

## Waiting

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. We explore each theme in worship and in our newsletter; in covenant groups, guided writing sessions and Wednesday evening programming; and in our community outreach ministries, our literary journal and programs, and many other opportunities. The December theme is Waiting.

Waiting has, perhaps justifiably, been given a bad rap. It conjures up time wasted in waiting rooms with dog-eared magazines, in traffic jams where the air is choked by exhaust, or in long lines as we queue up to claim some new possession or experience.

But wait. What about the kind of waiting that is less about taking our turn than it is about taking our time and less about arrival than it is about awareness? It is *this* waiting – the quiet, patient kind that turns our hurried world on its head – that calls for our attention in the cold and darkening days of December.

A few years ago, a young freelancer wrote an article about illegal Central American immigrants hopping freight trains in Mexico to reach and cross the U.S. border. When a picture editor told the journalist her story needed a dramatic photo, she headed to a Mexican train yard with her camera to hop a boxcar with the immigrants.

For seven days she waited for the right train and the right moment. Some of the trains moved too fast, others were too empty. Some weren't headed to the border; others moved through in the middle of the night. For a week she waited, passing the time by photographing the immigrants waiting with her. Only at the end of the week did she realize she had all the photographs the story needed – not images of the heart-stopping leap onto the train nor of the clattering journey down the tracks, but images of the immigrants' long, hot and hungry, often dangerous wait in the train yard.

Waiting can be as difficult to practice as it is to photograph, but it has as much to do with going someplace new as it has to do with sitting still. We might dismiss it as an annoyance, a petty passivity or undesired delay. But waiting is about preparing ourselves for something different. Waiting is about learning to see and listen so attentively that we will know when something fresh and providential comes along.

It can be challenging to experience this kind of waiting when we know how the season's stories all turn out. We already know not only who is about to be born but also when and where. We already know that though the Maccabees had only one day's oil, it would burn for the

requisite eight-day watch. And certainly we know that the longest night, on winter solstice, will inevitably be followed by longer days to come.

And yet, for all our knowing, the invitation of this season and its stories is to enter a deeper kind of waiting – to wait without knowing exactly what we're waiting for. It is a kind of faithful listening, an attentiveness to possibilities we may not even yet imagine. Surely, for all our knowing, the world still contains enough mystery, enough uncertainty, enough proleptic promise that we too in the 21st century can take up this kind of faithful watch.

Can you hear the child's quiet voice of hope born outside the inn? Can you see a guiding star in the night sky or hear the host of voices singing praise for a new day and a new order? Can you light the lamp of your faith even though you fear it will run dry before your watch is through?

This is the waiting we are called into as people of faith. This is the waiting that is required not only in this season but also as we work year round for justice, as we hope tirelessly for peace, and as we live day by day into the promise of beloved community.

"[T]he work of peace and justice, like the work of the Seed within, is one of patient waiting," says Quaker Douglas Gwyn. "Patience is an active condition of the spirit. It can march; it can demonstrate; it can live in jails. It can survive the long haul of transformation."

So we are called to wait and to watch on our feet, in the long haul of transformation.

Karen Hering  
Consulting Literary Minister

### Waiting Resources

#### BOOKS

**Reaching Out**, by Henri Nouwen, a perceptive exploration of befriending emptiness as a practice of the spiritual life.

**Room**, by Emma Donoghue, a potent and darkly beautiful novel narrated by a five-year-old child raised captive in a single room with his mother.

#### MOVIES

**Field of Dreams**, the 1989 feature film about an Iowa farmer who builds a baseball diamond in his fields and waits for the Chicago Black Sox to come and play in it.

#### STORY ON-LINE

**Thomas Potter and John Murray:** <http://www.murraygrove.org/pottermurray.html> The historical account of 18th-century farmer Thomas Potter, who faithfully waited 10 years for a minister who would preach universalism in the chapel he built in New Jersey.

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# JUST WORDS / WHEEL OF LIFE

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## Just Words

It can be so difficult to take time to just be, to wait for some "moment" to emerge. Harry Schofield, a colleague and a teacher, spent every morning waiting for the dawn. He woke in the dark, dressed, and with his two journals in hand, went outside to wait for the dawn and for the words of the prophets and the poets to come to him. Harry, you see, had spent years and years in the ministry memorizing scripture and poems by heart. I can imagine Harry sitting in his Northern California patio waiting for the poets to come. As he said, sometimes the poets don't come. But he always thought the waiting worthwhile. It was his practice, this art of watchful waiting. It involved opening the heart, eyes and ears. It involved listening within and without and noticing. In this practice of waiting, he watched the seasons go by, trees grow into maturity and old age. He lost his beloved first wife and grieved for her. Years later, he found love again and waited until his intended was convinced and agreed to marry him.

In this season of so much busyness, of doing and celebrating, it can be difficult to reach for the gifts of the spirit, which always involve waiting.

I think of waiting for babies to be born, or babies to arrive via airplanes and adoption agencies. I think of waiting for loved ones to pass over from this life to the next. I think of waiting for new life, I think of waiting for the contemplated changes to the building to take place. I think of waiting for a poem to take root in my life.

During a lectio divina session we sat in a small circle in the chapel. After some silence, a poem was read. Silence again. The poem was read again by a different person. It hardly seemed like the same poem. I heard completely different things with the different reading. Again, the poem was read. Again the poem was read by a different reader. Again, a line emerged that had flowed by unnoticed in the first two readings. I wrote about the line, letting it travel deeper into my thoughts and feelings. I sat, imagining the line coming to life, imagining what meaning and purpose it might have in my life. I left the small lectio divina session calmer, more connected to myself and those around me.

May we wait for the important but intangible things of this season with clarity and intention. And may the waiting in turn produce fruits of—and for—the spirit.

— *Janne Eller-Isaacs*

## Spiritual Practice for IT Professionals

Saturday, January 21 • 9:00–Noon • Parish Hall

"If you don't want to be replaced by a computer, don't act like one."

— Arno Penzias

Working with computers can be isolating work. Sometimes one can feel a lack of nourishment. It can be difficult to make meaning when one relates primarily to machines however fascinating they may be. It's hard not to take the pressures—and work—home at night. So how do IT professionals find inspiration, time for reflection, and a deeper connection to what can be truly significant work? Spiritual practice can be genuinely helpful. Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs are offering a three-hour workshop designed especially for IT professionals. Registration is required. Please contact Martha Tilton by email at [martha@unityunitarian.org](mailto:martha@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x105 to register.

Cost: Pledging: Free // Non Pledging: \$50.00

## The Wheel of Life

### In Celebration

**Maria Boland and Cory Ploessl**  
married November 19, 2011

### In Memoriam

**Liticia "Tish" Wolston**  
June 22, 1927–November 10, 2011

The Church Office will be closed on December 26, 27, and 28, and on January 2, for the winter holidays.

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# DECEMBER SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION

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## Sunday Worship Calendar

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

### December 4: *Why We Wait* — Rob Eller-Isaacs

We wait because we have to. Waiting is part of the natural order. We wait because “good things come to those who sit and wait.” Gestation, ripening, spiritual maturity all involve waiting. Rob and Worship Associate Jeanne Barker-Nunn will introduce our advent theme as, once again we breathe in peace and breathe out love.

### December 11: *Why We Can't Wait* — Janne Eller-Isaacs

There is often wisdom in waiting, particularly in this season. But sometimes wisdom calls us to say, “No more waiting!” I think of the great social movements in our history, when people finally said “no” to patiently waiting for things to change and changed the world in their impatience. Join Janne and Worship Associate Steve Harper as they explore times when we can't or shouldn't wait.

### December 18: *The Empty Present*

As Christmas Day approaches the whole church family will gather to sing (SHOUT at 11:00 a.m.) carols, prepare ourselves to greet the child, and remember some of the nicest gifts we ever got. Gifts like peace and joy and yes, even emptiness. The ministers will be joined by Director of Religious Education, Kerri Meyer for a festive celebration.

### December 25: One service only at 10:00 a.m.

#### *Jesus and the Black Sheep* — Rachel Lonberg

The Biblical story of Jesus begins with his family tree. On Christmas Day, we will take a closer look at Jesus' family, which is full of scoundrels, tricksters and other colorful characters. Join Rachel Lonberg and Worship Associate Carol Le Bourveau as we tell stories of Jesus' family and explore what this complicated, ancient family might teach us about our complicated modern ones.

### January 1, 2012: One service only at 10:00 a.m.

#### January 8, 2012: *Tolling of Bells*

We begin each new year with a memorial service for those who have died in the previous year. Rob and Janne will each eulogize men and women whose lives have shaped the world of art or politics, literature or science. Everyone will have an opportunity to acknowledge those they've loved and lost.

## Offering Recipients

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

### December 4: Open Access Connections

Open Access Connections (formerly Twin Cities Voice Mail) was founded in 1994 so that low income people in the Twin Cities could have free access to voice mail that would lead to increased self-sufficiency. Under the new name, the organization has expanded to serve all of Minnesota and is going beyond simply voice mail to make sure low income people have equal access to other technologies such as computers, cell phones, the internet, etc. Today, 350 agencies across the state partner with Open Access Connections to allow nearly 5,000 individual and families each year to have a safe and secure place to receive messages from employers, landlords, children's schools, doctors, social service providers, family members, and friends.

### December 11: Project Excel

Project Excel is a youth tutoring and enrichment program focused on the long-term academic success of youth in under-resourced areas of New Orleans. Through collaborative outreach with local schools, organizations and community members, the program provides holistic educational support to youth. In addition to providing tutoring services, Project Excel offers year-round enrichment and leadership classes, including Audio Production, Hip Hop Poetry, Video Production, Graphic Novel Writing, Theater, Dance and Youth Advocates Program. Project Excel was founded by Unity Member Ethan Seabury-Kolod.

### December 18: Heart of the Beast

The Heart of the Beast Puppet Theatre provides community theatre, produces original plays and commissioned spectacles, and teaches workshops in mask making and peacemaking throughout the Twin Cities area. This year marks the 35th anniversary of their beloved annual Minneapolis May Day Parade in Powderhorn Park. Many Unity Church children and adults have participated in performances, puppet making workshops and the parade.

### December 25: Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery

The greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery works in partnership with parents in crisis and the community to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect.



Holiday worship information is available on page 9.



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# BOARD OF TRUSTEES / UNITY TOMORROW

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## Board of Trustees

From Craig Allen, Trustee

One Saturday morning this past month saw our busy building hosting the members of the Interfaith Youth Leadership Coalition. This organization of young people, 14- to 18-year-olds with Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Baha'i, and secular perspectives from across the metro area, meet regularly and have it as their mission to foster interfaith understanding, reduce prejudice, and act together on common values through service and justice for the good of the world. Among other activities, they sponsor and coordinate the Interfaith Youth Day of Service on Presidents' Day every year which attracts participation from hundreds of Twin Cities young people.

Among the expressed purposes of this particular meeting, an overnight retreat, was to share experiences and learn how to advocate for a multi-faith world. But I think an unstated purpose was for each member of the group to learn how to honor implicit promises between themselves and stay in covenant with one another. The goal, at least in part, had to be to inspire trust among members so as to be able to sustain the planning and work that needs to be done in the coming months. Or it might be said that these young people were learning to see beyond the religious faith of each member to the good faith of all members.

Here at Unity Church we too, of course, have made many similar agreements with one another, both explicit and tacit. Perhaps our most widely shared covenant is that between members—we agree to look beyond our differences of opinion, to credit every person with the motivation of seeking the common good, and to continue to work and worship together. Additionally the members of the Board, when elected, covenant with the congregation to align budget, policy, and planning decisions with the mission and ends statements of the church according to the best understanding of each Trustee. I can only speak for myself, but I am sure I am not alone, when I say that I feel the force of that commitment when I am engaged in any Board activity. It is through such mutual commitment that we will continue building Unity's future.

## The Unity Church 2012 Board of Trustees

Craig Allen: [library42@msn.com](mailto:library42@msn.com)

Rob Fulton: [robwfulton@gmail.com](mailto:robwfulton@gmail.com)

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Marg Walker: [marg.walker@comcast.net](mailto:marg.walker@comcast.net)

## Unity Tomorrow

### Operating Pledge Drive and Capital Campaign

From Dan Huelster

The *Unity Tomorrow* fall campaign is drawing to a close. We are approaching our goal for the Operating Pledge drive. The Capital Campaign will continue, as we strive to reach our \$8,000,000 goal.

Thank you, each and every one who considered what your operating pledge might be given these financial times. Thanks to those who were able to increase their pledge, to those who were able to maintain, and to those who had to revisit their giving and adjust for the realities of fiscal constraints. Each gift to the operating pledge is given as a reflection of our commitment to our church. *Our church*, this place where we come to lead lives of *integrity, service and joy*.

The monies being raised for the Capital Campaign will inform the work to be done on our building. This edifice that we hold so dear will become safer, greener, and more welcoming. At our Annual Meeting in November, we voted to proceed with the plans recommended to us by the *Unity Tomorrow* design teams. We anticipate work to commence in late spring or early summer of 2012.

**For those of you who have yet to make your Capital Campaign commitment, the time is now.** As Rob Eller-Isaacs has written elsewhere, *just as we have reaped the harvest sown by previous generations, we have seeds to sow for those to come after us.* We are looking to usher our community into an even more vibrant future, with a facility that will enable us to work towards and experience beloved community.

*Unity Tomorrow* has never been about the amount that you give, but the sincere hope that everyone will give generously within their means to both campaigns. Truly, when it comes to taking care of our church now and for the next generation, *it takes a community.*

## Unity Tomorrow

### Congregation Review and Comment Session

Sunday, December 11 • 12:30 p.m. • Foote Room

Come for an update on the *Unity Tomorrow* facilities planning process with time for learning, questions, and comments. All are welcome and childcare will be provided.

All of the most recent renderings, floor plans, and design development details are available online at <http://www.unitytomorrow.org/current-site.html>.

Paper copies of the *Unity Tomorrow* newsletter are available in the information kiosks located throughout the church and by contacting the Church Office at 651-228-1456 or by email at [unity@unityunitarian.org](mailto:unity@unityunitarian.org).



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# UNITY CHURCH INTERNS / PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP

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## Rachel Lonberg: 2011-12 Hallman Ministerial Intern



What does our culture have to say about waiting? We are part of a culture that frequently revels in instant gratification... and then we turn on the radio. Our airways are flooded with songs about waiting.

The Beach Boys think that it would be nice if we were older and we wouldn't have to wait so long. Bob Marley doesn't want to wait in vain for your love. Dusty Springfield and Dionne Warwick are among those wishin' and hopin' and plannin' and dreamin'. Brad Paisley doesn't mind waiting on a woman. Tom Petty tells us that waiting is the hardest part. Jennifer Lopez waits for tonight when you will be safe in her arms. John Mayer proclaims that we keep waiting on the world to change. Foreigner has been waiting for a girl like you to come into their lives. Richard Marx states that wherever you go or whatever you do, he will be right here waiting for you. The Kinks are so tired, tired of waiting, tired of waiting for you. And balladeers from Etta James to Beyoncé proclaim that their waiting is over, "At last, my love has come along. My lonely days are over and life is like a song."

Maybe waiting makes for a good narrative for a song, but I don't think that is the entire story. If we weren't accustomed to waiting for love, for time to pass, or for the bus to arrive, these songs wouldn't mean anything to us.

As December begins, as some of us wait for Christmas, some of us for the return of the light, some of us for the New Year to begin, some of us on personal timelines, we should take heart in knowing that we are not alone in our waiting. If you should ever begin to feel like you are the only one waiting, just turn on the radio.

Rachel Lonberg can be reached at the Church Office by email at [rachel@unityunitarian.org](mailto:rachel@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x129.

## Jim Foti: 2011-12 Ministerial Intern



### Uncommon Conversations

I'm interested in the ethics of the professional sports industry—the economic questions around stadium subsidies, the inherent gender inequalities of the major leagues, the dynamics of race, and the violence of football and the related health problems of players. I'm also well aware

of the family traditions, feelings of community and identity, and general good times that make spectator sports so popular.

There's plenty of material in there for a rich conversation about values, meaning-making, beliefs, and justice. So I started just such a conversation—on Facebook.

Those of you familiar with Facebook know that it doesn't always seem like the best venue for reflection, what with all the party photos and the often mundane personal updates. But when I posted a few thoughts about pro sports during this, the holiday/football season, I was delighted and enlightened by the result. Within a few hours, my cousin in Milwaukee, my friend who lives in Italy, a former journalist who owns a chocolate shop, and a Vikings fan I know from Camp Unistar were among those who posted thoughtful, respectful responses to my original comment and to each other. Such a conversation was unimaginable twenty years ago, and it highlighted one of the many ways we can be enriched by listening to others.

For me, going online is no substitute for going to church, and the Internet can isolate individuals just as easily as it can connect them. But if we're careful and creative and covenantal, we can find ways to convert some of that time that so many of us spend in front of the computer into exchanges and insights we might not otherwise be able to have.

Jim Foti can be reached at the Church Office by email at [jim@unityunitarian.org](mailto:jim@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x212.

## Pathway to Membership: A Series of Three Classes

Contact Julie Handberg at the Church Office ([julieh@unityunitarian.org](mailto:julieh@unityunitarian.org)) to sign up for these classes. Free childcare is provided with at least one week advance request to [christy@unityunitarian.org](mailto:christy@unityunitarian.org).

**Welcome to Unity** is geared to newcomers and those seeking to learn more about Unitarian Universalists and Unity Church. Upcoming classes include Wednesday, December 7, from 7:10-8:30 p.m., and Sunday, January 22, from 12:15-1:45 p.m.

**Finding Yourself at Unity** includes Unitarian Universalist and Unity Church history (including a tour of the church), opportunities to share parts of your religious journey, and discussion of the expectations and benefits of membership. The January class will be held on Saturday, January 21, from 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., and includes a potluck lunch.

**Committing to Unity** is designed for those who are ready to make the membership commitment. This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. The next class will be held on Saturday, December 10, from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

The next **New Member Recognition Ceremony** will be held during the 4:30 p.m. service on Sunday, December 11.

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## Quiz Yourself: World Religious Holidays

1. Saint Patrick was...
  - a.) born the son of a bishop in Ireland, b.) kidnapped from Wales as a boy and enslaved in Ireland, c.) sent by Rome to catechize the Celts
2. Nowruz is...
  - a.) a Persian rite of spring, b.) a Pagan festival for the goddess of the hearth, c.) the king of the underworld in the ancient Norse traditions
3. Candlemas and Imbolc are the festal predecessors of...
  - a.) Mardi Gras, b.) Easter, c.) Groundhog's Day
4. During Lent, it is liturgically inappropriate to say or sing the word...
  - a.) God, b.) alleluia, c.) resurrection
5. Unity's Celebration of New Lives is to baptism as Coming of Age is to...
  - a.) Confirmation, b.) Confession, c.) Beatification

*If you got 5 correct answers: You should sign up to teach "High Feasts and Holy Days" as part of our Junior High Religious Education team!*

*If you got 1-4 correct answers: You should sign up to teach "High Feasts and Holy Days" as part of our Junior High Religious Education team!*

*If you got 0 correct answers: You should sign up to teach "High Feasts and Holy Days" as part of our Junior High Religious Education team!*

The good news is, whether you know the answers or not, you are still qualified to teach our 11:00 a.m. or 4:30 p.m. Junior High *Religious Education* class on High Feasts and Holy Days. There's no better way to learn than to teach and six more teachers are needed to build our teams! All lessons, snacks, games and supplies provided; you bring a curious spirit and some extra energy. You choose which 6-8 Sundays to teach between January 22 and May 13. Contact Kerri ([kerri@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kerri@unityunitarian.org)) in the Church Office for more information. (Answers: 1.b 2.a 3.c 4.b 5.a)

## Save the Date! Saturday, January 28, 2012

The fourth annual Gathering, is a one-day women's spiritual retreat celebrating each woman's voice with invitations for expression and being heard, and for deep listening through art, movement, writing, conversation, and contemplation.

## Lectio Divina: holy reading

**Every Sunday • 10:15-10:45 a.m., between worship services • Ames Chapel**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer called it "spiritual reading." Others following a sixth-century Benedictine practice call it "*lectio divina*" or holy reading. Both names describe a reflective practice of meditating on the written word and listening for "what is found there" by each reader and listener. No experience or registration is necessary. Join us for a quiet, facilitated practice of reflecting on a particular poem on the month's worship theme.

## Heart to Heart: A Couples' Enrichment Weekend

Heart to Heart is a program designed to enrich communication and deepen intimacy in your relationship. This year's 17th annual retreat will be held February 10-12, 2012. All couples committed to their partners and to their relationships are welcome—same-sex and opposite-sex, married and unmarried. Space is limited, so register early. For more information, go to: Heart to Heart at <http://heart.mn.cx> or call Cheri at 612-722-3304.

## Women's Wisdom Circle

The Women's Wisdom Circle continues to meet on the first and third Thursday of each month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. For more information please contact Maryann McGuinn at 651 698 8467.

## Elders' Circle Holiday Gathering Tuesday, December 13 1:00-2:30 p.m.



The Elders' Circle is a group of church elders (self-identified) who gather monthly for fellowship, reflection, and fun. Join us this month for holiday-themed readings, treats, and music! For more info, or to inquire about a ride, contact Ministerial Intern Jim Foti by email at [jim@unityunitarian.org](mailto:jim@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x212.

## Job Transitions Group

**Meets Mondays • 9:30–11:30 a.m.**

The Job Transitions Group offers support, encouragement, and skill-building resources to Unity Church members who are unemployed or underemployed. For more information contact Linda LaBarre, Facilitator, at [lindaleelabarre@gmail.com](mailto:lindaleelabarre@gmail.com).

## Zen Meditation

**Tuesdays • 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.**

**Ames Chapel**

Find renewal and grounding in the practice of Zen meditation. People at any level of experience are welcome. Newcomers are encouraged to arrive 10 minutes early and are welcome to contact Ken Ford at 612-701-0841 or [kford5@comcast.net](mailto:kford5@comcast.net) with questions.

## Caregivers Group

**Thursday, December 15**

**Noon–2:00 p.m.**

Join Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and Pastoral Care Team member Cynthia Orange for an informal support group for caregivers. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org) to participate in this group.

## Living With Grief Group

**Tuesday, December 20**

**7:00-9:00 p.m.**

A group for people living with grief and loss. All are welcome to come discuss issues related to the grieving process. Contact Janne at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org) to participate.

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## Ongoing Groups, open to everyone.

Please contact the person listed for more information or contact the Church Office by phone at 651-228-1456 or by email at [unity@unityunitarian.org](mailto:unity@unityunitarian.org)

**A New Look at the Bible:** Second Thursday of the month (December 8) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

**Afterthoughts:** Sundays after the 9:00 a.m. service. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

**Caregivers Group:** An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (December 15) from Noon–2:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Evergreen Quilters:** Second Tuesday of the month from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760 to find out about the December calendar.

**Grandparent Unitots!:** A playgroup for grandparents and their grandkids. Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Contact: Ona Lentz at 651-222-8117

**Job Transition/Networking:** Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Contact Linda LaBarre, Facilitator, at [lindaleelabarre@gmail.com](mailto:lindaleelabarre@gmail.com)

**Lectio Divina or Spiritual Reading:** Sundays after the 9:00 a.m. service in the Ames Chapel.

**Living With Grief Group:** A group for people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (December 20) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Men's Retirement Group:** Monday, December 5 and 19, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

**Unitots!:** A playgroup for families with kids through preschool age. Fridays at 9:30 a.m. Contact: Michelle Hill at 651-264-0884

**Unity Book Club:** Second Tuesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. On December 13, they will discuss *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit* by Parker J. Palmer. On January 10, they will discuss *Tinkers* by Paul Harding.

**Unity Bridge Club:** First Friday of the month (December 2) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209

**Unity Singles:** Watch for announcements in *This Week at Unity*. Contact: Bonnie Reiland at [bonniereiland@aol.com](mailto:bonniereiland@aol.com)

**Zen Meditation:** Find renewal and grounding in the practice of Zen meditation. Tuesdays from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Contact Ken Ford at [kford5@comcast.net](mailto:kford5@comcast.net)

## Brave Souls & Dreamers

A sneak preview of our fall music and a community discussion of alternative responses to violence in honor of Pearl Harbor Day. Featuring One Voice's newest commission, *Brave Souls & Dreamers* — inspired by the words of peacemakers from around the globe.

**December 7, 2011 – 7 pm**  
Unity Church—Unitarian  
732 Holly Ave., St. Paul

The concert and discussion is free and hosted by Unity Church—Unitarian as part of their Wellspring Wednesday series

More info: [www.ovmc.org](http://www.ovmc.org)  
or 651-298-1954

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## RADUISIA

WINTER MELODIES OF EASTERN EUROPE  
by  
MILA VOCAL ENSEMBLE

SUN DEC 4 NEW BRIGHTON, BIGELOW CHAPEL 2PM  
FRI DEC 16 RED WING, HOBGOBLIN 7:30PM  
SUN DEC 18 ST. PAUL, UNITY CHURCH 2PM

TICKETS AT DOOR \$10.05 STUDENTS, SENIORS & KIDS  
FOR MORE INFO VISIT [MILAVOCALENSEMBLE.COM](http://MILAVOCALENSEMBLE.COM)



# WINTER SOLSTICE AND HOLIDAY EVENTS



## Winter Solstice Reflection

Winter Solstice occurs this year on December 21, at 11:30 p.m., CT. This is the first day of winter—the shortest day and longest night of the year. Every day thereafter, the days grow longer until Summer Solstice, when we have the longest day and the shortest night.

Wintertime is the season of rest and renewal for the natural world. Plants stop growing and return to the earth, focusing their energy in their roots or in seed that lies dormant until Spring. Most animals that don't migrate find comfort in shelter or hibernate until warmer weather. For us, as humans, it can also be a time of rest, a time of going inward to nourish our souls, a time of re-creation. However, as we head inside for the cold Minnesota winter, it's often the opposite—we find more and more to do. Not only are the holidays coming, but everything that was set aside over the summer and fall now captivates our attention.

The part of us that is in touch with the turning of the seasons yearns for this time of turning inward to nourish our roots, this time of rest. What would it mean to spend time in the darkness waiting and ready for the unknown, quiet and attentive to the unknown? What if we didn't immediately turn to our to-do lists whenever we had a free moment, thus filling up our time with the known? What if we stopped for a moment to take in the darkening, to rest more, to respond to the invitation to slow down and nourish our souls? How might our lives be different?

Here's a starting place for a journal exploration, or a short ritual alone or with friends:

1. Begin in the dark, sitting in silence for a time, breathing in the darkness and the stillness.
2. As you sit with yourself, notice your body and feelings. What arises in you? How is it to sit here quietly with nothing to do?
3. When you are ready, light a single candle.
4. Notice if there is a change in you with this light—keep coming back to your body and heart.
5. Name out loud or in your journal what the darkness and stillness is calling forth in you. You may want to follow your body's impulse to move or sound this experience.
6. Acknowledge your gratefulness for this inward time of re-creation, and blow out the candle.

Please join us for the Winter Solstice Celebration at 7:00 p.m. on December 21, in the Parish Hall. May you welcome and find grace in this changing of the seasons.

— Winter Blessings, Katy Taylor  
Seasonal Coordinator Worship Associate, [katy@thewingedheart.net](mailto:katy@thewingedheart.net)

## Mitten Tree

Beginning December 4, the Unity Mitten Tree will be up at the intersection of the downstairs hallways. Decorate the tree with new children's mittens, gloves, hats and scarves. On January 9, items will be donated to Obama Elementary to be distributed to children who don't have adequate winter gear.

## Wreath and Cookie Sales!

Please plan to purchase your holiday wreath and treats from our high school youth in support of their pilgrimage to Boston. Wreath and cookie sales start Sunday, December 4, following each service.

## Mano a Mano Craft Sale

**Sunday, December 4**

**9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. • Cloister**

New bags, hats and scarves! Purchases help support Bolivian artisans as well as Mano a Mano International.

## Evergreen Quilters Sale

**Sunday, December 11**

Come to see what's available at the Evergreen Quilters table in the Parish Hall after the morning services. Money raised from selling quilts and other fiber items is donated to: The Family Place, a day shelter for homeless families; Jeremiah House, a transitional housing program; and Sharing Korner food shelf.

## "Santa Pause" Free Childcare

**Wednesday, December 14**

**6:00-8:30 p.m.**

Unity families are invited to take advantage of this gift from the Junior High Youth Group—two and a half hours of free childcare so that parents can finish holiday tasks or just have a break. Pizza dinner included. Crafts and games supervised by our 6th-8th graders and their parents. **REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.** Contact [christy@unityunitarian.org](mailto:christy@unityunitarian.org) to sign up your kids ages 6 months through 12 years for this event.

## Winter Solstice Celebration

**Wednesday, December 21 • 7:00 p.m. • Parish Hall**

Come join this contemplative, family-friendly, participatory, Celtic-inspired ritual to mark the turning of the year as the darkness gives way to the growing light. This participatory ritual will include chanting, meditation, candle-lighting, singing, and cauldron jumping. Kids—bring animal masks and hand percussion (rattles, shakers, bells)! If you would like to participate as a ritual leader or in a facilitating capacity (greeter, set-up, etc.) for this December 21 ritual, or if you have any questions, please contact Katy at [katy@thewingedheart.net](mailto:katy@thewingedheart.net) or 651-291-8551.





# HOLIDAY WORSHIP AND CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



**Sunday, December 18**

## **The Empty Present • Family Sunday**

As Christmas Day approaches the whole church family will gather to sing (Carol Shout will be at the 11:00 a.m. service) carols, prepare ourselves to greet the child, and remember some of the nicest gifts we ever got. Gifts like, peace and joy and yes, even emptiness. The ministers will be joined by Director of Religious Education, Kerri Meyer for a festive celebration.

**Wednesday, December 21**

## **Winter Solstice Celebration • 7:00 p.m. • Parish Hall**

Come join this contemplative, family-friendly, participatory, Celtic-inspired ritual to mark the turning of the year as the darkness gives way to the growing light. See page 8 for details.

**Saturday, December 24**

## **Find A Stillness • 10:00 a.m.**

In the full rush of Christmas Eve morning we will gather in the quiet of Ames Chapel. There will be extended periods of silence to provide time for relief and contemplation. The service will include an invitation to join in communion.

## **Christmas Pageant • 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.**

Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs narrate the story of the nativity as Unity Church's children and youth act out the story in the Sanctuary. Children, youth, and adults are welcome to come and participate in Unity Church's annual holiday tradition. Families with children age three and under are encouraged to attend the 4:00 p.m. service.

## **Silent Night and Candlelight: Family Lessons and Carols • 7:00 p.m.**

Join worship leaders Kerri Meyer and Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs as we retell the history of the beloved carol "Silent Night" and celebrate the promise of peace within the Christmas story. This is a service for the entire family, with hymns and homilies that children and adults will enjoy. Nursery care available for infants and toddlers. Musicians: Stu Janis, hammered dulcimer; Taylor Burr, voice and guitar.

## **Silent Night and Candlelight: Lessons and Carols • 10:00 p.m.**

In the glow of candlelight, we retell the Christmas story as well as the history of the beloved carol "Silent Night." Join worship leaders Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs as we celebrate the promise of peace that Christmas Eve brings—even to the trenches of war. With the sounds of hammered dulcimer and guitar, this intimate service will blend beloved holiday tradition with a courageous call to peace. Musicians: Stu Janis, hammered dulcimer; Taylor Burr, voice and guitar; KrisAnne Weiss, mezzo-soprano.

**Sunday, December 25 • One service only at 10:00 a.m.**

## **Jesus and the Black Sheep**

The Biblical story of Jesus begins with his family tree. On Christmas Day, we will take a closer look at Jesus' family, which is full of scoundrels, tricksters and other colorful characters. Join Rachel Lonberg and Worship Associate Carol Le Bourveau as they tell stories of Jesus' family and explore what this complicated, ancient family might teach us about our complicated modern ones.

**Sunday, January 1, 2012 • One service only at 10:00 a.m.**

**Sunday, January 8, 2012 • 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.**

## **Tolling of Bells**

We begin each new year with a memorial service for those who have died in the previous year. Everyone will have an opportunity to acknowledge those they've loved and lost.

## **Christmas Pageant and Pageant Choir**

All families with children and youth who are or have been recently enrolled in Religious Education are invited to participate in the annual Unity Church Christmas pageant. Pageant information has been e-mailed to families and registration is available online at <http://www.unityunitarian.org/pageant-registration.html>. Registration must be returned by Sunday, December 4. For more information about the Pageant contact Kelley Loughrey at [kelleyloughrey@comcast.net](mailto:kelleyloughrey@comcast.net).

The adult Pageant Choir is open to all. The Children's Pageant Choir is open to children in third through sixth grade. For more information about the Pageant Choirs, please contact Ruth Palmer at the Church Office.

**Please note** the important dates below (parents are asked to assume volunteer roles and should plan to attend all of the following events):

**Wednesday, December 6**

Cast assignments are posted on church website.

**Sunday, December 11  
Pageant Costume Fitting**

Costume fittings at 10:15 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. in the hallway outside of Ames Chapel.

**Sunday, December 18**

**Pageant Adult Choir Rehearsal**  
10:00–11:00 a.m. in Robbins Parlor  
**Pageant Children's Choir Rehearsal**  
10:00–11:00 a.m. in Foote Room

**Friday, December 23**

**Pageant Dress Rehearsal**  
12:45–4:00 p.m.

**Saturday, December 24**

**Pageant Performances**  
Pageant services are at 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. Performers and parents should arrive at 3:00 p.m.

# LITERARY MINISTRY

## A Ministry of Words: Within, Among and Beyond

From Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering

Three years ago, when I arrived at Unity Church to begin a new ministry of poetry, story and words, none of us knew what that might actually look like. We wanted to explore the power of words for deepening faith and building community. We wanted to engage writing as a spiritual practice and a tool for social action. We hoped to increase our fluency in the languages of faith.

With modest financial support from the Fund for Unitarian Universalism and individual donations, and with the considerable literary talent and interest here at Unity Church, together we developed a new form of ministry. We created opportunities for weaving words and writing into the life of the congregation. Some of the words came from writers long ago and far away. Some came from me. But *most* of the words were yours. And all sprang from our human search for meaning, for love and connection, for faithful living; and together they made for a rich and salient conversation.

The funding that has supported my work here in the congregation has now ended, but the conversation we have begun will continue. I will take the Open Page writing sessions to other congregations, community settings and retreats. In 2012, I will serve as writer in residence at Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality, developing additional invitations for engaging writing as a spiritual practice and a tool for social action. And I will be completing a book about writing as a doorway to faithful living, hoping to reach an even broader audience.

As the next stage of my ministry now stretches beyond this congregation, I value and will depend on its enduring taproot here – a root that has fed it and will continue to steady its growth into the wider community.

The Greek poet Yannis Ritsos once wrote:

*Every word is a doorway  
to a meeting, one often cancelled,  
and that's when a word is true – when it insists on the meeting.*

Here at Unity Church, I want to thank you for passing through the doorway with me to join this meeting between words and faithful community. With curiosity and wonder, I now eagerly wait to discover how the meeting will be enlarged yet again as the words insistently lead us beyond.



## Writing and Reading As Spiritual Practice

### OPEN PAGE Writing Sessions

Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering will continue to lead Open Page guided writing sessions such as the one listed below. Check individual listings for location and registration requirements and fees. For more information visit [www.unityunitarian.org/literary-ministry.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/literary-ministry.html).

### Sacred Time, Sacred Space

Thursday, December 1

At moonrise, 12:04-2:30 p.m.

Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality,  
1890 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul  
Registration and fee information at:  
[www.wisdomwayscenter.org](http://www.wisdomwayscenter.org)

A day of rest can be hard to come by. But an empty day, like an empty page, can open sacred and creative possibilities. "All creation springs from emptiness," says writer Wayne Muller. Before the rapid holiday pace picks up, this midday writing session reflects on the gift of Sabbath rest and other sacred time and space.

### Nonwriting Program

### Winter Solstice Celebration and Ritual: When Shadows Hold Their Breath

Wednesday, December 21

7:00-8:30 p.m.

Carondelet Center, 1890 Randolph Ave., St. Paul

Free registration on-line,  
[www.wisdomwayscenter.org](http://www.wisdomwayscenter.org)

Led by Karen Hering

"There is a certain slant of light," Emily Dickinson wrote, on winter afternoons. "When it comes, the Landscape listens—Shadows—hold their breath." In this time of quiet stillness, when the winter landscape listens, we gather to celebrate the Winter Solstice and the slant of light it brings. With candles and shadow, with poetry, music and silence, we will hold the night's darkness and its light, its stillness and its song.

COST: Donation

# LIBRARIES AND BOOKSTALL / WELLSPRING WEDNESDAYS

## What's New in the Library and Bookstall

from Barbara Foss and Shelley Butler

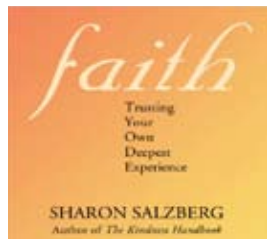


*Teach us, O Lord, the disciplines of patience, for to wait is often harder than to work.*

— Peter Marshall, Scottish clergyman

Leaping Loon, a UU/seminary student/blogger, writes that in this time of waiting, "We are invited to be the traveler and the child, the prophet and the promise. We are given this period to journey inward and prepare ourselves for the blessing of hope and the possibility of a miracle."

## Featured in the Bookstall



*Faith* by Sharon Salzberg and *Being Peace* by Thich Nhat Hanh. Both encourage the Buddhist practice of living "right in the moment we are alive." In a journey of faith, everything is moving onward to something else, inside and outside. Faith resides not in the outcome,

but in the willingness to see the possibility for change. Visit the bookstall on Sundays after the morning services to take a closer look at these two thoughtful and reflective guides.

## In the Library

*Chaos, Wonder and the Spiritual Adventure of Parenting: An Anthology* is a collection of writing on how children impact the spirituality of adults, by bestselling authors such as Barbara Kingsolver and Barry Lopez, and the exceptional Rosemary Bray McNatt. On the lighter side, *Ma, There's Nothing to Do in Here: A Word From Your Baby-in-Waiting* by Barbara Park is a tongue-in-cheek look at waiting, from a baby anxious to be born. Still the best children's novel on the true meaning of Christmas, Barbara Robinson's *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* makes all readers laugh while it touches your heart — read it together with a child in your life.



May we keep on waiting, and find peace in our own deepest experience.

**Cairns**  
Coming mid-December!

## Wellspring Wednesdays

A weeknight at church including dinner, worship, and learning. All are welcome.

**6:00 p.m. Dinner:** \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family, and can be paid by cash or check.

**6:45 p.m. Worship service** in the Ames Chapel.

**7:10 p.m. Programs** follow worship. Childcare is available.

## December 7: Brave Souls & Dreamers

December 7, 2011, marks the 60th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. To honor this anniversary, members of One Voice Mixed Chorus are coming to Wellspring Wednesday to share their insights about "Brave Souls & Dreamers" a cantata that draws on inspirational words from Gandhi, Jesus, Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, Isaiah, Confucius and Buddha. The text boldly contrasts a prevailing hope for peace with the realities of war. Come and join Jane Ramseyer Miller, the artistic director of One Voice Mixed Chorus, in a wonderful exploration of a piece of music that honors peace at this moment in time.

## Wellspring Wednesday is on Winter Break from December 14-January 4 and will resume on January 11.

### Save the dates!

A Wellspring Wednesday series on "Homelessness in St. Paul and Ramsey County" sponsored by the Unity Church Affordable Housing Outreach Ministry Team

### January 18: Homelessness Series Part 1

#### **Homeless People from 16 to 76**

Who are these young people, families and single adults? Why are they homeless? Speakers from organizations serving homeless people and those who have been homeless will help us understand the scope and the reasons for this crisis in our community.

### January 25: Homelessness Series Part 2

#### **Homelessness: The Community Response**

How local government and faith communities are addressing the issues and needs. Representatives of Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul and members of churches actively involved will describe their efforts to meet the needs of homeless people and break the cycles of homelessness.

### February 1: Homelessness Series Part 3

#### **Help and Hope for Homeless People**

A moderated discussion about opportunities where we live, where we work, and here at Unity Church.

## Wellspring Wednesday Ongoing Offerings

**Yoga:** Weekly, \$10 per class or \$50/6 classes

**Tween Youth Group (grades 4-8):** Weekly, all are welcome, see page 14 for details

**UU Families Dinner Table Talk:** Monthly, watch for details.

**Childcare/Children's Programming:** Weekly, childcare check-in is in the Parish Hall. Free.

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# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

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## Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Update

### Guest at Your Table

Participation in *Guest at Your Table* nurtures a spirit of gratitude, justice, equity and compassion in human relations. *Guest at Your Table* fosters understanding and awareness of UUSC's human rights work.

*Guest at Your Table* is an annual UUSC tradition. Congregation members were given a box to take home on November 13. The box features "guests" that UUSC has worked with recently. The table mat in this year's box may generate conversation about "Philanthropy." If you missed getting a box, pick up one in the Parish Hall.

### How does UUSC invest *Guest at Your Table* donations?

The following illustrates the many ways in which UUSC translates support into tangible projects to advance human rights:

- Helps families in Myanmar bring their crops to market successfully. Participating in revolving loans allows farmers to buy food and meet basic needs while waiting for their harvest, when they will be able to sell their rice at a better and fairer price.
- Supports STITCH, a network of unionists, activists and organizers who connect women in Central America and the U.S. so they together can focus on economic justice.
- Provides an ox for a group of families returning home from post-war camps in northern Uganda.
- Creates a public education forum to train youth on voting rights in their hometowns in Egypt and Tunisia.
- Trains youth for livelihoods in preparing nutritious meals with traditional food crops, planting organic foods and taking care of the environment.

### Become a member

Make a membership gift by completing the form on the side of the *Guest at Your Table* box. To learn more about membership, go to [www.use.org](http://www.use.org).

Return *Guest at Your Table* boxes in the Parish Hall on or before December 11.

**Unity Church**  
**will host Project Home**  
**in**  
**May!**  
**(Not in January after all.)**

It's never too early to pick a date and mark your calendar.  
For more information contact Anna Newton at [newtona@comcast.net](mailto:newtona@comcast.net)

### Pilgrimage to India

Learn more about the first Unity Church Pilgrimage to India scheduled for March of 2012. This opportunity is a part of the Unitarian Universalist Association Holdeen India Program that has supported justice projects for the most vulnerable people in India over the past 27 years.

The first information session for the trip will take place on Wednesday, November 30, at 7:10 p.m. in the Crothers Room and on Sunday, December 4, at 10:15 a.m. in the Crothers and again at 12:15 p.m. in the Gannett Room. For more information, contact Pat Haff by email at [pat@unityunitarian.org](mailto:pat@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x126.

### Whole Farm Coop

Buy meat, cheese, produce and more from local, sustainable farms and pick it up at Unity Church! Order from [www.wholefarmcoop.com](http://www.wholefarmcoop.com) or call 320-732-3023 by Wednesday, December 14. Orders will be delivered to Unity Church on Wednesday, December 21.

### Evergreen Foodshelf

The third Sunday of every month is Evergreen Food Drive Sunday. Donations can be brought anytime and should be placed in the barrels located at both the Holly and Portland Avenue entrances. Suggested items for December 18: bottles of detergent (dish or clothing) and toilet paper.

### From the Affordable Housing Outreach Ministry Team Homelessness Series

#### January 18: Part 1

*Homeless Peoples from 16 to 76*

#### January 25: Part 2

*Homelessness: The Community Response*

#### February 1: Part 3

*Help and Hope for Homeless People*

See page 11 for more information.

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# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

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## Defeat the Minnesota Marriage Amendment at Unity Church

The Unity Church organizing efforts to defeat the Minnesota Marriage Amendment in 2012 is off and running. Over 60 people attended two information meetings at Unity in June and October to learn about the larger organizing efforts of "OutFront" and "Minnesota United for All Families." Subsequently, seven Unity Church committees have formed to work on defeating the amendment throughout this next year. These committees are:

1. Training and Tracking
2. Interfaith
3. Campaign Related Fundraising
4. Supporting the Congregation
5. Programming
6. Youth Initiative
7. Campaign Related Activities

If you are interested in participating on any of these committees, please contact Pat Haff at the Church Office by email at [pat@unityunitarian.org](mailto:pat@unityunitarian.org) or by phone at 651-228-1456 x126.

## Marriage Amendment Campaign

### From Jane Bacon, UUs Out For Marriage

*Will this amendment allow same-sex couples to marry? No.*

Currently MN state law (517.01) defines marriage as "a civil contract between a man and a woman..." In other words, same-sex marriage is **currently prohibited** under state law. Whether or not the amendment passes, same-sex marriage will still not be allowed.

*So what difference does it make if the amendment passes or fails? There will be no immediate impact because same-sex marriage will remain illegal either way. But...*

- Currently this prohibition is by state statute and could be changed with a change in the legislature. A single election could mean marriage equality for same-sex couples.
- **If this amendment passes, the prohibition of same-sex marriage will be written into the constitution.** To achieve marriage equality would then involve: passage of an amendment to repeal the ban on same-sex marriage, and changing current state law. Eliminating an amendment is much more difficult than simply changing a law. That's why opponents of marriage equality want this amendment to be in the Minnesota constitution.

We need to understand the issue clearly and be able to explain it to others; to tell them why it's so important to **VOTE NO**. People may ask what the proposed amendment says. Here it is:

**Title:** "Recognition of Marriage Solely Between One Man and One Woman"

**Question:** "Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to provide that only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Minnesota?"  "Yes"  "No"

## Save the Date! Day on the Hill: January 31, 2012

Help advocate for fair laws for ex-offenders by joining members of the Restorative Justice Ministry team at the State Capitol on Tuesday, January 31. Sponsored by the Second Chance Coalition, the Day on the Hill is an opportunity to rally and speak to legislators about specific reforms proposed for those with criminal records. Watch for more information in the January *commUNITY*.

## Travel to Bolivia!

Join a group from Unity as we travel south to learn first-hand about the work of Mano a Mano, a volunteer organization co-founded by Unity Church members!

Dedicated to improving health and well-being in very low-income communities, Mano a Mano International Partners has built 124 clinics, serving more than 700,000 of Bolivia's poorest citizens. In addition, Mano a Mano builds schools, roads, and water reservoirs, all in respectful partnership with local residents.

Join us as we visit clinics and schools in poor urban barrios and remote rural areas, travel on roads that Mano a Mano has carved into mountainsides, and tour water projects that help farm families increase their meager incomes. Guided by Mano a Mano founder Segundo Velasquez and Patricia Ohmans, leader of seven previous trips to Bolivia, this pilgrimage to one of South America's most fascinating countries will challenge and inspire you.

This 9-day trip takes place from March 23 to March 31, 2012. If you are interested in learning more about the trip, plan to attend one of these 45-minute information sessions at Unity Church.

- Sunday, December 11, after the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services
- Sunday, December 18 at 4:00 p.m.

If you can't make it to any of these, but want more information, contact Patricia at [patricia.ohmans@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.ohmans@gmail.com) or 651-757-5970.



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# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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## Meal Ritual and Chalice Making Workshop

**Saturday, December 10 • 9:30 a.m.-Noon**

Join us on Saturday, December 10, from 9:30 a.m. until noon and learn the meal ritual created by the Young Unitarian Universalist Families Initiative. We'll share the ritual and our experiences and challenges when practicing it in our own homes. Please RSVP to [LouiseLivesay@yahoo.com](mailto:LouiseLivesay@yahoo.com) and include the number kids for childcare and the number of adults attending. Families will practice the ritual over lunch and children will make their own chalices!

## Journey Guides Needed for Second Semester!

At the 11:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. services, there are openings for Journey Guides to serve the church through ministry with our elementary school-aged children. This is the role for you if you've ever said, "R.E. sounds so cool that I wish I could go to classes!" The Journey Guide has no curricular responsibilities, but instead gets to know the group of children as a religious community. Journey Guides are the face of the church for our children. Guides attend with their class every R.E. Sunday (holidays off) from January 15 to May 13. Subs are available to cover Sundays when you can't be here. Contact Kerri at the Church Office for a job description and details.

## Second Semester Junior High R.E. Reminders

The second semester of Junior High Religious Education starts on January 22. Confirmation emails will be sent out reminding you of your youth's enrollment status. If you do not get a confirmation email, contact Kerri in the Church Office before the end of December. The course options for second semester (January to May) are listed below:

**Extreme Religion: Fundamentalism and Cults:** This class explores what happens when religion sees itself in conflict with society. Learn about extreme movements within the major world traditions. Find out how to recognize cult-like behavior in a group. Our balanced exploration will include topics like jihad, Jonestown, Jesus Camp and Orthodox Judaism.

**High Feasts and Holy Days, Part 2:** An exploration of the winter and spring holidays of the major world religions, week by week. You can sign up for Part 2 in the winter even if you didn't take Part 1 in the fall. Youth will be expected to contribute snacks and decorations for the various celebrations.

**Youth Music Ensemble (11:00 a.m. only):** Again, the ensemble will be strictly choral, with youth singing world religious music and providing percussion. Youth should be interested in singing if they sign up for this group. Youth can't miss more than 2 Sundays, because the group will be rehearsing for worship performances (Sunday sports are a likely conflict). There's a \$30 tuition fee per semester because the directors are paid professionals from the Twin Cities music community.

## Religious Education Calendar Notes

Please note that Religious Education classes will not be held on December 18 (Family Sunday), December 25, and January 1. Nursery care and supervised children's activities will be offered.

## Coming in January: Unity D&D Night!

Love Dungeons & Dragons (now or in the past)? Join us for an afternoon of multigenerational role-playing fun on the Saturday afternoon, January 14, 2012. Youth and adults, ages 10 and up welcome! Experienced Dungeon Masters needed; contact Kerri in the Church Office ([kerri@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kerri@unityunitarian.org)) for information. Details in the January 2012 newsletter.



**Santa Pause  
Christmas Pageant  
High School Cookie Sale  
Family Lessons and Carols  
Details on pages 8-9.**

## Unity Tweens Social Justice

The Unity Tweens have been active this fall supporting GLBTQ youth during Ally Week, preparing signage for the UUSC Guest at Your Table launch, and putting hygiene supplies and warm clothes together for people leaving prison. There are no regularly scheduled meetings in December but the older youth are encouraged to help with Santa Pause!

The Unity Tweens Social Justice group is designed to connect youth with the social justice teams led by adults in the congregation. A typical evening involves a short conversation about the mission of a particular social justice group followed by an activity to further the mission.

Please mark your calendars for 2012 activities!

Meeting time: 7:15-8:30 p.m.

February 1: Racial Justice

February 15: Racial Justice

March 7: Mano a Mano

March 21: Frogtown Farms

April 18: Centers for Victims of Torture at peace garden (garden clean-up)

May 2: Rainbow Chalice (Pride Parade prep)

Looking forward to all the opportunities to do awesome and fun things! For more information, email [mcdeborah@msn.com](mailto:mcdeborah@msn.com).

— Deborah & Kelley

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# MUSIC MINISTRY / PARISH HALL ARTIST

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## Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministry

*Still, still, still*

*The angels make music so sweet.*

*Sleep, sleep, sleep*

*My dear little child, sleep. — traditional*



The words to this Austrian carol truly echo our desire for moments of peace and quiet through this often over-energized season. It is often through music that we can find these times of reflection. The very nature of extended time in sound, of words drawn into the filling of seconds, suspended in a time frame that far surpasses the normal length of speech gives opportunity for this pause — this inner tuning of self. Below I share one of my favorite passages from *Free Play: The Power of Improvisation in Life and the Arts* by Stephen Nachmanovitch:

*In tuning an instrument we are forced to obliterate outside noises and distractions: As the sound gets closer and closer to the pure vibration we are trying for, as the pitch moves up and down over a smaller and smaller range, we find body and mind progressively dropping away. We enter more and more deeply into the sound. We enter into a kind of trance state. This intensified listening is deep play — total immersion in the game. And once we pick up that instrument to play, our friends the audience will enter into a similar state of mind more readily in proportion to the care we have given to that process of tuning. What we discover, mysteriously, is that in tuning the instrument we tune the spirit.*

## Music Ministry Winter Holiday Calendar

**Sunday, December 4, 11, 18 • 3:30-4:15 p.m.**

*Holiday "Walk-In" Choir Rehearsals, sing at 4:30 service following rehearsal*

**Saturday, December 17 • Sanctuary**

*Holiday Carol Sing, Concert & Dessert Buffet*

6:30 Carol Sing

7:00 Holiday Concert – "A Rose In Winter"

7:45 Holiday Dessert Buffet

Please bring a holiday treat to share and childcare will be provided.

**Sunday, December 18 • 10:00-11:00 a.m.**

*Children's and Adult Christmas Pageant Choir rehearsals*

\*Children in the Foote Room

\*Adults in Robbins Parlor

**Sunday, December 18 • 12:30-1:45 p.m.**

*Intergenerational Neighborhood Caroling*

Share the love of this community with our neighbors through our coordination with SULAH: The Summit University Living at Home/Block Nurse Program, and by caroling out and about for some of the Unity Church members and friends who can't get here to share the holidays. Please consider bringing family and friends and joining us to sing joy into our extended community.

**Sunday, December 18 • 2:00 p.m. • Unity Church**

*Radujša! Rejoice in the Holiday Music of Eastern Europe*

Mila Vocal Ensemble presents a choral tour of winter songs from countries such as Russia, Belarus, Georgia, Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria and Ukraine. Tickets available at the door. \$10 general admission / \$5 youth, students and seniors

**Wednesday, December 21 • 7:00 p.m. • Parish Hall**

*Winter Solstice Service (see page 8.)*

**Saturday, December 24 • 4:00 and 5:30 p.m.**

*Christmas Pageant performances*

## Parish Hall Artist

### *Tiny Compositions*

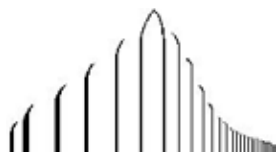
*Recent paintings by Ellen Thomson*

Many of my paintings have been influenced by trips to Iceland but also imagery from my surroundings and my childhood. Whether intentional or not I'm collecting a visual vocabulary that appeals to my subconscious and any narrative found is intentionally loose and open-ended.

Waterfall, ladders, clouds, volcanoes, and horses are a few of the images that show up repeatedly. More recently I've added tornadoes, apples, birds and swingsets. I let the painting guide me while adding/layering/subtracting these ideas and constantly fighting the urge to do the predictable. My favorite part of the process is the final addition of subtle lines layered over the sometimes abstract, uncontrolled backdrops. The tactile experience of drawing brings the control back to a simple lead pencil.

## Shostakovich Sampler

The Artaria Quartet will be presenting a "Shostakovich Sampler" concert on Sunday, December 3, at 3:00 p.m. at Sundin Recital Hall at Hamline University. The Schubert Club will be presenting the quartet in eight of the fifteen Shostakovich string quartets on the four Thursdays in January at noon at the Landmark Center. These concerts are free and open to the public. The same eight quartets will be presented over a two-day period at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church in downtown Minneapolis on January 14 at 7:30 p.m. and January 15 at 3:00 p.m.. The quartet will be joined by St. Olaf College professor and Shostakovich expert, David Castro, who will speak at these two events.



# UNITY CHURCH—UNITARIAN

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## CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

### Holiday Calendar

#### Sunday, December 4 ~

Mano a Mano Craft Sale • 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. • Page 8  
High School Wreath and Cookie Sale • Begins Today • Page 8



#### Sunday, December 11 ~

Evergreen Quilters Annual Sale • Following Morning Services • Page 8  
Pageant Costume Fitting • 10:15 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. • Page 9  
High School Wreath and Cookie Sale • While Supplies Last • Page 8

**Tuesday, December 13** ~ Elders' Circle • 1:00-2:30 p.m. • Page 6

**Wednesday, December 14** ~ Santa Pause • 6:00-8:30 p.m. • Page 8

#### Saturday, December 17 ~

*A Rose In Winter*: Annual Holiday Concert/Carol Sing • 6:30 p.m. • Page 15

#### Sunday, December 18 ~

*The Empty Present*, Family Sunday • 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 4:30 p.m. • Page 9  
Pageant Adult Choir Rehearsal • 10:00 a.m. • Page 9  
Pageant Children's Choir Rehearsal • 10:00 a.m. • Page 9  
High School Wreath and Cookie Sale • While Supplies Last • Page 8  
Intergenerational Neighborhood Caroling • 12:30-1:45 p.m. • Page 15  
Mila Holiday Concert • 2:00 p.m. • Page 7

**Wednesday, December 21** ~ Winter Solstice Celebration • 7:00 p.m. • Page 8

**Friday, December 23** ~ Pageant Dress Rehearsals • 12:45–4:00 p.m. • Page 9

#### Saturday, December 24 ~

Find A Stillness • 10:00 a.m. • Page 9  
Christmas Pageant • 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. • Page 9  
Family Lessons and Carols • 7:00 p.m. • Page 9  
Lessons and Carols • 10:00 p.m. • Page 9

**Sunday, December 25** ~ *Jesus and the Black Sheep* • 10:00 a.m. • Page 3



Look for the holly and find details on all the holiday offerings.

Unity Church will host  
Project Home in  
May!  
(Not in January after all.)  
It's never too early to pick a date  
and mark your calendar!  
For more information contact  
Anna Newton at  
[newtona@comcast.net](mailto:newtona@comcast.net)

*Chim*

Vol. 3, 2011

coming  
mid-december



Zizea Aurea Sophie Kissin