

## AUTHORITY

*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, and religious education; and in our community outreach ministries, our literary journal and programs, and many other opportunities.*

It seems to me that when we talk about authority what we're really talking about is trust. And not an easy trust or a simple trust, but trust that is enigmatic and paradoxical. A trust in both a grasp of power and a submission to something bigger than ourselves. A trust in both pride and humility. A trust in both wisdom and ignorance.

Not only that, but authority also inherently creates "other"; there must be a source or agent of authority and a someone(s) receiving, responding, submitting, or serving. In a time when we are increasingly distrustful of binaries and dichotomies, authority becomes even harder to swallow.

And the sad truth is that so many of us have had our trust betrayed over and over again — broken promises, abuses of power, boldfaced lies, and subtle oppressions from religious leaders, politicians, teachers, parents, bosses, etc.

I'm sorry for all the scars we bear, both personally and communally. It's no wonder, really, that so many of us who call ourselves Unitarian Universalists have tentatively come here after running from other religions. It's no wonder that the younger generations require their leaders to *earn* their authority rather than be followed dutifully because of age or status or money. And it's no wonder that it can feel so hard to claim our own authority, to voice even our deepest convictions, for fear of joining the ranks of those who have over-used and abused such things.

And yet...

Leonardo DaVinci said, "Nothing strengthens authority so much as silence." We are constantly being told by our leaders, our ministers, our prophets that the voice of liberal religion *must* be heard in today's world; that

our message is not only important, but imperative as counterpoint to voices of oppressive, abusive authority that seem to control our society.

This seems to serve us well as Unitarian Universalists, in our fight against traditional forms of authority, in our call to justice and truth. Everybody knows that UUs have trouble with authority, right? I mean, it's one of the main threads running through our history, from the moment Michael Servetus dared to write a book challenging the authority of the dominant religious teachings and was burned at the stake. We descend from a long line of men and women who refused to remain silent about their beliefs, instead finding within themselves a personal conviction urging them toward greater truth.

Yes, authority can be scary. So much so that even claiming our own can be very difficult. But there *are* things in which we've learned we can trust. In fact, our religious tradition has identified several sources of authority in which we can depend: direct experience of mystery, words and deeds of prophetic men and women that have come before us, wisdom from the world's religions including our Judeo-Christian heritage, humanist teachings, and spiritual teachings of the myriad of Earth-centered traditions that have existed for thousands of years.

We're also learning, at least I hope we are, that the wisest and most powerful authority is that of the Love that binds us together in beloved community. There's a delicate balance to be found between our individual experiences and convictions and our collective values and visions, but if we trust in the both/and of that tension our fear and hesitation will be replaced by humble audacity to speak and act toward a shared vision.

So, yes. In response to Davinci's claim that our silence allows unhealthy authority to gain power and control, we must speak loudly and often with our own authority. But I wonder, if we look at his words with different emphasis, if there's another message there for us. What if what he was really saying was that nothing strengthens our own inner authority so much as silence — taking the time to be quiet and let the still, small voice within speak?

Because in order to stand up and make our voices heard in this world, we need to know what it is we want to say.

By Hallman Ministerial Intern  
Shay MacKay with this month's theme  
team: Rob Eller-Isaacs, Janne Eller-Isaacs,  
Ruth Palmer, KP Hong,  
Lisa Friedman, and Karen Hering

### AUTHORITY THEME RESOURCES

#### BOOKS

1984 by George Orwell  
*Essay: Our Responsibility in Society*  
by James Luther Adams  
*A Way of Being Free* by Ben Okri  
*Ethics of Authenticity* by Charles Taylor  
"Choose Your Own Adventure: A  
Conversation with Jennifer Egan  
and George Saunders" in *The New  
York Times Magazine*: <http://nyti.ms/1HCFmiv>

#### FILM

*V for Vendetta* (2005)  
*Spotlight* (2015)  
*Eyes on the Prize* (1987 PBS  
documentary)

#### YOUTH

*Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type*  
by Doreen Cronin  
*Eat Your Peas* by Kes Gray

## Just Words



Most of my New Year resolutions revolve around the endless self-improvement promises we so often make to ourselves this time of year. Yes, I will get to the YWCA more often and more consistently. Yes, I will get to bed earlier. Yes, I will take time to be attentive to those I love. Yes, I will lose those pounds yet again. Yes, I will eat and drink less. Each year it seems, ever so slowly, the old, familiar bad habits come back. Changing lifestyle habits can be so challenging.

This year however, I am trying to make real promises that have to do with kindness and compassion. I have resolved this year to be as kind and hospitable to strangers as possible. I will let them out of parking lots when they are trying to get their car merged into a long line of traffic even if it means I will have to wait at the red light farther on down the street. I will smile at people in lines and say hello to strangers I pass. I will greet people with respect and assume the best. I promise to turn to kindness and compassion even when it is not my first or natural response. As Thich Nhat Hanh says, "It all begins with kindness."

This past week Syrian refugees began arriving in Canada. They arrived to an airport full of people to welcome them. There were signs saying welcome all over the airport and city in both Arabic and English. They were given warm clothes and other needed supplies. Each child that arrived was partnered with a child who could welcome them and tell them through a translator that they were welcome here and that they were safe. The new Prime Minister was in the crowd to greet them as well. I have wept when I have watched these pictures on the news and on the internet. I have wished that all Americans might remember that we are largely a nation of immigrants and refugees. I know I descend from German, Scotch-Irish, and Jewish immigrants and refugees. I know that the story is even more complex than what has been shared with me. What I haven't forgotten is that my ancestors took great risks and traveled across the ocean to create a new life of opportunities for themselves and the generations that followed.

I invite you to join me in my New Year's practice and resolution to be more compassionate and kind to those around me. It is one of the ways we can make the world a more welcoming place for all. Happy New Year!

— Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs

## Soup Suppers

*After the 4:30 Sunday Worship Service*

All meals will offer vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies may contact [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org) to arrange to have a special preparation.

**January 3:** black bean soup with lemon crème fraîche; Thai squash and coconut

**January 10:** roast pork and udon noodle soup; cauliflower and roasted garlic puree

**January 17:** chili

**January 24:** broccoli cheddar soup; root veggie stew

**January 31:** leek and potato soup, Italian sausage and fennel soup

## UUA MidAmerica Regional Assembly 2016

*The WHO in the New Era of Unitarian Universalism*  
Save the date! April 29-May 1, 2016 • Saint Paul, MN

Keynote Speakers: Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen, Rev. Jeremy Nickel, and Kenny Wiley

If you are interested in attending the conference, volunteering, or learning more about Unity's Denominational Relations Team, please contact Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org).

Details at [www.midamericaregionuua.org/ra](http://www.midamericaregionuua.org/ra).



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# JANUARY WORSHIP CALENDAR / OFFERING RECIPIENTS

## January 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).

### January 3: Tolling of Bells

We begin each New Year with a service to honor those who have died in the previous year. The ministers will eulogize a number of "world shaping" artists, musicians, writers, and leaders. Then the congregation will be invited to light a candle and speak the names of those they have lost this year.

### January 10: Questioning Authority: A History Lesson

Our Unitarian Universalist history is a story of questioners and heretics. It could be said that we come by our questioning honestly. It is one of our greatest strengths. It is also one of our greatest liabilities. Janne and worship associate Brian Newhouse will explore the positive and negative impact of our questioning natures on our religious lives and our religious communities.

### January 17: Save the Country

We honor the life and legacy of Dr. King most powerfully when we take up the ministry for which he lived and died. This year we are honored to welcome the Rev. Ruth Mackenzie who will join Rob and Pastor Danny Givens, Jr., as they expand on the service they offered to open the Annual Assembly of the Mid-America Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Avi Viswanathan will serve as worship associate.

### January 24 : Yes, and . . .

Improv performances are based on a simple formula of saying "yes" to whatever is given — a word, a scenario, an action — and adding to it to create a rich story of shared authorship. Far from the panacea of positive thinking, this challenging practice can be useful when living through significant change, especially in community. It offers us the authority to change the story while accepting what is given. Will we say yes? The Rev. Karen Hering and worship associate Jen Niemela will lead this service.

### January 31: Rev. Karen Hutt

Details to follow.

## Rides Ministry

Unity's Rides Ministry helps people get to Sunday worship. If you don't drive or don't have a car and could use a lift, please contact the church office at 651-228-1456 to see if we can connect you with a driver. If you are a driver, give us a call and we'll add you to our list of over 60 volunteers!



## Offering Recipients

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

### January 3: Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association sends its energies in three directions: research, support, and legislation. Its support program provides repeatedly updated education for diagnosed individuals and their caregivers. Its lobbying teams press hard to expand the scope of dementia-sensitive legislation. Unity member Kathy Stack works tirelessly with the Early Stage Advisory Committee on both the state and national level.

### January 10: Holdeen India Program

The Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Program (UUHIP) provides aid for humanitarian service ventures and social enterprises that seek to advance prosperity for all of India's people. Education programs, livelihood development initiatives, and projects promoting access to credit have all received UUHIP support. Unity Church members Laney Ohmans and Wendy Harris have both taught in one of the UUHIP programs. Janne Eller-Isaacs currently serves on the Holdeen Advisory Board.

### January 17: Johnson High School Habitat Trip

"Get ready to make a difference and be changed in the process!" This quote characterizes the goals of this St. Paul Johnson High School Habitat for Humanity trip to Nicaragua. This team of students, staff, and adult volunteers will be working with Nicaraguan volunteers, as well as future homeowners themselves, to help families achieve their dream of having a simple, decent place to live. This annual trip is life changing experience for the Johnson students who participate. This offering will help bridge that gap between what students are asked to pay and what they can afford.

### January 24: discapitados abriendose caminos

d.a.c. is a small beacon of light for low income Latino families. As Minnesota's only non-profit dedicated solely to the needs of this population, d.a.c. is an award winning part of a network of small culturally focused family centers. Program activities include home visits, doctor and school visits, as well as weekly parent education and support groups dedicated to strengthening Latino families. Unity Church member Linda Kjerland is a longtime d.a.c. volunteer.

### January 31: The Link

The Link served nearly 2000 youth in 2014 through its three divisions: housing and homeless services, juvenile justice, and its Passageways Program, which provides a safe harbor and an extensive physical and mental health program for sexually-trafficked youth. Passageways also works as a regional contact point for exploited persons desperately seeking safety. Unity Church member Kendra Garrett serves on The Link's board.



## The Budget and Church Governance

From Angela Newhouse, Chair



As I finish my first year on the board, I find I'm reflecting most on our church's budget process and financial position. Frankly, I find it very difficult to wade through budgets and financial statements. I am more interested in relationships and building connections. Oddly, I find it eye-opening to view our budget through a relational lens.

First a brief primer on our church's governance structure. In Unitarian Universalist churches, the congregation is the ultimate authority. Our Executive Team (Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs, Lisa Friedman, and Barbara Hubbard) makes all decisions regarding programming, operations, and budget. We might see them as authorities, because of their spiritual and institutional leadership. But the Executive Team is actually accountable to the Board of Trustees. We evaluate their performance against our Ends and make sure they are staying within our limitations set forth in policy. Who is the Board accountable to? You, the congregation. We answer to you.

What does our budget have to do with this relationship between the Executive Team, the board, and the congregation? Each year our Executive Team creates a budget based on meeting the Ends and congregational input, measured largely by the results of the congregational survey. The Board of Trustees provides a check on fiscal responsibility by accepting the budget as balanced — financially and in relationship to the Ends.

Again this year, the board strongly recommended cost of living adjustments for the ET, and additional adjustments to bring our ministers' salaries up to a competitive market range. As you read the Annual Meeting packet, you know this did not happen, and the budget reflected some painful cuts. This reality is disappointing to me.

The Executive Team created the budget, but it belongs to the congregation, based on our relationship within the church's governance structure. We approved it on November 21. As I think about this, I ponder financial responsibility. We, as a congregation, fell short of our overall goal. Our next budget cycle is many months away, and it is tempting to let others worry about that process. I invite you to exert your "ultimate authority" as a congregant. Participate in the congregational survey this spring, ask questions of me and other board members about the budget process, and talk to others about what Unity Church is worth. Let's work together to ensure we have adequate financial means to realize our Ends.

Please visit [www.unityunitarian.org/annual-pledge.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/annual-pledge.html) for an updated 2016 pledge drive report and to make your 2016 financial commitment to Unity Church.

## 2015-16 Hallman Ministerial Intern

Shay MacKay



I've always loved January, even though nobody loves January. Kind of like how I've always loved the color yellow. I love it still, even though most people don't love yellow. They love blue or red or green, even, but not yellow. Maybe I love it because, being colorblind, it's the one color I'm always sure of. Blues and purples and reds and greens and browns

can blend and confuse me, but yellow shines bright and clear in my sight.

Maybe I love January because it's the month into which I was born — the beginning of a new year for me regardless of which calendar you gauge the passage of time by. A fresh start out of the darkness from which we all come — let there be light! — a time to return to, and prepare for the next emergence from, the quiet womb of winter.

Maybe I love January because I'm an introvert. What better month for introverts than this dark quiet? Recovering after the busy-ness and noise of November's and December's holidays. Kept inside by snow and cold. "No, no. I'm fine staying home alone tonight. Wouldn't want to risk driving on those icy roads!"

For some reason, I was always afraid to admit I love yellow. (I outed myself in a class last year when I had to pick a random object off a table and then explain why I chose it — I picked a yellow highlighter.) And I've always been afraid to admit that I love January. Because who loves the winter? Nobody names it as their favorite season unless they ski or play hockey — which I don't. But I'm telling you all now, here. I'm not afraid anymore.

I love January!

And it doesn't matter why. I'm done trying to figure it out. Instead, I'm going to settle in, go within, and as Joyce Rupp says, seek solace in the empty places of winter's passage, those vast dark nights that never fail to shelter me and lie in the cave of my soul, the source of revelation.

Shay MacKay can be reached by phone at 651-228-1456 x129 or by email at [shay@unityunitarian.org](mailto:shay@unityunitarian.org).

## Food Collection for Sharing Korner

Unity's Evergreen Quilters coordinate an on-going food drive for Sharing Korner Food Shelf. Collection baskets are stationed in the main lobby and by the Holly Avenue doors. Donations of non-perishable items are always welcome. Thank you!



# WELCOME WORDS & MEMBERSHIP / WOMEN'S RETREAT

## Welcome Words



Happy New Year! Beginning a fresh chapter is an exciting time. Whether your hopes for 2016 lead you into new adventures or deeper explorations, may you enjoy the new energy that infuses your daily practice of living. Let us know how Unity Church can be a support to you in those goals. For

whether you are tending to your body, mind, and spirit in new ways, seeking to align your life to your values differently, or looking for deeper ways to be a part of religious life and community, these are all part of the journey of spirit. And it is a joy to share that journey with you! See you in church!

Rev. Lisa Friedman  
Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement

## Pathway to Membership Classes

Unity Church offers three different classes for visitors who are exploring Unity as a spiritual home. Sign up at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Rev. Lisa Friedman, Minister of Congregational and Community Engagement, at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x107. She is also happy to meet with you personally to answer questions and to welcome you into the congregation. Childcare is available by request at least one week in advance.

### Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

**Sunday, January 24: 10:15-11:30 a.m.** ~ also offered ~  
**Wednesday, February 3: 7:15-8:30 p.m.**

If you have been visiting Unity Church and would like to find out more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation, we invite you to join us for a Welcome to Unity class. Together, we will explore the mission and vision of this church, as well as historical and contemporary Unitarian Universalism.

### Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Inquiry

This winter and spring, Finding Yourself at Unity will take on a new format! Look for sessions to be offered on a regular basis on Sundays, which can be attended in the order that works for you. In these classes, we will have an opportunity to share part of our religious journey, to take a more in depth look at the history of Unity Church, to discuss the expectations and benefits of membership, and get to know the programs and ministries of the congregation.

### Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

**Wednesday, January 13: 7:15 – 9:00 p.m.**

Have you been considering membership at Unity Church? This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's needs meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class will conclude with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church! There will be a special new member recognition ceremony in February.

Joy is what happens to us when we allow ourselves to recognize how good things really are.

– Marianne Williamson

# JOY!

## The Gathering

### 8th Annual Women's Retreat

## Saturday, January 30

The Gathering is a one-day women's spiritual retreat held at Unity Church. This year's theme is joy — exploring the ways that we, as women, strengthen, cultivate, and share joy in our lives even in the midst of heartbreak and the struggles of our world. Join us in an opportunity to share the wholeness of our experience — through worship, song, movement, writing, drumming, conversation, and contemplation.

Registration is limited to 125 women from ages 18 to 108. The cost is \$40. Breakfast, lunch, and a social hour at the end of the day are included. Massage and spiritual direction are available at additional cost. Childcare is provided.

Registration will be online at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) and in the Parish Hall on Sundays beginning January 3. Gift certificates and financial aid are available. Contact Barbara Hubbard ([barbarah@unityunitarian.org](mailto:barbarah@unityunitarian.org)) or Rev. Lisa Friedman ([lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org)) with questions.

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

January 6

*Dinner menu: stuffed mushrooms, salad, sorbet*

## **An Essential Guide To Gun Safety Specifically For People Who Hate Guns — Richard Birger**

This is isn't an argument for guns or against guns. It is a practical guide to gun safety for people living in a country where there are more guns than citizens. This will be a discussion of some practical ways to protect yourself and family when encountering firearms. Why can't we just leave gun safety at "not touching one if you see one?" That's always a good start but unfortunately our real world isn't always that simple. We've all read about high numbers of deaths due to accidental weapon discharge and most of those deaths are preventable. Educating ourselves and loved ones about gun safety can help ensure we know how to prevent an accident. Unity Church member Richard Birger received his training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, GA.

## **Authority for Unitarian Universalists with Rev. Lisa Friedman**

What sources of authority guide Unitarian Universalists — theologically and historically? How do we determine what is true for us, our congregations, and our faith? Do our sources of authority ever change? We'll engage some of our history, and also look at how the issue of authority plays out in Unitarian Universalism today.

## **Addiction and Recovery Ministry Meeting**

This group offers topics for discussion and time for sharing and doing peer-to-peer support ministry. The use of the terms addiction and recovery are meant to be inclusive and self-defined with the focus on strengths, community, and spiritual development. Everyone is welcome.

## **Meet Unity's New Textile Arts Group!**

This group will meet regularly on the first and third Wednesday evenings beginning tonight. All ages and levels of experience are welcome! Bring your knitting, crocheting, tatting, embroidery, and cross stitch for an evening of fellowship and service. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Mandeville at [lindamandeville@aol.com](mailto:lindamandeville@aol.com).

## **Embodied Spiritual Practice: Yoga Round**

A 60-minute practice referred to as a "yoga round." We'll alternate between deep breathing, slow movement, rest periods, and guided meditation to balance body, mind, and spirit. Youth ages 10 and up are welcome to come with an adult family member. Wear comfortable clothing and bring a yoga mat or blanket. There will be a few mats/blankets available for loan.

## **Go: A Chinese Game — Bob Ruud**

Learn and play Go, the Chinese board game. Anyone above the age of 10 is welcome. Bring your own board and set if you have one. [www.usgo.org/what-go](http://www.usgo.org/what-go).

## **New Family Religious Education Orientation — Rev. K.P. Hong**

An orientation for families whose children are enrolling in Religious Education for the first time. Contact [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org) if you plan to attend this orientation session.

## **Tween Group (for youth in grades 5-8)**

January 13

*Dinner menu: roasted chicken, green beans, salad, dessert*

## **Hands Up Don't Shoot Our Youth Movement: Documentary Film Produced By Ralph L. Crowder III**

On the day of Mike Brown's funeral in Ferguson, Missouri, there was an atmosphere of rest and calm in the people's struggle for justice. It created a unique opportunity for Freedom Radio News and Culture Television Network to engage a needed Black perspective of media communication in which a video camera was on and captured a wide range of voices. The input on the death of Mike Brown and the uprising of young black youth is a centerpiece of discussion in this very important news documentary regarding the climate and conditions of Ferguson, Missouri (Anywhere, U.S.A.). In order to facilitate discussion of the film, this session will last until 9:00 p.m.

## **Go Solar With Us! Save our planet, save money, tell everyone!**

Learn how Unity's new Community Solar Garden can make clean, renewable solar electricity available for your residence with no upfront costs. As a subscriber, you can reduce your total carbon footprint by roughly 30%. Participation requires an Xcel account and a FICO credit score 680 or above. No solar panels are installed at your residence, so this arrangement works for both renters and homeowners — even if you get no sun! Learn how it works along with the subscription terms and process. If you are ready to formally register your interest, bring a recent Xcel invoice showing your account name and number, premise number, and meter number. Paul Densmore is a member of Unity Church and the metro-area UU Solar Coalition. Minnesota Community Solar (MNCS) is our solar developer — a local company that shares our environmental and community values.

## **Committing to Unity**

Have you been considering membership at Unity Church? This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's needs meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class will conclude with a celebration ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church!

## **Embodied Spiritual Practice: Therapeutic Yoga**

This practice is great for those with chronic tightness, chronic pain, or who simply want to move their bodies more freely. The 60 minute-long practice takes place lying on the floor, with slow, subtle movements and gentle breathing. We find this practice is best for adults, not youth. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat and blanket, if possible. There will be a few mats and blankets available for loan.

**Go: A Chinese Game** (See January 6 description)

## **Tween Group (for youth in grades 5-8)**



# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

## January 20

*Dinner menu: made from scratch macaroni and cheese*

### Why Black Lives Matter

Come join ministers and staff members who have been supporting Unity's efforts to stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. From the Mall of America, to the Minnesota State Fair, to the 4th Precinct, we've been there. The Tower Club has been out in force as have many members of the congregation. Now that the encampment is over, as the Black Lives Matter leadership team considers how best to continue to fight for justice for Jamar and shape the future of the movement we will come together to reflect on where we've been and where we're going.

### Embodied Spiritual Practice: Yoga Round

This week's 60-minute practice is referred to as a "yoga round." We'll alternate between deep breathing, slow movement, rest periods, and guided meditation to balance body, mind, and spirit. Youth ages 10 and up are welcome to come with an adult family member. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat or blanket. There will be a few mats/blankets available for loan.

**Textile Arts Group** (See January 6 description)

**Go: A Chinese Game** (See January 6 description)

**Tween Group (for youth in grades 5-8)**



### About Wellspring Wednesday

Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather midweek at church for food, fellowship, and fun. Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., followed by worship at 6:45 p.m., and an evening of rich programming beginning at 7:10 p.m. All are welcome. Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance.

**Dinner:** The cost for dinner is: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4, and \$20/family. (Children under the age two are free.) Reservations for dinner are not required. All meals will offer vegetarian and gluten free options. People with specific food allergies may contact [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org) to arrange to have a special preparation. Email Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) for financial assistance to help cover the cost of dinner. No one is turned away.

## January 27

*Dinner menu: soy glazed roasted pork with sugar snap peas and ramen slaw*

### Gender Identity and Expression: What's Next in LGBT+ Advocacy — Sponsored by Unity's Rainbow Chalice Alliance

Minnesota has seen exciting changes in recent years for the LGBT+ community! We fought off an amendment to ban gay marriage. We passed an amendment to add gay marriage as a constitutional right in the State of Minnesota. We passed a safe schools bill to keep all our kids safe and free from bullying. What's next? In a society that is often obsessive about gender, those whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned to them continue to struggle. Transgender people face severe discrimination, stigma, and systemic inequality. Tonight's panel will help promote understanding and sensitivity of gender identity and expression. Parents, family members, friends and allies — all are welcome!

### The Sacred Art of Listening with Shay MacKay

The quality of our listening can make a profound difference in our lives. Deep listening as a spiritual practice is a way of being in the world that is sensitive to all facets of our experience — external, internal, and contextual. Listening in this way is a choice we make and a practice we can cultivate, attuning ourselves to the deeper rhythms of our lives and our world.

### Embodied Spiritual Practice: Therapeutic Yoga

This practice is great for those with chronic tightness, chronic pain, or who simply want to move their bodies more freely. The 60 minute-long practice takes place lying on the floor, with slow, subtle movements and gentle breathing. We find this practice is best for adults, not youth. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat and blanket, if possible. There will be a few mats and blankets available for loan.

**Go: A Chinese Game** (See January 6 description)

**Tween Group (for youth in grades 5-8)**

***The most fun you'll ever have at Wellspring Wednesday!***

### Dinner helpers needed!

*And if it's not the most fun you've ever had... you'll still end up with a delicious dinner.*

#### Helpers are needed:

- Tuesday, January 5, 5:00-7:15: Stuffing mushrooms with Molly and Susan
- Tuesday, January 19, 5:00-7:45: Learn to make homemade mac and cheese with Madeline
- Wednesday, January 27: Help us prep cook (2:30-5:30) or help us serve and clean (6:00-7:45)

Contact [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org) to help!

# SPIRITUAL PRACTICE & LEARNING

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## Dying and Death

### Group Conversations at Unity Church

At Unity Church this winter, members of the congregation will be invited to engage in conversations about dying and death in the hope that we will reach a point of being able to articulate our wishes about our end of life decisions and create a health care directive (HCD) that is a tangible reflection of those wishes. Dying may be as complicated as living and a HCD needs to be able to cover a broad range of situations—not just dying of old age—that truly help our loved ones understand and navigate the complex decisions they may need to make on our behalf.

Groups will consist of six participants and a facilitator. There will be two sessions for each group. The first session will include guided conversations about dying and death, provide resources for creating an effective HCD, offer suggestions about how to begin conversations with family and friends, and ask you to begin creating a HCD. The second session will offer time for reflection on your conversations and the progress you have made on your HCD. Watch future communications for information about signing up for groups.

If you are interested in participating as a facilitator in this broadly based congregational experience, please contact Janne at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org). Trainings are scheduled for Thursday, January 7, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.; Sunday, January 10, from 1:00-3:00 p.m.; and Saturday, January 23, from 9:30-11:30 a.m.



## The Mysticism of Music

### *A Retreat into the Spirituality of Sound*

**Saturday, February 20 • 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. • Unity Church  
Facilitated by Hallman Ministerial Intern, Shay MacKay**

“Music is the miniature of the whole harmony of the universe, for the harmony of the universe is music itself, and humanity, being the miniature of the universe, must show that same harmony. In our pulsations, in the beat of our hearts, and in our vibrations we show rhythm and tone. Music helps us to train ourselves in harmony, and it is this which is the magic, or the secret behind music. When you hear music that you enjoy, it tunes you and puts you in harmony with life. Music develops that faculty by which one learns to appreciate all that is good and beautiful. Music also produces that resonance which vibrates through the whole being. Music touches our innermost being, and in that way produces new life, a life that gives exaltation to the whole being.” (from *The Mysticism of Sound and Music* by Hazrat Inayat Khan)

Sign-up for this retreat at the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall on Sundays or by emailing Shay at [shay@unityunitarian.org](mailto:shay@unityunitarian.org).

## Tuesday Meditation at Unity Church

A portion of the time in Unity Sangha’s Tuesday meditation meetings is devoted to teaching and discussion to deepen our understanding of the meditation path and its roots. In the first months of 2016, this exploration will be devoted to the core teaching of the Buddha commonly known as the “Four Noble Truths.” We will ask: How did this contemplative way arise as an antidote to the fear and anxiety we all know as an inescapable aspect of the human condition?

Join us Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. in Ames Chapel. Meditation instruction is offered at 5:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month. Please notify Ken Ford at [kenfaure@gmail.com](mailto:kenfaure@gmail.com) if you plan to come for instruction.

## Wednesday Evening Yoga

Weekly 60 minute yoga practice that alternates between a yoga-round class (deep breathing, slow movement, rest periods, and guided meditation to balance body, mind, and spirit, suitable for all body types and ages) and therapeutic yoga (great for those with chronic tightness, chronic pain, or who simply want to move their bodies more freely, and is best for adults). Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a yoga mat or blanket. See Wellspring Wednesday offering descriptions pages 6-7 for details. Learn more about the instructor, Elen Bahr, at [EveryYogi.com](http://EveryYogi.com) or email questions to [elen@everyyogi.com](mailto:elen@everyyogi.com).

## First Thursday Tai Ji

The Tai Ji practice circle will again meet in the Foote Room on Thursday, January 7, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Practicing the Five-Element Form, the circle offers enhanced balance, flexibility and peace of mind and is open to those new to Tai Ji as well as experienced participants. People with limited mobility can enjoy the practice seated in a chair.

Facilitator Lisa Schlingerman says, “the Five-Element form is a joyful dance connecting us to the natural world. We can celebrate the mystery and beauty of life and enjoy a healthy, active practice too.”

To participate, RSVP to Karen Hering at [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org). Dress in comfortable clothes and bring your own beverage and/or treat for a break midway through the practice. Donations will be accepted for the facilitator.

## Saturday Southern Style 5 Animal Kung Fu

This beautiful Chinese martial art emulates the moment and disposition of the Tiger, Snake, Crane, Dragon, and Leopard. Our focus will be on studying the introductory form of this style. You can expect a practice which builds strength, conditioning, and flexibility. Class meets Saturdays, in the Body Room, from 10:00 a.m.–noon, and is for any level of experience ages 16–106. To participate, please contact Bryan Kujawski at 612-750-0221 or [barney.kujawski@gmail.com](mailto:barney.kujawski@gmail.com).



# SPIRITUAL PRACTICE & LEARNING

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## Crossing and Blessing Our Thresholds

Every year brings changes, but sometimes the changes are larger and more challenging than others. If you are crossing a significant threshold in your life — a change in relationship, work, home, roles, identity or abilities — perhaps you'll want to join the Thresholds group offered again in 2016, starting January 23.

The four-part Threshold series invites you to explore a current personal threshold, chosen or unbidden — one you have just crossed, are in the process of crossing or are about to cross — together with others on their own thresholds. "The support of the participants was amazing," said Jill van Kooljik, after participating in 2015. "I connected with many congregants and made new friends. Most of all, the workshop confirmed that we are not alone in our struggles."

In a supportive small group facilitated by literary minister Karen Hering, we'll each reflect on a threshold we're crossing while accompanying others in crossing theirs. Using conversation, guided writing, and a variety of non-writing activities both playful and serious, we'll consider the meaning, risks and possibilities present on the cusp of change.

"The series helped me let go of fear and realize that moving forward meant leaving some things behind," said Pam Sheen, who participated in 2015. "The group process is perfect for threshold crossing, a 'safety net' of like-spirited individuals."

Another 2015 participant, Heather Wells, said, "This experience for me was all about putting intentions out into the universe, but I didn't expect the universe to listen! I am on a different path than I was on at the start of the series and it is a path of my choosing."

Participants are asked to commit to all four sessions. At the end of the series, the group will be blessed by the congregation in worship, honoring the role of community in giving us all safe passage across the many thresholds of our lives.

The group will meet Saturday, January 23, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., and three additional Saturday mornings, 9:00 a.m.-noon: February 6 and 20, and March 5. The congregational blessing will occur on Sunday, March 6. The series is free to members; a fee of \$75 will be charged nonmembers at the time of registration.

Group size is limited. Register early to reserve your place — e-mail Karen Hering ([karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org)) or put a note in her church mailbox, with your name, phone and email or street address, and a sentence or two describing the threshold you have crossed or will be crossing soon.

*"The series helped me let go of fear and realize that moving forward meant leaving some things behind..."*

## Learn Home-Grown UU Family Rituals

Unity's UU Families Initiative is offering workshops on two family rituals that you and your children can enjoy. These rituals, developed here at Unity Church, create bonding times for families along with a unique way to connect home and church.

### **Sunday, January 24, 10:30-12:30: Family Meal Ritual**

You will learn a simple ritual and kids will make their own chalices. You will also hear from parents who have made this ritual a part of the fabric of their lives.

### **Sunday, January 31, 10:30-12:30: Bed Time Ritual**

End the day with your children in quiet reflection on the values we hold dear. Kids will make beads with the Rainbow Path colors for the seven UU principles.

### **Sign up: [www.unityunitarian.org/uu-families-initiative.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/uu-families-initiative.html)**

*The UU Families Initiative is a parent-led project aiming to generate shared principles and common practices for raising our children religiously in the Unitarian Universalist tradition, and to create a community of families raising our children religiously at Unity Church.*

## Half-day of Silence

### **Saturday, February 6 • 1:00-5:00 p.m. • Unity Church**

Ever wanted to go on a silent retreat, but a weekend or a week seemed too long? Join Spiritual Director Sarah Cledwyn in a half-day of silence on Saturday, February 6. We will begin as a large group to talk about the day and then engage in practices to reflect in the silence as each desires. We will reconvene at the end of our time to talk about and share our experiences. Activities will include an indoor labyrinth, journaling questions, creative arts and more. All are welcome and we ask for a \$10 suggested donation. Please RSVP to Sarah at [sarahcledwyn@gmail.com](mailto:sarahcledwyn@gmail.com) or at 651-699-9948 to ensure there are enough space and materials for everyone. To request free child care, please e-mail Michelle Hill at [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org) at least one week in advance.

## Small Group Spiritual Direction

Change is something we can count on in life. Wherever we are in this moment, it is different in our very next breath. Join Spiritual Director Sarah Cledwyn, MA, for a small group spiritual direction process. This group will provide an opportunity to bring awareness to the change that is always part of life, bring focus and attention to the path of your life, as well as offer community connections for support and deep reflection. Groups will meet every other week on Thursday, beginning in February and will run through May. A day group will meet from 10:00 a.m.-noon and an evening group will meet from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Free childcare is available with one-week advance notice to [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org). Details and sign up is online at <http://bit.ly/ucugroups>. Cost is \$30 per session with a sliding fee scale. Questions? Contact Sarah at 651-699-9948 or [sarahcledwyn@gmail.com](mailto:sarahcledwyn@gmail.com).

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



26TH ANNUAL MLK HOLIDAY BREAKFAST  
JANUARY 18, 2016

## Annual MLK Holiday Breakfast

Monday, January 18 • 7 - 9:30 a.m.  
Mount Zion Temple, St. Paul

Each year, the General Mills Foundation and UNCF present an annual MLK Holiday Breakfast at the Minneapolis Convention Center to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year's keynote will be presented by Massachusetts Governor, Deval Patrick.

With the help of countless volunteers, Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul hosts breakfasts at nine neighborhood locations, featuring a live broadcast of the General Mills event as well as a hot breakfast and local programming. Unity's neighborhood location is Mount Zion Temple, 1300 Summit Avenue, St. Paul. For more information and to register for the event, please visit: <http://interfaithaction.org/mlk>.

## Attention Artists and Art Teachers: We need your help!

As part of the redesign project in our religious education spaces, we are creating a community art project in each of the rotation classrooms (grades 1-6).

We want the children in our community to design and create these art projects over the next year with the guidance of an artist/art teacher who can help shape their creativity into a wall size mural.

If you are interested in becoming involved or have questions, please email Megan Casselman-Condon at [megscondon@me.com](mailto:megscondon@me.com) for more information. We look forward to this inspiring and challenging work!

## January Parish Hall Artists

Cheryl Anderson and Jean Wright

Cheryl Anderson and Jean Wright are two artists working with encaustic paint. This ancient medium combines pigment, beeswax, and damar resin to create a paint that is applied in a melted state and fused with heat. The manner in which it is manipulated, layered and enhanced with other mediums creates effects unlike any other paint.

Although they have different styles, both artists work with a theme of relationship.

For Cheryl, the relationship is external. It explores her relationship with nature and the awe and fascination she feels for it's beauty and complexity. Her current work is from a series called "The Earth Began to Sing." The images are inspired by her photography of the weathered and water smoothed layers of earth found on cliff faces and sinkholes. Cheryl writes, "The melted wax that is the base of encaustic paint creates an organic fluidity that feels alive as I work with it, and seems a fitting medium to share the story of what I see."

Jean's interest is in examining the internal nature of personal relationships. She seeks to give form to questions of harmony, balance, power and presence. Jean writes, "One of the qualities that draws me to encaustic as a medium is its translucency. I find that the creation of a multi-layered image is the perfect way to explore my interest in relationships, as they are so often complex and multi-layered."

## Jewelry Donation Collection

Unity Church is currently collecting new and gently used jewelry and watches for a fundraiser that will be held in February. Please drop off jewelry at the Peace Coffee table in the Parish Hall on Sundays and look for more details on this event in *This Week at Unity* and the February *commUNITY* newsletter.

## SAVE THE DATE Heritage Week is Coming! February 10 - 21

Each February, we will come together to learn the story of Unitarian Universalism and apply it to our lives today. We will reflect on some of the significant moments in our faith's formation and meet some of the significant people who helped to shape this vibrant tradition.

# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## Volunteer Corner



Please contact Volunteer Coordinator, Madeline Summers, at [madeline@unityunitarian.org](mailto:madeline@unityunitarian.org) to sign up for any of the opportunities on this page. In addition, if you would like to know more about other opportunities or discuss the particular gifts and talents you'd like to share with Unity Church, you may set up Involvement Appointment. During this appointment you can explore which opportunities would work best for you and how to make your biggest difference.

### Volunteer Bakers

Unity's memorial service team is continually recruiting bakers to help with cookie and bar making. If you are able to bake three dozen cookies at home and bring them to church 3-5 times throughout the church year, please let us know and we will add you to our volunteer list. This volunteer job is very flexible and well suited to family volunteering.

### We invite you to try out the Welcome Team!

We are currently looking for additional Welcome Team members at the 9:00 and 4:30 services. We invite you to join us and try it out this month. Volunteers greet members and visitors as they arrive to church, welcome them to Religious Education and to worship, pass out orders of service, ring the church bell, collect and count the offertory, and assist with serving coffee during our fellowship time after the service.

### Soup Supper Open Shifts

Sunday, January 3, 10, and 24: Help us prepare the soup from 2:00-4:15 p.m. and/or help us serve and clean up from 5:30-6:45 p.m.

### Elders' Group

#### Congregational Conversations: Death and Dying

**Tuesday, January 19 • 1:00 p.m. • Center Room**

Janne Eller-Isaacs will present the plans for a congregational conversation about end of life care, death, and dying. Contact Shay MacKay at [shay@unityunitarian.org](mailto:shay@unityunitarian.org) for more information. See page 8 for more information about these conversations.

### Young Adult Group

The Young Adult group is growing! Join us on Tuesday, January 26, for a 6:30 p.m. potluck in the Center Room. We will have a ritual to honor the new year and brainstorm some of the activities we'd like to see in 2016. All those ages 18-35 are welcome! Contact Rev. Lisa Friedman ([lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org)) to be added to the email list to receive Young Adult news and announcements.

## Fellowship Groups

*These groups are open to all members and friends of Unity Church. If you are looking to connect with a group, please contact the person listed below, visit the church website at [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) for meeting information, or call the church office at 651-228-1456.*

**A New Look at the Bible:** Second Thursday of the month (January 14) at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

**Afterthoughts:** This group meets 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 (January 21) 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 (January 12) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (January 23) from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760.

**Living With Grief Group:** For people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (January 19) from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Janne Eller-Isaacs at [janne@unityunitarian.org](mailto:janne@unityunitarian.org)

**Men's Retirement Group:** Monday, January 11 and 25, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

**Unitots!** A drop-in playgroup for families with kids through preschool age. Every Monday and Thursday, from 9:30 a.m.-noon, in the nursery. Contact Michelle Hill at [michelle@unityunitarian.org](mailto:michelle@unityunitarian.org)

**Unity Book Club:** Second Tuesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. All are welcome—even if you haven't read the book. Contact Jack Hawthorne at [jack.hawthorne@comcast.net](mailto:jack.hawthorne@comcast.net).

**January 12:** *The Underground Girls of Kabul: In Search of a Hidden Resistance in Afghanistan* by Jenny Nordberg

**Unity Bridge Club:** The next meeting of the Bridge Club will be Friday, February 5, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Priscilla Swartz at 651-454-3209.

**Women In Retirement, The Choice Years:** This group meets the second and fourth Thursday (January 14 and 28) of each month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) for more information.

**Young Adult Group:** Potluck supper on Tuesday, January 26, at 6:30 p.m., in the Center Room. Bring your favorite dish to a relaxed evening of good company and conversation. Contact: Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org)

**Sangha Zen Meditation:** Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. Instruction is offered on the first Tuesday (January 5) beginning at 5:00 p.m. Contact Ken Ford at [kford5@comcast.net](mailto:kford5@comcast.net)



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Sustainable Living Group

The Sustainable Living Group is picking up steam! We are a group of people with a deep concern and passion for the environment in our homes, church community, and beyond. We joyfully welcome new participants that are searching for ways to live into their environmental values! Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 12, at 7:00 p.m., in the Center Room. Questions? Contact Jessica at [jzimm0813@gmail.com](mailto:jzimm0813@gmail.com).



## Winter Warm Up Drive

The Racial and Restorative Justice Team and our partner Amicus thank you for the wonderful response so far for this year's Winter Warm Up Drive. The team will continue to collect items throughout January:

- Hygiene items: shampoo, soap, toothpaste and brushes, body lotion, deodorant, shaving cream (all items should be unopened)
- New gloves, hats, scarves, coats, and socks
- Hand and foot warmers
- Bus passes or donations for Amicus to buy bus passes

On Sundays, please bring donations to the Racial and Restorative Justice table in the Parish Hall. Donations delivered during the week should be brought to Rev. Lisa Friedman's office. Thank you!!

## Rainbow Chalice Alliance: Ready to Bake

Our annual Pi(e) Day (3/14/16) Bake Sale is fast approaching! RCA will have a table in the Parish Hall in late January where you can order a wonderful blueberry, apple, or French silk pie. Your pie purchases make it possible for RCA to support Q-Quest (a yearly festival for LGBTQA youth) as well as help fund Queer Prom and Youth Pride in the spring. Watch for details! *Thank you for your support!*

## Go Solar with Us Kick-Off: January 10, 2015!

*Save our planet, save money, tell everyone!*

Incentives provided by a 2013 Minnesota law allow us to make clean, renewable solar electricity available for our residences and our church. Once Unity's Community Solar Garden becomes operational, you may reduce your total carbon footprint by roughly 30% without spending a dime up front. Carbon reduction is the purpose, not savings. Under a recent change in terms, you can expect to pay less for your household electricity during the early years of your subscription, but possibly pay somewhat more later on. Participation requires an Xcel account and, under recently liberalized terms, a FICO credit score 680 or above. Church membership is not required. No solar panels are installed at your home, so this arrangement works for both renters and homeowners — even if you get no sun!

On December 12, 2015, in Paris, France, 195 nations made a historic agreement to move as quickly as possible to a low carbon future. For humanity to make this transition, nations and corporations must make sustained and increasingly dramatic changes — as must each individual and household. We in the U.S. bear much of the responsibility. CO2 emissions are 1.6 thousand tons per capita in India, 7.1 in China, and 16.4 in the U.S.

To help us make this historic turn to clean energy, Unity Church and several other metro UU churches have each partnered with local solar developer Minnesota Community Solar (MNCS) under an agreement carefully negotiated by a metro-area UU Solar Coalition with members from each church. UU congregations have been advocating for as inclusive a program as possible. Negotiators succeeded in eliminating a number of financial barriers including upfront capital outlays, nonrefundable application fees, relatively difficult credit standards, unreasonable exit fees, and obligations for the estate of a deceased subscriber.

By eliminating the most common financial and practical barriers to residential solar electricity, our Community Solar Garden can potentially reduce our combined CO2 emissions by over 1,500 metric tons annually. This is the equivalent of eliminating 806 tons of coal burned each year, or taking 316 cars off the road. Going solar together can be a powerful new way to affirm and promote our seventh UU principle: "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." It says yes to life on this precious planet.

Our partnership with MNCS puts in place the necessary financing, technical skills, solar installation sites, pollinator assurance, customer service arrangements, and residential subscription terms. However, before construction begins, MNCS must receive enough signed subscriptions from us and timely solar site approval from Xcel.

Unity Church volunteers Paul Densmore and Aleks Kinclara will conduct the subscription campaign. In consideration of this campaign effort, MNCS will make a onetime payment to Unity based on total subscribed residential usage, yielding a potential cash windfall for social/environmental justice purposes.

Subscriptions will be available on a first-come, first-served basis for a limited time. The campaign kick-off date is Sunday, January 10, with meetings after services as well as on Wellspring Wednesday, January 13 (see page 6). Spread the word, attend informational meetings, and watch for Paul or Aleks at a Parish Hall table.

Individuals representing more than seventy Unity Church households have already expressed interest. If you would like more information or have questions, email your name, phone, and county of residence to Paul Densmore at [unitysolargarden@gmail.com](mailto:unitysolargarden@gmail.com). A formal expression of interest also requires the account name and number, premise number, and meter number shown on your recent Xcel invoice.

***Go solar with us!***

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Mano a Mano invites you to...  
**Travel to Bolivia in March 2016!**



Are you interested in finding out more about how Unity Church supports health care and economic development in Bolivia, the poorest country in South America? Learn first-hand about this work through a trip to Bolivia during March 12–20, 2016. Mano a Mano International Partners, one of Unity's commissioned Community Outreach Ministry projects, invites you to visit operating clinics in remote rural areas, see water reservoirs that help farm families improve their sparse diet and increase their meager incomes, and work alongside farmers as they learn to protect their natural environment. If you are interested in joining us or learning more, please contact Segundo at 651-324-8471 or [Segundo@manoamano.org](mailto:Segundo@manoamano.org).

Join Unity's Partner Church Ministry Team and...  
**Visit Transylvania this summer!**

Learn first hand about our Unitarian roots and partner church in the village of Homorodszentpeter in Transylvania (now a part of Romania) during this summer pilgrimage!

During the first part of our pilgrimage we'll assemble in Budapest, Hungary — an important cultural center since Roman times. After getting a flavor of this amazing city on the Danube, we will travel east by coach to visit historic sites where our liberal faith has deep roots. This is the part of Europe where the idea of freedom of conscience in religion was actually promoted by an official edict. The "land beyond the forests" (Transylvania) is the home of our spiritual ancestors as well as the current home to about 600,000 ethnically Hungarian Unitarians. Our final destination will be a week-long stay in the village of Homorodszentpeter, our partner village in the beautiful Homorod River valley. Leaving our new friends, we'll return to the United States via Bucharest.

You are invited to contact Hal Freshley ([halfresh@q.com](mailto:halfresh@q.com) or 651-778-8765) if you are interested in finding out more about the trip. Space will be limited to 20 persons.



## REGIFT...and REJOICE Holiday Regifting Sale

**Sunday January 10, 2016**

***Donate your unwanted treasures!  
Shop for fabulous regifted bargains!***

Did Santa bring something that's not your size, your style, or your idea of fun? Donate your brand-new but unwanted gift to Unity Church! We'll sell it to someone else, turning your discards into cash. Proceeds will benefit Unity's Mano a Mano Outreach Ministry Team.

**What: Holiday Regifting Sale**

**When: Sunday, January 10, 2016**

**Where: Unity Church Parish Hall**

**Time: Right after each service**

How it works: Bring your new, unused but unwanted items to the "regifting table" in the Parish Hall on Sunday, January 10, before either morning service. Estimate their value and place them on an appropriate table. We'll sell items at a discount at the Regifting Sale. Unsold items will be given to charity.

All proceeds from the Regifting Sale benefit the work of the Community Outreach Team that supports Mano a Mano International Partners. Mano a Mano builds clinics, schools and roads, and trains teachers, doctors and farmers in rural Bolivia.

Questions? Contact Barbara Benner at [benne002@umn.edu](mailto:benne002@umn.edu) or Unity Church at 651-228-1456.

## Pitter-pattering Questions

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

From KP Hong, Director of Religious Education



In his thinkpiece for *The Atlantic*, the celebrated journalist Ta-Nehesi Coates expounds on the mistaken and myopic focus on police reform:

“At some point, Americans decided that the best answer to every social ill lay in the power of the criminal-justice system... There are many problems with expecting people trained in crime-fighting to be social

workers. In the black community, there is a problem of legitimacy. In his 1953 book *The Quest For Community*, conservative Robert Nisbet distinguishes between ‘power’ and ‘authority.’ Authority, claims Nisbet, is a matter of relationships, allegiances, and association and is ‘based ultimately upon the consent of those under it.’ Power, on the other hand, is ‘external’ and ‘based upon force.’ Power exists where allegiances have decayed or never existed at all. ‘Power arises,’ writes Nesbit, ‘only when authority breaks down.’ ... African Americans, for most of our history, have lived under the power of the criminal-justice system, not its authority.” (*The Atlantic*, April 2015)

Coates and Nisbet stand in a lineage of prophetic voices and social theorists who have reminded us of this, time and again, including the political theorist Hannah Arendt who set authority against coercion and that “where force is used, authority itself has failed.” Liberals may prefer to frame authority as instrumental and coming *from below*, and conservatives as coming *from above* with charisma-expertise-experience. But either way, our democracy presumes that legitimate political authority stems not from the barrel of a gun but from the active consent of the governed, by means of delegated authority of the office, polity, and enduring forms of social contract.

Which brings me to *covenant* — that peculiar, demanding, and daring way of being that faith communities risk — wherein our shared promises and trust impart a kind of relational authority that *authors* life in one another. For nowhere is the temptation to confuse authority with power as subtle and understated as in our relationship with children. In the guise of “exercising authority” and bending “unruly children” to our “benevolent” will, we rationalize compliance while failing to see power and coercion actually at work engendering injury, distrust, and enmity. For like power, authority can become hyperbole, an overstatement and intensifier to emphasize, impress upon, and evoke emotional force toward our own desired ends. And as hyperbole, authority should never be taken literally. But if true authority is a figure of our relationships anchored in trust, what will safeguard it and establish its legitimacy if not our covenant with children? (For is not covenant itself an intensifier, an overstatement of trust to keep in check the exaggerations of authority?) What else but a *covenantal authority* could affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of each child? In a world where truth, tradition, power, and authority have all been rendered suspect, what else but a covenantal authority reveals the weight and ferocity of love strong enough to author our children’s lives toward integrity, service, and joy?

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

## Talking with Children about Racial Justice: From Clumsy to Confident Conversations

As stories of racial inequality continue to capture headlines and the Unitarian Universalist Association commits to support Black Lives Matter, our kids will have questions about racial justice. As parents, we know it can be hard to find the right words to explain racial justice and how it affects our community and our nation. This is hard stuff: our children differ developmentally and we differ in our personal beliefs and attitudes. So we feel clumsy, our confidence waivers, the words don't flow, and maybe we hope they don't bring up the subject. If you have had this experience, or want to avoid it, join Unity's UU Families Group in a six-session intensive workshop where we will explore how to talk to our kids about racial justice. You will emerge with a unique and individualized way of talking to your children about racial justice, including how to connect with Unitarian Universalist values. The group will also locate resources and generate collective wisdom to be shared with other UU parents.

The workshop begins on Saturday, January 16, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and will meet on Wednesday nights from 7:15–8:45 p.m., on January 20, and February 3, 10, 17 and 24. Participants must commit to being present for each session. Facilitators will be Unity Church members Pamela Johnson and Betsy Hearn, using a “bottom up” and deeply interactive process designed by psychologist C.J. Peek. Limited to 10 parents. Reserve your spot now by emailing Pamela Johnson at [pjohnso@comcast.net](mailto:pjohnso@comcast.net).



# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH / MUSIC MINISTRY

## Religious Education at Unity Church:

### A New Perspective

From Joe Mueller, Religious Education Ministry Team

The dark rafters of the sanctuary, while beautiful, can often be taken for granted simply as that which holds up the roof.

On a recent Family Sunday, Kate and I retreated to the choir loft to allow our fidgety seven-year-old a little more space to spread out and to relieve our usual lower pew neighbors from his yet-to-find-an-inside-voice inquisitiveness. I was immediately struck by how different the sanctuary looked from this new vantage point.

What stood out most was the rafters. Up close, the individual pieces and their various roles in the support of our church emerge.

There are the beams themselves, some bearing the weight of the roof directly, others bearing the weight of other beams, and still others aligned to span great distances. Then there are the metal joints, connecting the beams to one another. Each with a specific shape and purpose.

Then it hit me. It is not the wooden beams or the metal connections between them that support the roof. It is the design, development, coordination, and maintenance of this entire support system that provides the space for our hopes, prayers, and songs to rise up and mingle in this sacred space each weekend.

As a new member of the Religious Education Ministry Team (REMT), I am just beginning to see the work of the REMT in a similar way. In our early years here at Unity Church I tended to take religious education for granted as a familiar architectural feature common to many congregations. From the new vantage point of the REMT, I am seeing the selfless individuals who make up this amazing support for the spiritual growth of our children.

The service work of the REMT then truly becomes the design, development, coordination, and maintenance of the entire R.E. program. Whether it is the design and construction of remodeled classroom spaces, the orientation and development of new teachers, or the review of our curricula through an equity lens, it is our work to help people find out where they fit, help them align their work in ways that can span greatest distances across our community, and help build and maintain strong connections between programs.

It is my sincerest hope that religious education at Unity Church continues to provide support for the hopes, prayers, and songs of our children and their teachers as they explore what it means to be Unitarian Universalists in 2016.

**CHILDREN'S MUSICAL AUDITIONS**  
**SUNDAY, JANUARY 3**  
**Details on back cover...**



## Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer  
Director of Music Ministries

*Happy New Year! Yes, you can still SING in a Unity Church Choir!*

Here at Unity Church we have a vital choral program and invite you to consider singing with us this year. If you've been wanting to do this, but missed joining in the fall, now is the time to jump into things. Our music program planning works in two distinct sections, September-December and January-May. We "start up again" in January with new repertoire and Sunday projects which culminate in our highly anticipated Arthur Foote Music Sunday on the first Sunday in May.

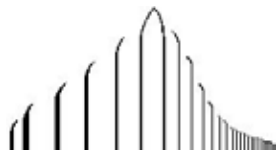
For the adults, it is recommended that you have some musical experience such as music lessons at some time in your life or having sung with a choir before. Of course, if that is not in your background but you have a passionate interest and the courage to jump into the flow of things in order to learn a new skill, we invite you to come and sing with us. We have a great time together!

Please feel free to contact Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministries, with any questions at [ruth@unityunitarian.org](mailto:ruth@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x118.

First rehearsals for this church year are as follows:

- Children's Choir (grades 1 - 5): Sunday, January 3, from 10:15–11:00 a.m. Kathleen Radspinner, director ([kathleenr395@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenr395@gmail.com)); Robbins Parlor
- Unity Choir (adult, high school and beyond): Thursday, January 14, from 7:30– 9:15 p.m. Ruth Palmer, director; Parish Hall
- Unity Singers (auditioned membership): Tuesday, January 12, from 7:30-9:30 p.m. Ruth Palmer, director; Parish Hall/Sanctuary
- Women's Ensemble: Sunday, January 10, from 10:15-10:45 a.m. Ruth Palmer, director; Foote Room

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**Arthur Foote Music Sunday**  
**May 1, 2016**  
**9:00 a.m. • 11:00 a.m. • 4:30 p.m.**



# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

Sanctuary Entrance: 733 Portland Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
Business Entrance: 732 Holly Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
651-228-1456 • fax: 651-228-0927 • [www.unityunitarian.org](http://www.unityunitarian.org) • [unity@unityunitarian.org](mailto:unity@unityunitarian.org)

MARK FOSTER, CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
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## Children's Musical Auditions and Parent Meeting

Calling all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders! Auditions for the 2016 Children's Musical will be held Sunday, January 3, from 1:30-4:00 p.m., in the Foote Room. Kids don't need to prepare anything. They will sing and dance in group activities so they should wear comfortable clothes and bring a water bottle. Everyone who auditions will receive a part.

The first parent meeting will be held in the Anderson Library during auditions. We will cover logistics, answer questions, and sign up for committees. If you have a kid in the musical, you need to be at this meeting.

Performance dates are March 3, 4, and 5, 2016.

Questions? Contact Kim Klose at [klose001@msn.com](mailto:klose001@msn.com).

# JOY!

## The Gathering

### 8th Annual Women's Retreat

Saturday, January 30  
Unity Church-Unitarian

Turn to page 5  
for all the details.

**ETA-NEHISI  
COATES**  
—  
**BETWEEN  
THE WORLD  
AND ME**

The Unity Racial and Restorative Justice, Anti-Racism Leadership,  
and Library-Bookstall Teams Invite You to the 2016

**UNITY CHURCH CONGREGATION**

# BOOK READ

January 2016: Read

*Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nahesi Coates



Available now in  
the Bookstall and  
Anderson Library.

February 17 and 21: Discuss

- Wellspring Wednesday Feb. 17 at 7:10 p.m.
- Sunday Feb. 21 at 12:30 p.m.