelands. He has developed his painting in the Woodland style first introduced by Anishinaabe painter Norval Morriseau. He reimagines the symbolism of the clan animals while incorporating the natural landscape of Lake Superior.



All Our Fullness Art Show

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

A Light that Will Not Fade

Betsy Power Moore, Archives Team

I grew up at Unity Church and went through all the church school programs including Tower Club. One of my classmates was another Betsy, Betsy Turner, who is still a member of the church. This past spring Betsy contacted the Archives Team and asked if there was any chance that we might be able to find a sonnet she had written after the 1963 fire at Unity Church that destroyed much of the Sanctuary. She wrote it for an English class assignment and her teacher, also a church member, sent it on to the church. Betsy thought it had been published in either the newsletter or the Sunday Order of Service not too long after the fire.

That request sent Pauline Eichten and me to the Minnesota History Center to search the church archives. The records from back then were incomplete and not very well organized. However, to our delight, we did find Betsy's sonnet printed in the March 31, 1963, Order of Service. Here is what she wrote over 60 years ago.

A Light that Will Not Fade

While stepping on a hardened mass of snow,
I came upon a sight that caught my eye;
For in the light I saw my church aglow
With blazes shooting outward toward the sky.
The smoke streamed out of windows far and wide,
And crawled on walls that meant so much to me.
The sparks began to jump and crack inside,
As if to show their pains for me to see.
When I think back and try to see once more,
What meant so much to me, I first recall
The little detailed carvings on the door,
And next the simple altar above all.
This church, which was a second home to me,
Would still be in my heart for all to see.

What fun it was to find Betsy's sonnet and, with her permission, share it with all of you.

commUNITY is the monthly newsletter of Unity Church. Deadlines are the 15th of each month.

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

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



LIBRARY-BOOKSTALL



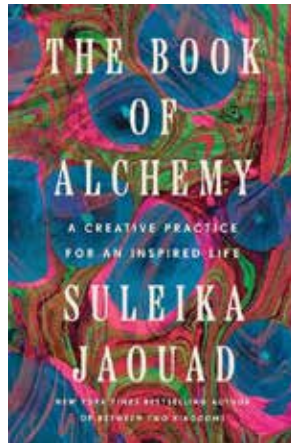
September Waits for No One!

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

“September” comes from the Latin word septum or “seven,” which makes sense since it is the ninth month of the year. Huh? Anyway, ready or not, it’s a new church year full of possibilities! So many things coming up; so many books to tell you about.

Mitali Perkins wrote *Just Making: A Guide for Compassionate Creative* for creative people who are also concerned with justice. It seems as though we are bombarded with a grim reality of the way things are. Art can move to where things ought to be. The creative perseverance from people on the margins of power will inspire you. The book explores the potential of art as a justice-making tool, and offers practices to help you find your just voice, whether you consider yourself a writer or artist or not. In the Anderson Library!

The Book of Alchemy: A Creative Practice for an Inspired Life is a best seller and already being talked about as a best book of 2025. Suleika Jaouad has inspired dozens of writers, from Mavis Staples to Susan Cheever, to share a story about something that inspired them and offer a prompt for you to get there. As Elizabeth Gilbert said, this book, “proves on every page that a creative response can be found in every moment of life — regardless of what is happening in the world.” In the Anderson Library.



The Unity Bookstall thanks all you book lovers for the successful summer sale! Keep in mind that during the church year, the Bookstall carries many titles for teams, upcoming events, groups, and classes. Act for the Earth is bringing in the author of *Sea of Grass: The Conquest, Ruin, and Redemption of Nature on the American Prairie* in November; and a new *Active Hope* book group is forming in September. Find both books in the Bookstall this month.

In order to dismantle oppression, one must be able to identify it, as Ibram X. Kendi reminds us. Check the October newsletter to learn more about **Unity's Justice Learning Partners** program, get resources for reflection (discussion guides provided), and sign up for a partner or group.

Save the Date
October 11, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.
for the Book Launch of
*So Surprisingly Light the
Small Suitcase of Certainty*
Poems by Marg Walker

In The Justice Database

Justice Database
A Project of Unity Church-Unitarian

[Environment Minnesota](#) works for clean air, clean water, clean energy, wildlife and open spaces, and a livable climate, from saving the bees to saving the Boundary Waters. Members across the state put grassroots support behind our research and advocacy.

Do you enjoy books? Interacting with people?
**TEAM POSITION OPENINGS
UNITY BOOKSTALL**
Visit the Bookstall during coffee hour any
Sunday morning and chat with us.
Pick up a description of our duties.
We offer full training including shadowing other
volunteers and ongoing support.
Contact Team Coordinators:
Vicki Kappus vkappus@msn.com or
Barbara Foss pbfoss@mac.com
It's fun and it's important. Bookstall sales support the
Anderson Library and other literary programs at Unity.

The Library-Bookstall Team
Unity Church-Unitarian

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Welcoming our Transylvanian Friends

Dane Smith, Partner Church Team



Our dear Unitarian friends from our partner church in Transylvania (central Romania) are here and we've been having a grand time renewing this extraordinary bond during their three-week visit (August 17-September 9).

Over the last quarter century, on more than a dozen pilgrimages, more than 150 Unity Church members have enjoyed the warm embrace of the 700-year-old church and the villagers in Homoródszentpéter (pop. < 200). Since the arrival of Pastor Kinga-Réka Székely and nine other villagers in mid-August, we have been reciprocating and renewing this relationship.

We've hosted the villagers in our homes, held social gatherings and potlucks, showed off our Twin Cities and northern Minnesota sights on various excursions (pictured here at Minneapolis Institute of Art), and engaged in deep conversation about our spirituality and heritage. Find details about the visit and our partnership here: unityunitarian.org/partner-church. Please take time to read the recent *National Geographic* article about the tranquil beauty of the Transylvanian region and its resilient ethnic Hungarian culture, featuring a quote from Kinga on the communal and sustainable way of life they are trying to preserve.

One remaining high-priority event you won't want to miss is the installation of a traditional hand-carved wooden [Székely Gate](#), a priceless gift to us from the village. The gate has been installed and will be dedicated during a ceremony on Saturday, September 6, at 10:00 a.m., in the green space east of the church. The inscription on the gate will give special recognition to our late ministers Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs, who started the pilgrimages and worked diligently to build this relationship.

This physical symbol also reinforces our connection to a place and people who made a bold and brave [statement for religious liberalism and freedom of conscience](#) more than 450 years ago. This was more than two centuries before the evolution of our own brand of Unitarianism and Universalism in New England. Partner Church Team members together with the Art Team, and the Archives Team have laid out an engaging display of our partnership history in Robbins Parlor with many images, videos and a timeline. We hope you consider joining our next pilgrimage to Homoródszentpéter, tentatively planned for the summer of 2026.

12

Integrity, service, and joy.

Project Home Household Goods Collection

Saturday, September 13 | 9:00-11:00 a.m. | Parking Lot

Unity's Evergreen Quilters and Housing Justice Team are once again collecting household items for families moving out of emergency shelter at Project Home and into permanent housing. Please bring the following **clean and gently used or new** household items to Unity's Holly Avenue parking lot on September 13:

- Dish sets including fine China. Please no chips, cracks or stains, etc.
- Pots and pans, baking pans, storage containers, service pieces, Corning Ware.
- New pillows and twin, regular or queen-sized sheets and pillow cases.
- Small appliances such as toasters, microwaves, coffee makers, etc.
- Bath towels, washcloths, kitchen towels and dishcloths.
- Silverware sets, knife sets.
- Kitchen utensils: spatulas, turners, soup ladles, measuring cups, measuring spoons, etc.

We had three very successful collections last spring, resulting in ten vehicles full of items delivered to Project Home. Thank you very much! Questions? Email Barb Rogne at bzrogne27@gmail.com or Janice Gestner at janicemgg@comcast.net.

Housing Justice Team

Be a Weekend Warrior!

We're looking for groups of three to six adults to participate in weekend meal teams at Provincial House in Saint Paul. Volunteers assist with serving meals, visiting with guests, and clean up. Sign up for a shift: bit.ly/ucuph. Questions? Reach out to Donna Franklin at dfranklin@interfaithaction.org or contact Unity member, Janice Gestner at janicemgg@comcast.net.

Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf

Donations are trending upwards!

We are back on track and trending upwards with our donations to Hallie Q. Brown. In July we donated 218 pounds of food and the first week in August, 98 pounds of food was collected. There is considerable need in our neighborhood — inflation, job loss, high rent, homelessness, federal food support cuts, and more. Thank you for your generosity and continued support.

During September please donate granola bars, fruit bars, boxed cereal, soup, ramen, mac 'n cheese, any non-perishables and general hygiene products. Food shelf financial contributions are accepted at hallieqbrown.charityproud.org/donate.



Wonder, open-hearted engagement, courageous action

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Obama School Ribbon Cutting

All are welcome!

Nancy Heege, Obama School Team



We've just heard that Obama School will be having a ribbon cutting ceremony in the park behind the school on Thursday, September 25, at 5:30 p.m., and the congregation is invited! It will be a good opportunity to celebrate the beautifully renovated building and demonstrate our enthusiasm as we welcome the students, families, and staff into our neighborhood.

Labor Day came as early as possible this year, and construction workers were still working in the hallways late in August as members of our leadership team entered the building for a meeting and tour of the central part of the ground floor with the two principals. Yes, two principals — one for the new Middle School and one for the Montessori school for younger children.

As Unity Church volunteers, we have our work cut out for us this year — there will be more requests for volunteers to devote their time and good energy to the communities at Barack and Michelle Obama Montessori and Middle School. Two groups of staff members and two schools, with more than 120 sixth graders registered for the new middle school! Thank you to the many people who visited our Parish Hall table in August and expressed interest in serving as a volunteer this year. It's not too late to join us! Contact Nancy Heege nancyheege672@gmail.com for information.

Jodi Pfarr Returns to Unity Church

Saturday, September 13, and October 11

Jodi Pfarr was here last spring and 65 people attended one, or both of her Urgency of Awareness workshops. Many people expressed a strong desire for her to return. Watch for details from Unity's Racial Justice Community Outreach Ministry Team.



Act for the Earth

Fork to Forest:

Our Food System's Impact on Climate Change

Friday, September 26 | Parish Hall

6:00 p.m.: Plant-based Potluck | 6:30-8:00 p.m.: Presentation

Enjoy an evening of fellowship and share a plant-based feast, then hear a lively presentation exploring the under-appreciated impact our food system has on climate and the environment. Even if we stopped using fossil fuels today, emissions from our conventional food system would still cause the earth to exceed climate targets. Learn how you can take action at your very next meal to start changing things for the better. Please bring a plant-based dish (food entirely free of animal products: no meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, gelatin, or honey) to share! For plant-based recipes [visit the Act for the Earth webpage](#).

About the presenters:

Anna Larsson spends her days working on strategy and finance in the corporate world. By night, she is a longtime climate and environmental activist. She lives with her partner and two teenagers in Minneapolis and loves biking and getting out in nature.

Nicola Philpott runs a plant-based meal program at a shelter for people experiencing homelessness in Minneapolis. She has a doctorate in biochemistry and molecular biology and has written peer-reviewed scientific publications. Nicola enjoys gardening, biking with her teenagers and walking her dogs.

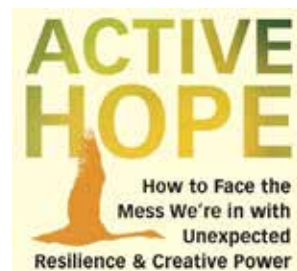
Energy Tax Credits Ending

Now is a great time to purchase a new or used electric vehicle (EV). The \$7,500 tax credit for new electric vehicles and \$4,000 for used vehicles ends September 30. Or you may want to consider leasing an EV. Many leasing companies are claiming the tax credit and passing the savings on to customers. Want to test-drive an EV? Contact Paul (Best Car I Ever Owned) Englund at paulenglund@yahoo.com.

Credits for home EV charging stations, heat pumps, insulation and other energy efficiency measures for your home will end December 31, as will the federal tax credit worth up to 30% of the cost of installing solar panels and/or battery storage. For more information visit homes.rewiringamerica.org/electric-tax-credits and n.pr/4mttkwW.

Active Hope Programming

For details about Act for the Earth's Active Hope programming, including a Community gathering remembering Joanna Macy, please turn to page 9.



MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Dangerous Words

Nelson Moroukian, Religious Education Program Assistant

Language shapes us. From our earliest days, we learn its rhythms; how a simple “yes” or “no” can set boundaries, how words can wound or heal, and how the way we speak can create both connection and division. As we grow, we discover that language is not just a tool, it’s a force. Through language we learn how to ask, how to stand up, how to connect.

But today, words are often tossed around without care. Language is losing its depth, used more to divide than to unite. Online spaces full of slogans, soundbites, and memes overflow into our everyday lives, reinforcing the idea that words are tools that have lost their purpose, no longer pointing to something greater than language can name.

Anyone who’s spent time on social media knows how overwhelming the noise can be. For children, it’s even more confusing. They’re caught between the messages they hear at home or school and the ones they absorb online. When words begin to lose their meaning, reclaiming them becomes a radical act; an act of faith, for ourselves and for the generations to come. Because *meaning* is what brings words to life; it animates our stories, carries purpose, and creates common understanding.

In the face of this noise, our faith community is seeking a different path. In this faith community we commit to looking closely, feeling deeply, and acting courageously; things that compel us to speak truth. These are not easy tasks. They require care, intention, and practice. Without that, even our best intentions can turn into fear or anxiety. That fear is understandable, because speaking truth has always carried risk. But to “evangelize love” is to speak from our deepest values. To say we will “yoke” ourselves to what this world demands of us is no small thing. And each time we do, we affirm that it matters deeply what we say, and what we mean. We show our children that these are more than just words, they are commitments that bring the meaning of our words to life. And when we proclaim love at the center of what we do, our words begin to point towards something greater than we can name.

Just as we learn early on that words can cause harm, we also learn that they can carry a very different kind of weight; that weight we feel when something true is spoken. The kind of weight we feel when our words give gravity to our values, the weight that love begets when we *proclaim* it as we step out into the world. Some words come with baggage, distortions of history or continuing misuse, and that’s not something to erase. But when we say “*evangelize love*,” we don’t have to ignore the ways that evangelization has been harmfully confused with different words, like “proselytize.” Instead, we can acknowledge these past misrepresentations as we reclaim “evangelize” in its intended meaning: to share good news. And the good news we share is not about exclusion or superiority. It’s about love. It’s about speaking boldly and openly about community, justice, compassion, and equity in all its forms. It’s how we show our children that it matters deeply what we say, what our words point to, and what we do about it. It reminds us that our values are not something to be whispered behind closed doors, they’re something to proclaim.

2025-26 Religious Education Enrollment

Religious Education classes begin Sunday, September 14. For families wanting to enroll children, email Nelson Moroukian at nelson@unityunitarian.org.



Summer in the Garden was full of fun, learning and growing this year! Pictured here is a vegetable artist with their creation — one of the highlights of the summer program.

Childcare for Church Events

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

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music Notes

Ahmed Anzaldúa
Director of Music Ministries

The Music Ministry at Unity Church isn't an exclusive club. You don't need a conservatory degree, years of choir experience, or a perfect voice. All you need is a desire to connect through music and the willingness to keep showing up, even when it's challenging. It can be fun and a good social experience, but at its core it is a spiritual practice. This is true as much for the people in the congregation as it is for me.

If you've been enjoying the music from the pews, I want to encourage you to take a step closer. Sing in one of our choirs! All you have to do is come to a rehearsal and try it out. Share your talent in a service. Or, if you have an idea for something completely new, let's try and make it happen.

This church year brings some extraordinary musical opportunities. In December, all of our choirs will join forces with an orchestra for Benjamin Britten's *St. Nicholas* — a vivid, dramatic telling of the real-life story of the man who became Santa Claus. It's a piece full of beauty, humor, and moments that invite the whole congregation into the story. The orchestra itself will be a combination of professional string players and amateurs from our congregation and community (stay tuned for more details!).

Looking ahead to May, for Foote Sunday, we'll present Craig Hella Johnson's *Considering Matthew Shepard*. This powerful work blends classical, folk, and gospel styles to tell the story of Matthew Shepard's life and legacy, offering a message of compassion, reflection, and hope. Some of you may remember the closing movement, "All of Us", which the choirs performed last year. That was a warm-up to tackle the full emotional arc of the piece.

We'll also continue our tradition of pick-up choirs, Wellspring Wednesday hymn discussions, and other ways to make music without a year-long commitment. These are perfect opportunities to meet fellow music-makers, try something new, and experience the joy of creating sound in community.

However you choose to participate, you're helping to make our worship deeper, our connections stronger, and our community more vibrant. The music ministry isn't just something you listen to on Sundays — it's something you can belong to. This can be your musical home and the door is open. Come in!

First Rehearsals

Unity Singers: Tuesday, September 2, 7:30 p.m., Parish Hall
Unity Choir: Thursday, September 4, 7:30 p.m., Parish Hall
Women's Ensemble: Sunday, September 7, 10:30 a.m., Foote Room
Children's Choir (grades 1-5): Sunday, September 14, 10:15 a.m., Choir Room

An Opportunity to Bring a Wonderful Piano to Our Sanctuary

Our Sanctuary piano has served us faithfully for many years, but it is now showing its age. Recently, Ahmed Anzaldúa found a terrific opportunity to acquire a well-maintained Steinway D in beautiful condition. This instrument, considered the gold standard of concert grand pianos, could serve us for decades, offering the kind of rich, expressive sound usually reserved for major concert halls. We have the chance to purchase it directly from its current owner at a price well below both new and used retail. We also plan to purchase sturdy wheels for easy movement, a humidity control system, and a protective cover that reaches all the way to the floor. This new instrument would be a tremendous asset to our music ministry and to everyone who makes and experiences music at Unity Church.

We hope to raise \$60,000 by September 30, and welcome contributions of any amount. To donate or ask questions, contact Laura Park at laura@unityunitarian.org.

Border CrosSing 2025-26 Season

The upcoming season includes: An a cappella program of Venezuelan choral music by Modesta Bor and Antonio Estévez, a *Serenata Navideña* Community Sing, the cherished *Navidad Nuestra* program, a performance of their debut album *Un milagro de fe* including Ariel Ramírez's *Misa Criolla* and Calixto Álvarez's *Réquiem Osún*, a *Día de las Madres* Community Sing, and the return of the Salsa Dance Party program! Please check their website, newsletters, and social media for more information. Border CrosSing is thankful for the support of the Unity Church community and look forward to seeing you this season! bordercrossingmn.org

BORDER CROSSING	
2025-2026 SEASON	
SEPTEMBER 20 & 21, 2025 <i>Canto a la vida</i>	APRIL 19, 2026 <i>Un Milagro de Fe</i>
DECEMBER 13, 2025 <i>Serenata Navideña Community Sing</i>	MAY 2, 2026 <i>Día de las Madres Community Sing</i>
DECEMBER 20 & 21, 2025 <i>Navidad Nuestra</i>	MAY 15 & 17, 2026 <i>Border CrosSing Dance Party</i>
BORDERCROSSINGMN.ORG	



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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

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**TIME SENSITIVE
MATERIAL**



Székely Gate Dedication

Saturday, September 6

10:00 a.m.

Green Space at Unity Church

The congregation of Unity Church will celebrate the dedication of a Székely Gate gifted to us by our partner church in Homoródszentpéter.

All are welcome to join this celebration!

