

Justice

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 January theme is Justice.

Ask anyone, of almost any stripe or leaning, if they believe in justice, and they will probably say yes. Ask them to define it, though, and you'll likely encounter a longer, deeper silence. For the concept of justice, embedded in the human heart as it seems to be and examined thoughtfully by the best minds in history, can be harder to catch hold of than a feather riding on the wind.

"There is nothing more instructive," noted the French philosopher Henri Bergson writing about justice almost a century ago, "than to see how the philosophers have skirted around it, touched it, and yet missed it."

Not just philosophers but human society itself circles around justice, codifying it into laws meant to preserve it. The legal system is often the first door we knock on when seeking justice, large or small; and it is an important and necessary one. But where there are laws there are loopholes. History repeatedly reveals the challenges of carving something as relational as justice into stone-like law.

Rigid rules lack both the power and the grace of a justice meant to roll down like water. And like all things written in stone or on tablets, they can be shattered in the heat of the moment, as Moses discovered with the first set of commandments broken at his feet before he'd even read them to the Israelites.

If not in laws, then, how and where can we find and keep justice?

Little is known about the specifics of ancient Egyptian law, but what has survived across the millennia is the spirit of justice or Ma'at on which Egyptian law and society were based. Ma'at was the goddess of Justice, Truth and Order. Ma'at was also reality itself, the right and reliable order of the cosmos that kept the sun rising every day and the seasons turning every year. Egyptian rulers were said to have "done Ma'at" when they ruled justly, aligning with this larger order. In addition, Ma'at judged the dead in the Egyptian underworld where, on a swinging balance, she weighed the heart of each arrival against a feather. Only those with hearts sufficiently lightened by "doing Ma'at" were permitted into the afterlife.

The Abrahamic religions, Taoism, Hinduism and Buddhism all carry similar ideas of justice as the underlying order of the universe. It is the human gift of free will that has opened the hatch through which we keep slipping out of this larger relationship and order. Perhaps, then, before justice was carved into stone, first and foremost it was tucked more indelibly into the essence of all life, written into the fiber of being

itself, woven into all right relations. No wonder we keep missing it. It's been hidden inside the very fabric of relationship and love.

Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred says the Creator's intention of harmony provides the basis for universal justice and for the Great Law of Peace that once brought together five warring tribes. Under the Great Law of Peace, he explains, "We were instructed to carry a love for one another and to show a great respect for all the beings of this Earth. . . . In our ways, spiritual consciousness is the highest form of politics." Coming as close as anyone to catching Ma'at's feather in hand, he adds, "Justice is the process of healing relationships so that each element in relation can live its natural power and fulfill its responsibility."

So justice is more than a set of commandments, laws or procedures, although it requires these as well. It begins by knowing who we are, which in turn begins by naming whose we are. It is a road that we walk, a way that we live, a relationship that we grow into over time as we participate in healing our fractured world. As the poet Denise Levertov writes, *We have only begun to know / the power that is in us if we would join / our solitudes in the communion of struggle.*

Come let us join in that communion of struggle.

~ Karen Hering,
Consulting Literary Minister

Worship Theme Resources

BOOKS

2048: Humanity's Agreement to Live Together, by J. Kirk Boyd, a visionary proposal for an enforceable international agreement protecting human rights.

Love, Power and Justice, by Paul Tillich, a theological analysis of the unity of love, power and justice.

To Kill a Mockingbird, by Harper Lee

JUST WORDS

Just Words

I don't tend to get sick. It must be genetic. I assure you it's not ample exercise and wise dietary decisions. But the truth is both Janne and I are blessed with strong constitutions and an almost irrepressible work ethic. So I find it strange to be writing this piece on day nine of debilitating illness. It is, I learned yesterday, after almost five days in bed with a hacking cough and spiking fever, when I finally decided I was sick enough to visit my doctor, "just a touch of pneumonia." But for those of us who don't tend to get sick a touch of pneumonia is a direct encounter with mortality. I'll be fine in a few days. And I've learned a couple of important lessons that I want to share with you.

Did you know that illness is not necessarily self-indulgence? You may not know this but I can be a very driven, highly ambitious person. Being sick has knocked me for a loop and given me renewed respect for those for whom just making it through the day is a significant accomplishment. Sometimes a smack across the snoot can be a real wake up call. It is just plain arrogant to ignore the impact of illness. Compassion is not kindness. Compassion is an abiding awareness that "there but for the grace of God go I."

The other big lesson is one that I have to learn over and over again. George Harrison says it so well:

*"We were talking—about the space between us all
And the people—who hide themselves behind a wall of illusion...
When you've seen beyond yourself—then you may find, peace of mind,
Is waiting there—
And the time will come when you see
we're all one, and life flows on within you and without you."*

In the rush and tumble of my life I forget that I am one among many. In my illness I've had to let it all go. Meetings, which seemed essential, counseling appointments for which only I would do, even a visit to treasured colleagues, all of it, cancelled. And on top of that we had a blizzard, which caused us to cancel services. In thirty-five years of ministry we have never cancelled services until this past week. And you what? Life goes on, life flows on within you and without you.

It's not about me. It never has been. How lovely to learn that lesson again here among you. Happy New Year.

Rob Eller-Isaacs



Unity Tomorrow • Building On Our Heritage

Visit www.UnityTomorrow.org for information and updates on the Unity Church facilities planning process.

The Wheel of Life

In Celebration

Hendrik David Olson

Born one more redeemer

December 13, 2010

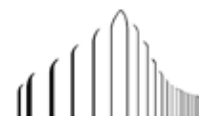
to parents

Erik and Melissa Olson

Flowers for Sunday Worship

If you would like to donate flowers for a Sunday, the following dates are available: January 2, 23, 30, and February 13 and 20. Contact Julie Handberg at julieh@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x.110.

commUNITY is the newsletter of Unity Church—Unitarian. It is published monthly, except the month of July. Deadlines are the 14th of each month. Subscriptions are free to those who make pledges to Unity Church and are available to others for \$30 per year.



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JANUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION

Sunday 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.

January 2: *Preparing a Justice Sermon for an Imaginary Child* — Leon Dunkley 10:00 a.m. ONLY

Dear Angela, I have been given the opportunity to deliver a sermon on the theme of justice. I'm excited but I have only the barest idea about what I would like to say. At first, I thought I'd speak about the courts and the legal system. Then, I thought I'd speak about vengeance and retribution. After that, I thought that I would speak about the relationship between the rights of individuals and the power of the state. So, I even read philosophy for a couple of hours but I felt strangely uninspired. Justice was little more than an abstraction until I thought of you.

Now, it seems almost dishonest to do research in moral philosophy and comparative religion. It feels more immediate to write to you directly about the world in which I hope that you will find a deep sense of joy. Justice alone may not bring this to you but it will preserve the possibility. Justice protects the possibility of joy. The joy part, as always, is up to you. I want you to know joy. Because I want this, I must speak out for justice. I'm delivering the sermon on justice on January 2 at 10:00 a.m. I want you to come if you can. You are precious to me. I invite you to come and listen. Let me know what you think. Somehow, over the years, you have become my teacher. Know that I love you dearly. I always have and will. Every blessing, my beloved... Me

January 9: *Tolling of the Bells* — Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs

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.

January 16: *How Long? Not Long!* — Rob Eller-Isaacs

There are some questions we need to ask ourselves over and over again. It's true in our personal lives and it's true in the life we share. If, as theologian Paul Tillich, declared, "justice is the work of love in community," we need to ask such questions as: does how we choose to live limit the choices of others? What inner work do I or we still need to do to root out prejudice? In what ways do I or we benefit from the systemic oppression of others? We may not always know what to do with the answers we arrive at but we do have to struggle with the questions. To renew our devotion to the ministry of Dr. King, Rob and Worship Associate Steve Harper will help us to develop a perpetual calendar for justice.

January 23: *Who Owns the Table* — Janne Eller-Isaacs

Radical hospitality is a phrase heard in conversations around Unity Church. Radical hospitality is important and vital to living out our values and principles, but how often do we think about turning the tables and being a congregation committed to being guests rather than hosts? Janne and Worship Associate Marg Walker will explore the justice dimensions of table to table hospitality.

January 30: *Rediscovering Restorative Justice* — Rev. Mary McNamara

To take the time to think about restorative justice is to discover anew its power as a rubric for all healing of wounds. From the abused child to the unjustly imprisoned to the art of statecraft, there is something profound that does not love a neglected injury. The distressful noise of the tearing of the fabric of life leaves our hearts unsettled and our minds yearning for something, someone who makes things whole. Anxiety that gnaws at the gut of our life, relaxes, so soothingly when others, even ourselves, attend to breakage. So we reach for this concept and turn it round in our minds like we once did with fascinating winter scenes in glass globes so long ago, looking for the clues that we can absorb into our life's journey. Here we find peace. Here we find the Spirit.

Spiritual Practice for Healthcare Professionals

Saturday, January 22
9:00–Noon • Unity Church

Doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals lead particularly stressful lives. The work is often urgent, relationships with patients are hurried, it's hard not to take the pressures home at night. Spiritual practice can be genuinely helpful. And the good news is, it makes more time than it takes. Rob Eller-Isaacs is offering a three hour workshop designed especially for healthcare professionals.

Pre-registration is required. The workshop is free to pledging members, others will be charged \$50.00. Contact Julie Handberg by e-mail (julieh@unityunitarian.org) at the Church Office to register.

Unity Church Welcomes Rev. Mary McNamara Sunday, January 30 • All services

Mary E. McNamara, a Presbyterian minister, is President of United Theological Seminary, a seminary of the United Church of Christ chartered to fulfill an ecumenical educational role. From 1999 to 2009 she served as Executive Vice President of Union Theological Seminary. From 1990 to 1999 she served as President of The Interchurch Center which provides offices and services for the National Council of Churches, the United Methodist Church, and many other religious and nonprofit organizations. Rev. McNamara also served as New York City's Director of the Nonprofit Sector under Mayors Koch and Dinkins. Rev. McNamara was a Religion Major at Carleton College and received her M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School in 1968. She has two sons, Peter and Nathaniel.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES / ANTI-RACISM LEADERSHIP TEAM

Board of Trustees

Each year, three new Trustees are selected to serve on the nine-person Board. A lengthy selection process occurs with open recruitment for interested persons, an assessment by the Board of what talents are needed for the coming year, a nominating process with a committee that interviews all of the interested candidates, recommendations to the Board for candidates, and finally, vote by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. So, who are these new members of the Board of Trustees?



Bob Peskin has worked in nonprofit administration for more than 25 years including five years as Unity's director of music ministries in the 1990's. He and wife Jenny Thompson were married at Unity Church by Rob and Janne in 2007. Bob sings in the Unity Singers. He writes, "The *Unity Tomorrow* discussions are generating more excitement and anticipation in the congregation than I've seen in 15 years of association with Unity Church. We're on the cusp of significant change here, and I want to be sure that all voices in the church community are heard as we move forward."



Sarah Pradt was raised in the First Universalist Church in Wausau, Wisconsin. She has taught Japanese language, literature, and film at the University of Minnesota and Macalester College. Her current work as an administrator in experiential education for social justice combines teaching, academic administration, grant-writing, and cross-cultural and interdisciplinary program development. She has researched and published on the portrayal of AIDS in Japan, a Japanese communist feminist writer, and Western accounts of WWII Japanese prison camps. Sarah serves as an officer on the board of a Minneapolis nonprofit, AdopSource, which seeks to integrate culture, lived experience, and identity for transracial adoptees, their families, and broader communities, and she currently co-chairs the Annual Fund at the Friends School of Minnesota.



Tim Thoreen and his wife Mary Hanrahan have lived in Saint Paul for the past ten years, having been members of Unity Church for the last three. With a two-year-old daughter (Ida) and expecting a second child in February, Tim's desire to serve on the Board of Trustees is fueled by his interest in growing as a parent, raising children in a supportive church environment, and working with others to help realize our dreams for Unity Church. Tim graduated from the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute and is a Project Manager for the engineering consulting firm CH2M HILL. Tim's community involvement includes having served on the Merriam Park/Union Park District Council board for the last five years. When not listening to or watching the Twins, Tim also enjoys taking his dog for walks in the morning and evening solitude of Saint Paul.

2009–2010 Annual Report on Institutional Progress

Below you will find a summary of the 2009-2010 Annual Report on Institutional Progress from the Anti-Racism Leadership Team (ARLT) at Unity Church. The full report can be found online at www.unityunitarian.org/antiracismteam.

Executive Summary

The ARLT has now spent its first full year as an entity chartered by the Board of Trustees. According to the charter, it is the role of the ARLT to:

- Advise the Board of Trustees in creating policies about institutional practices to further the church in living out its commitment to anti-racism and racial healing in covenant with people and communities of color.
- Assess and report annually to the Board of Trustees, the Executive Team, and the congregation on the progress being made in the journey toward becoming an actively anti-racist institution in covenant with communities of color.
- Regularly scan for best practices with regard to transforming our institution to one that is actively anti-racist.
- Work with the Executive Team to support the implementation of these (institutional anti-racist) practices and related programming.
- Shape and maintain shared responsibility for creating an institutional environment that supports anti-racist accountability.
- Promote/organize opportunities for congregants to understand the systemic nature of racism and to engage in transformational racial healing.

During this past year, the ARLT has worked to refine understanding of its role – a role that includes responsibility for monitoring and reporting on institutional progress and life through an anti-racist lens, for offering advice and working to facilitate efforts to promote conversation and education around white privilege and dismantling systemic racism, and for communicating internally and externally on all of these activities.

After significant strides and an undeniable willingness and energy on the part of Unity Church to become an anti-racist organization, too few tangible efforts have been undertaken in the past year and a half to prevent backwards motion. In reviewing "The way forward" section of our 2008-2009 Annual Report, we've seen little or no action on our recommendations.

There is no denying the philosophical and spiritual acceptance and passion within Unity Church for the work to dismantle racism and to become an anti-racist institution. The difficult part comes in formulating policies and procedures that constitute anti-racist practice. The ARLT recommends the following steps as the most urgent and beneficial for the Board and Executive Team to pursue.

Recommendation 1: Establish formal lines of communication between the Anti-Racism Leadership Team, the Board of Trustees, and the Executive Team

Recommendation 2: Assign staff to Unity's anti-racism initiatives — put this work in job description(s)

Recommendation 3: Commit to training that provides an analysis of systemic racism and its effects on everyone

Recommendation 4: Coordinate additional opportunities for discussing and learning about race and racism

WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY / HALLMAN MINISTERIAL INTERN

Wellspring Wednesday

Each Wednesday evening, everyone is invited to gather for a night at Unity Church. This is a time to engage in religious community, a time to cultivate our values and beliefs.

Schedule for the Evening

6:00 p.m. Dinner: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$18/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.

January 5: No Wellspring Wednesday

January 12: *12 Angry Men*

Justice—Part One (Reviewing the Films)

Twelve jurors gathered in a room to decide the fate of a young man who was accused of a terrible crime. The question before them was incredible—Should they or should they not allow the state to take his life? For eleven men in the jury, the choice was easy. For them, justice was not the first order of business. One man, however, had the courage to speak his truth.

For half a century, *12 Angry Men* has challenged us to insure the link between justice and the practice of the law. A televised play in 1954, a feature film in 1957, and a fortieth anniversary remake in 1997, *12 Angry Men* continues the fight for justice. Join Shelley Butler and Leon Dunkley as they continue their film series into the new year!

Yoga with Jen Seymour • \$10 per class
Junior High Youth Group
OWL Parents Group

January 17: *The Nexus Between Justice and the Law*

Justice—Part Two (Public Conversation)

What is the nature of justice? What is the nature of the law? With inspiration provided by Plato and a professor from Harvard University, conjoin, create and participate in a public conversation about justice. This meeting will not be a lecture but a public conversation about the real and imagined meeting place between justice and the law.

Yoga with Jen Seymour • \$10 per class
Junior High Youth Group
OWL Parents Group

January 26: *A Musical Exploration*

Justice—Part Three (Public Conversation)

Join Bob Peskin, Brian Newhouse and Leon Dunkley in a conversation about the meaning of justice (or right relationship) in music. Be prepared to sing and to listen and to laugh and to learn. No prior experience necessary!

Yoga with Jen Seymour • \$10 per class
Junior High Youth Group
OWL Parents Group



Jason Seymour

2010-11 Hallman Ministerial Intern

Theodore Parker described justice as “the constitution or fundamental law of the moral universe.” He continued poetically (emphasis mine), “*The human naturally loves justice*, for its own sake, as the natural object of its conscience. As the mind loves truth and beauty, so conscience loves the right; it is true and beautiful to the moral faculties. Conscience rests in justice as an end, as the mind in truth.”

Paul Tillich described justice a century later as the unifying power of love made active in the world. Justice is “the form in which and through which love performs its work.” To paraphrase (via W.G. Dalton), *justice preserves what love unites*.

Frankly, these are two of a precious few expositions of the concept of justice that I find to be at all useful. Definitions of justice too often exhibit a self-referential grandeur that strikes me as naive and counter-productive. The word is just too big – too dependent on myriad individual perspectives and relationships – to ever achieve coherence or concretion as a single, simple category. Justice also invokes a false dichotomy (with injustice) that is impossibly simplistic; one frequent result is the perverse confusion of justice with retribution or punishment. After all, when do we mention justice without reference to a particular injustice that appears in need of redress?

When is any uncomplicated duality (like justice and injustice) actually reflective of reality? A wise man once told me: “Nothing is all one thing.” Indeed. Justice for some is rarely (if ever) justice for all. This is the implication of Martin Luther King’s famous words from Birmingham Jail: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

Like Parker and Tillich before him, King was elaborating as justice something far more constructive and enduring than a conditioned response to wrongdoing. Rather, justice is the natural state of a loving and relational humankind; this pre-condition can be expressed politically and socially. Individual humans are hard-wired to love, to act justly; selfishness and violence arise through an alienation from our very nature as loving, relational beings. So, the way forward is also the way back, back to our loving nature as human beings.

As we consider this month’s worship theme of justice, let us remember that justice is not a useful concept when it is far off and grand, when it is limited to the speeches of dead heroes, or when it is displayed upon a pedestal of history that sits elevated beyond our reach. Justice is immediate and true and beautiful. Justice is that impulse that, when trusted and expressed in a relationship, celebrates and protects our unity with all, a unity discovered and deepened by loving and being loved. May it be so.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE / FELLOWSHIP / LEARNING

Elders' Circle

Tuesday, January 25 • 1:00–2:30 p.m.
This month's meeting will comprise a presentation and discussion of modern American Unitarian and Universalist history (since 1800 or so), with particular emphasis given to our monthly worship theme of justice. For more information, or to coordinate transportation, contact Jason via email (jason@unityunitarian.org) or via phone through the Church Office. Refreshments will be served.

Fellowship Groups

These groups are open to all. Contact the person listed for information.

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, January 10 and 24, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

Unity Singles: Contact: Bonnie Reiland at bonniereiland@aol.com

A New Look at the Bible: Second Thursday of the month 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

Unity Men's Group: Third Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Nels Otto at 651-484-4590

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

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

Unity Bridge Club: First Friday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Mary Barrett at 651-225-9708

Evergreen Quilters: Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760

Unity Book Club: Tuesday, January 11, at 7:00 p.m.

Job Transition/Networking: Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Contact Rachel Holtzer, Facilitator at erholtzer@gmail.com

Job Transition/Networking Group

Meets every Monday • 9:30–11:30 a.m.

The Job Transition Networking Group was created to offer support, encouragement, information, and skill-building resources to Unity Church members who are unemployed or underemployed. Contact Rachel Holtzer, Facilitator at erholtzer@gmail.com.

Unity Sangha, A Weekly Meditation Community

Tuesdays • 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Find renewal and grounding each week in a supportive group setting. Strengthen a private practice by sitting in community. Zen meditation is an accessible spiritual practice that offers awareness, clarity and peace. People of all experience levels are welcome. Please arrive promptly; newcomers are encouraged to arrive 10 minutes early.

Welcome to Unity

Wednesday, January 12 • 7:10 – 8:30 p.m.

This class is geared to newcomers, visitors, and those seeking to learn more about Unitarian Universalists and Unity Church. *Welcome to Unity* covers the mission and vision of the church as well as the basics of historical and contemporary Unitarian Universalism. This class invites participants to reflect on their own faith journey and religious questions. Contact Julie Handberg at the Church Office to sign up.

Unity Church Book Club

The Unity Church Book Club will meet from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 11. The book they will be discussing is *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* by Nicholas Carr. **Everyone is welcome — even if you haven't read the book!**

Caregivers Group

Thursday, January 20 • Noon–2:00 p.m. • Third Thursday of the month

Are you a part-time or full-time caretaker of loved ones in your life? Do you need support in order to sustain the care you are giving? Join Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs and Pastoral Care Team member Cynthia Orange for an informal support group for caregivers. Contact Janne Eller-Isaacs if you would like to participate in this group.

50 Years of Camp UniStar!

Camper Reunion and Celebration

Saturday March 12, 2011 • First Universalist Church, Minneapolis

History Displays and Happy Hour at 4:30 p.m.

Potluck Dinner at 6:00 p.m. • Program at 7:00 p.m. • Dance at 8:00 p.m.

Camp UniStar is a Unitarian Universalist camp for families, individuals, and youth located on Star Island in Cass Lake, Minnesota. UniStar is owned by the Prairie Star District of the UUA. 2011 marks Camp UniStar's fiftieth year — please join in the celebration!

Information about 2011 summer programs and the annual Camper Reunion party (newcomers are welcome!) is available at <http://www.campunistar.org>. Join us on March 12 and plan on a great week at Unistar in 2011!

Heart to Heart: A Couples' Enrichment Weekend

Heart to Heart is a program designed to enrich communication and intimacy in your relationship. This year's winter retreat will be held March 11-13, 2011. 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, visit the Heart to Heart website at <http://heart.mn.cx> or call 612-722-3304.

UNITY LIBRARIES / LITERARY MINISTRY

We will open the book.

Its pages are blank.

We are going to put words
on them ourselves.

The book is called Opportunity
and its first chapter is
New Year's Day.

—Edith Lovejoy Pierce



For a few months in 2006, on the Bebelplatz in Berlin, where Nazi's burned 20,000 books in one May 1933 evening, there stood a 40-foot tall stack of books. Titled "Der Moderne Buchdruck" or "Modern Book Printing," the sculpture commemorated Gutenberg, who invented the printing press 550+ years before and some of the same writers whose books were burned there 70-some years ago. What an amazing opportunity we have now to think, write, paint, sing, dance, photograph, publish, read, and work, serve, protest, pray, and worship with abandon. What will you put on your pages this year?

Happy New Year!

From your Library Team, volunteers of the Anderson Library, The Bookstall, Cairns Literary Journal Committee, and the Whitman Children's Library



From the Literary Minister

*We are far from having exhausted the significance of the few symbols we use...
Every word was once a poem. Every new relation is a new word.*

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

For the past two years at Unity Church, we have been exploring the power of words as relations – with the holy, with one another and with the world. Since 2009, the literary ministry rooted here and now growing well beyond this congregation has created new opportunities for engaging writing as a spiritual practice and a tool for social action. Hundreds of Unity Church members and others have now participated in this project's *Open Page* guided writing sessions, communications workshops for activists and additional programs offered here and in other communities of faith.

I'm happy to report that this work of words will continue at Unity Church in 2011, thanks to the Fund for Unitarian Universalism, which has approved a third and final year of project funding. Their grant will support the monthly *Open Page* writing sessions at Unity Church as well as the thematic newsletter reflections for one more year. Additional support from generous individual donors, including many non-Unity members, helps bring this programming into the wider community and may make it possible, in the future, to reach an even larger audience by publishing resources in print and on-line.

Two years ago, when introducing this literary ministry, I noted that we were creating something new together. Following the most ancient ideas about awakening to the holy through our human gifts of language, poetry and story, we are together exploring new ways for doing this in the 21st century. You might say we are writing a new page in a very old story.

I thank all of you who have helped shape and support this work in the past two years – with your words, your presence, your feedback and your contributions – as well as the congregation at large for providing the institutional home and in-kind support that a new ministry like this needs to get started. It is a new page we're turning and a very old story we're telling again in new ways with our words and our lives. Thanks for adding your part to the story.

Karen Hering

OPEN PAGE: reflecting with pens in hand

These guided writing sessions, led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, are invitations to the creative spirit, opportunities to correspond with "the still, small voice within." No writing experience necessary; only an empty page and an open heart and mind. Check individual listings for location and registration requirements and fees.

Sunday, January 16 • 2:00-4:00 p.m. • Unity Church

Reflection Topic: Justice • Free; RSVP karen@unityunitarian.org

Pascal once observed that justice is too subtle a point to be touched by our blunt tools. Perhaps this is why its meaning has so often been carried by symbols and stories passed down through the ages. Join us for an afternoon's exploration of the swinging scales of justice.

Other Programming and Resources

For more information about the *Faithful Words* literary ministry and additional writing programs offered in other locations, visit www.unityunitarian.org/WritingMinistry.htm. To receive periodic e-mail notifications of upcoming literary programs and invitations for member writings, contact Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering at karen@unityunitarian.org. These programs are supported by a grant from the Fund for Unitarian Universalism and contributions from individual donors.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Unity Church Book Read



The Racial Justice and Library Ministry Teams would like to invite the Unity Church congregation to read J. California Cooper's novel *Family* in celebration of 2011 Black History Month in February.

Written in 1991, this book offers a unique portrait of slavery as seen through the eyes of the ghost-like narrator Clora. While illustrating the horrors of slavery with wide eyes and a firm sense of its tragic magnitude, *Family* also recognizes the power and resilience of human nature. As the San Francisco Chronicle noted in a review, Cooper's words "envelop and transcend time, offering hope and renewal at the same time they chronicle desolation and death." Cooper is an acclaimed playwright, novelist, short story writer and the winner of the 1989 American Book Award, the 1989 Black Playwright of the Year, the James Baldwin Writing Award and an NAACP Image Award for her most recent novel *Life is Short But Wide*.

There will be several opportunities in February to participate in a facilitated discussion of *Family* with other church and community members. The first will be on Wednesday, February 9, at 7:10 p.m., at a Wellspring Wednesday program and another on Sunday, February 20, after the second morning service at 12:30 p.m., with light refreshments served at this discussion. There is also a chance to join acclaimed storyteller Nothando Zulu, Arieta Little and others for a free panel discussion and creative performance of *Family* at the Rondo Community Library at 461 North Dale on Thursday, February 17, at 6:00 p.m.

Copies of *Family* will be available at the Unity Church Bookstall.

UUSC: What's Up?

from David Byfield and Marty Rossmann, Unity Church UUSC Representatives

A Guest at Your Table

The boxes representing people who are involved in the daily struggle for human rights have been on your table during this time of thanksgiving. Return your box to the Parish Hall by January 9. If you wish to become a UUSC member, please follow the instructions on the box. All of the money collected will go to support UUSC and its worldwide projects.

Happy 62nd Birthday, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

These notes are excerpted from an article Bill Schulz, President and CEO of UUSC, wrote on 12/10/10: "At the end of the day, the reason any one of us cares about human rights is because we feel sick at heart at the sight of misery. But whose misery? In 1948 the people of the world managed to agree that everybody's misery mattered. One reason the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on December 10, 1948, is such a revolutionary document, even after 62 years, is exactly because it is universal and thereby trumps every political ideology, every cultural practice, every parochial claim. UDHR is... a declaration of 33 rights that every single one of us can claim merely for being born human, from the right to a fair trial to the right to marry and receive an education.... This is what rights are: promises to which we can appeal in the face of misery."

"Over the years the [declaration] has been cited by courts, incorporated into constitutions, and elaborated upon by additional treaties, covenants, conventions, and protocols until today it is regarded as a source of customary law... Only the UDHR [as contrasted with the Bible, the Koran, the Magna Carta and the Analects of Confucius] cuts across every boundary, every margin, every faith, and every culture; only one sacred text, one mythic voice, in the entire world tackles two of the most controversial subjects in human history, namely, the nature of humanity and the ethics of public order, and still manages to claim the fealty of every quarter – and that is the UDHR."

If you'd like a copy of the UDHR, the Unity Church UUSC team has copies. If you would like to join the UUSC Team at Unity Church, please contact David Byfield at 612-374-4786 or DBYF@aol.com or Marty Rossmann at 651-690-4370 or rossm001@umn.edu.

Volunteer Coordinator Needed for Project Home

It takes 156 volunteer hours to host Project Home for homeless families in May at Unity Church! The Project Home Team is looking for someone to volunteer several hours a week during April and May to maintain the volunteer host data base. This person will work closely with Unity staff and the Project Home team. Familiarity with computer spreadsheets required, availability during weekdays a plus. If you can help, contact Anna Newton at 651-483-2986 or newtona@comcast.net.

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. **January 16 suggested items: spaghetti, canned stews, pancake mix, syrup.**

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 or call 320-732-3023 by Wednesday, January 12. Orders will be delivered to Unity Church on Wednesday, January 19.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

January Offering Recipients

January 2: Scholars of Minnesota-COPE Project

Scholars of Minnesota-COPE (Creating Opportunities for Post-Secondary Education) Project assists low income underserved high school students in the Twin Cities community to obtain educational opportunities, financial and other resources they need to reach their highest academic, professional and personal goals. COPE assists students in making a smooth transition into a post-secondary program of their choice. This is accomplished in collaboration with their community partners in after-school mentoring, ACT/SAT classes, college tours and fairs, financial aid workshops, health and wellness seminars, community service leadership opportunities and scholarship assistance. Presently there are 150 scholars in the program and a long waiting list for all of COPE services.

January 9: Center for Grief, Loss and Transition

The Center for Grief, Loss, and Transition is a non-profit organization that enlists the assistance of the surrounding community through volunteers and contributions. It provides specialized therapy and education in the areas of complicated grief, trauma and life transitions for individuals, couples, and families who have experienced a significant loss.

January 16: Vidhayak Sansad School in India (via UUA Holdeen Foundation)

Vidhayak Sansad and its sister union Shramajeen Sanghatana were originally founded to free slaves near Mumbai, India, after slavery was banned in 1976. Today the foundation and the worker's union are run for—and largely by—tribal and Dalit (untouchable) people. They work to ensure minimum wages through union organization, basic human rights, and dignity for people on the bottom rungs of India society. They also run a variety of educational programs including a residential school for 170 tribal girls who are the first people in their families to become literate. Both the founder, Vivek Pandit, and the current Director Amol Namjoshi, have visited Unity Church in recent years. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs visited the girl's school in their sabbatical year and two Unity Church members, Laney Ohmans and Wendy Harris, have volunteered as summer English teachers at the school.

January 23: Sharing Korner Foodshelf

Sharing Korner Foodshelf helps meet the basic needs of St. Paul's Frogtown community. This facility gave out 176,736 pounds of food in 2009 and served 8,792 individuals. The foodshelf has just purchased a new facility that is now large enough for people to pick out their own food. This offering will help make the new facility handicapped accessible. Unity Church has supported Sharing Korner since the early 1990s. Unity Church member Denise Dejarlais serves on the board and church member Mary Barrett has been a longtime supporter.

January 30: United Theological Seminary

United Theological Seminary (UTS), located in the northern part of the Twin Cities, was the first seminary in mainline Protestantism with an ecumenical charter. UTS is known nationally for its commitment to progressive theology, its programming in arts and religion, its commitment to social justice and its dedication to being an open and affirming community. For the past three decades approximately 20% of the UTS student body has been comprised of Unitarian Universalists (UUs) seeking degrees in ministry, leadership and/or the arts. Janne and Rob Eller-Isaacs have taught UTS classes, Unity Church members Jack Rossman and Rick Heydinger have served on the UTS Board and dozens of Unity Church members have graduated from UTS or are current students. All funding through this offering would be used directly for financial aid for students of the UU faith. Rev. Mary McNamara, UTS President, will preach at all three services on January 30. See page 3 for details.



¡BAILE!

Winter blahs getting you down? Want to escape to a warm tropical place and mambo the night away? The Mano a Mano Community Outreach Ministry Team invites you to a night of latin dance in the Parish Hall on Saturday, January 22, from 7:00 - 10:30 p.m. Free dance instruction the first hour and a half. No pressure and no partner required! This event is free, but donations are gratefully accepted. For more information contact Robin Moede at robin@lagerquist.com. For child care contact Christy Randall at christy@unityunitarian.org.

Winter Warm-Up Drive

The Restorative Justice Ministry Team is assisting Amicus this winter to provide men coming out of prison with basic needs. Please help by donating: coats, hats, gloves, boots, deodorant, toothpaste, hand lotion, scarves, soap, sanitizer, shampoo, washcloths, duffel bags, and socks. Clothing items can be new or used (clean with no holes, tears or stains) and new, unopened hygiene items are requested.

Donations to be used for public transportation cards and tokens for those looking for housing and work will also be gratefully accepted.

Help provide these items this season and send the message that someone cares and wants them to succeed in their efforts to find a second chance.

RJMT members will be available after the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Sunday services on January 9 and 23, and February 13 and 27, to accept donations and provide information of other volunteer opportunities. Donations may also be dropped off at Unity Church and placed in Pat Haff's office.

PARISH HALL ARTIST / MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

January Parish Hall Artist

Tom McGregor: Artist's Statement

One of my earliest memories is my mother setting me up with a chalkboard in the back room of her beauty shop. Long before I started school, I loved spending those long days filling and refilling the board with scenes from my imagination. I remember being so absorbed in my work. That feeling of total immersion in a world of my own creation is something I strive for every time I paint.

For the past 25 years, I've pursued a career as a graphic designer. But it wasn't until the early 1990s, when I opened my design studio in Lowertown St. Paul and met my wife, Jerri Jo Brandt—who is also a painter, that I returned to painting on a regular basis. When I discovered plein air painting, I was hooked! It combines my passion for being outdoors with my love of painting. These days, I maintain my design business and paint almost every day.

I paint with a prismatic color palette, a theory with roots in late nineteenth century French art. The prismatic palette consists of very intense, clean colors. I learned it from Joe Paquet, who studied under John Phillip Osborne at the Ridgewood Institute. Osborne learned it from Arthur Maynard, who was trained by the renowned Frank Vincent Dumond of the Art Students League of New York.

For a painting to communicate, craftsmanship is essential. With each painting, I strive to hone my craft so that I can better articulate my artistic vision. I want to spark recognition and feelings of connection to the places and moods I am presenting. Applying highlights to a field of grass, for example, makes you almost feel the warmth of the day emanating from the painting. Quality draftsmanship and brushwork, confidence with line, and color mixing are skills I practice each time I paint.

When scouting for a location to paint, I look for rhythms and patterns in nature that appeal to my sensibilities. My paintings have evolved into a form of realism with an affinity for the abstractions within nature. Rows of corn draped over rolling hills form op art-like patterns. Clear azure skies become minimalist paintings. Water surfaces are a favorite of mine because distorted reflections afford the opportunity to paint like an abstract expressionist within the context of realistic painting. The beauty of our natural world—the woods, the streams, the structures placed upon it—makes my heart beat faster.

A day spent outdoors painting is always a good day for me. In each of my paintings are memories of good days. I hope that these paintings evoke memories of good days for you, too.

More information and images of Tom's art are available on his website at: <http://mcgregorpaintings.blogspot.com/>

Bring Us Your Books!

Now Accepting High School Book Sale Donations

Beginning in January, the High School youth will be accepting donations of books in good condition for our annual fundraiser sale in April. On Sundays, please leave books (in sturdy bags or boxes) on the cart in the Parish Hall. During the week, leave books on the cart outside the Religious Education Office. Thanks for your support!

Journey Guides Needed Immediately!

Volunteers (10th grade through adult) are needed to fill the most important role in our ministry with elementary-aged children. Journey Guides attend Sunday School each week with their group of children, helping them to engage in the lesson and make friends at church; no curricular responsibilities are involved.

The commitment begins Sunday, January 16, and concludes Sunday, May 15, with several Sundays off around holidays and breaks. Our 9:00 a.m. R.E. program currently has NO Journey Guides signed up for this second semester; there are two openings at both 11:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Please contact Kerri in the Church Office to learn more about this vital role in our shared ministry.

Become a Chalice Lighter!

Is your 3rd - 6th grader interested in helping to lead worship as a Chalice Lighter? Kids who light our chalice each Sunday in Chapel and in the Sanctuary have learned about the Chalice's history and meaning during a two-session preparatory class with parents and ministers.

Our next two-session Chalice Lighter program will take place on Friday, January 14 and 21. Pizza dinner is included both sessions. One parent and child must attend both sessions. An investiture litany will take place during worship on Sunday, January 23. Contact Kerri in the Church Office by January 12 to sign your family up for this exciting opportunity to serve the church.

Unity Church Children's (5th/6th grade) Musical 2011

Green To Me

Finding the Trees for the Forest

Ever dreamed of just loafing in the forest?

Or a huge house on the hillside overlooking a forest with a pool and a basketball court?

But did you ever think what the trees and animals might think?

And who are those forest loafers feeding?

See page 11 for details!

MUSIC MINISTRY

Concerts with a Cause: Three Sundays at 3:00 p.m.

Come and hear wonderful musicians who are donating their time so that we might support an important cause that needs our help. A suggested donation of \$10.00-plus is appreciated. However, all concerts are free and open to the public. All are welcome!

Please invite friends and family to hear this wonderful music. Plan to stay for the 4:30 p.m. service and soup supper to warm these winter evenings!

Sunday, January 23 • 3:00 p.m. • *Indânde*

An ensemble of flute, oboe and piano!

Sunday, March 6 • 3:00 p.m. • *Pavia Winds*

A woodwind quintet (including our beloved Sarah Carmack) joined by pianist, Ruth Palmer (Unity's own!).

Sunday, March 27 • 3:00 p.m. • *Unity Singers*

Yes, our very own Unity Singers in a program of favorites from years past and present.

About our "Cause": Circle of Peace

Circle of Peace is a neighborhood grassroots organization of peacemakers committed to breaking the cycle of inner city youth violence. This circle was started by Russel Balenger, an employee of Amicus, Inc., a Rondo neighborhood resident and a grandfather to youth living in the community. The Circle of Peace, composed of Totem Town juvenile offenders, parents, grandparents, and community members, has great potential for impacting the community by creating a different, more positive relationship with youth in trouble. After only a few months of meeting in the Circle of Peace, a number of parents have welcomed their incarcerated youth back home. The circle has met once a week at Unity Church since last March, providing dinner hour meals and writing materials to all youth participants for developing their plans for success. The Unity Church Restorative Justice Ministry Team and its community partner, Amicus, both support this exciting new community effort.

About *Indânde*: (*Indânde*: Danish, to breathe)



Indânde is a chamber music ensemble consisting of flute, oboe and piano. The concerts blend music from different eras with dialogue that makes the music more accessible. All the performers are professional musicians based in the Twin Cities. They present professional-level concerts in addition to their community-based enrichment programs

The event is a kick-off to *Indânde*'s fundraising initiative for community enrichment. For years, the members of *Indânde* have been presenting concerts to under-served audiences in retirement communities, schools and churches.

They hope to expand their current offering of concerts in these locations in the Twin Cities and beyond in order to bring the enrichment, joy and inspiration of music to these communities with live concerts.

Indânde's January 23, 2011, concert at 3:00 p.m., introduces "The British Influence" and will feature works by Malcolm Arnold, William G. Whittaker, GF Handel, Sir Arthur Sullivan, and local composer David Evan Thomas.

Hear a preview! The members of *Indânde* will be joining the Unity Church community on Sunday, January 16, at all services, performing work by African-American composer William Grant Still.

Children's Musical 2011

Now in its 22nd year, the spectacularly special children's musical gives 5th and 6th graders a chance to be actively involved in a program performed in the sanctuary. Every year talented members of the community come together to write, compose, direct and choreograph a unique show for Unity Church.

This year Sandy Waterman returns with her fabulously catchy tunes, designed to expose the kids to many different styles of music – from ska to rock to jazz to traditional ballads and soft shoe. Every year she surprises and amazes us with her songs. In the director's chair is clowning specialist and seamstress extraordinaire Mary Blouin-Auffert, with the assistance of co-conspirator playwright and former producer Rene Meyer-Grimberg.

The storyline teaser goes like this:

Green To Me

Finding the Trees for the Forest

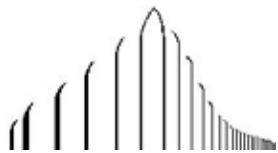
Ever dreamed of just loafing in the forest? Or a huge house on the hillside overlooking a forest with a pool and a basketball court? But did you ever think what the trees and animals might think? And who are those forest loafers feeding?

Auditions and Parent Meeting will be on **Sunday, January 9**, from **1:30 to 3:30 p.m.**

Parents are needed to do costumes, sets and stage, props, cast party, audio/dvd, program, lights, sound – all the fun stuff that makes the show happen. A great opportunity to revisit talents from your past and get to know other parents at church. A true team effort.

Rehearsals will be on **Tuesdays, Thursdays, from 7:00-8:30 p.m.**, and **Sundays from 1:30 -3:30 p.m.**, until our tech week.

Shows will be on March 3, 4 and 5.



UNITY CHURCH—UNITARIAN

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MATERIAL**

The Gathering Saturday, January 29, 2011

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

Registration is limited to 125 women from ages 18 to 108.
The cost is \$35.

Register at www.unityunitarian.org or in the Parish Hall on Sundays.

Gift certificates are available.

Scholarships and childcare are available upon request.

The Gathering Keynote: Ann Reed

Heroes: Guides and Companions on the Journey

Whatever we do in our lives, wherever we go, we are not alone.

Singer/songwriter Ann Reed examines the heroes who walk with her as, with each step, she re-discovers meaning in being a woman, musician, writer, and lesbian and the importance of these guardians as we all grow older and step fully into our lives.

Travel to Bolivia!

February 24–March 6, 2011

Learn more about a Mano a Mano International Partners winter trip to Bolivia after each morning service on January 9. If you are interested in joining this trip or would simply like to learn more about how Unity Church supports health care and economic development in rural parts of Bolivia, you are invited to one of these 45-minute information sessions.

