

commUNITY

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UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

June/July 2010

Belonging

Each month worship, religious education, community outreach ministry, covenant groups and Wellspring Wednesday programs will offer opportunities to contemplate, consider, contend with and discuss an intergenerational curriculum based on monthly themes. Our hope is that this approach will bind us more closely together and inform our lives in effective and positive ways. June's theme is...Belonging

Which one *doesn't* belong? Many of us spent our childhoods answering that question. In puzzles and games, in worksheets and tests, we learned to sort and identify by form and by function. We learned to know the world – and ourselves – by category. We learned to think of belonging as a matter of division. The triangle does not belong with the squares, and the fox does not belong with the raven and the robin. The word love does not belong with the words rational and real. (*Really? Be careful how you sort.*)

Around the time that we mastered these lessons in similitude, rounding the corner into adolescence some of us discovered that despite our best efforts to fit in ourselves, we were often the ones who didn't belong. In the awkward self-consciousness of youth, we learned the inner experience of loneliness and alienation that seems to come with the human condition. And so began the more personal lesson, learning to balance two of our great human yearnings – for connection and for differentiation.

We humans are social creatures as much as we are individuals. Our need for belonging is as basic as our need for air. Our very personhood depends on it. South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu says in Africa this is called *Woon-too*, which he describes this way: "A person is a person through other persons. In order for me to be me, you must be you. . . . I wouldn't know how to be human except by learning from other human beings. God created us incredibly for inter-dependence. None of us can ever be fully self-sufficient. The totally self-sufficient human being is sub-human. We are meant for togetherness, as those who belong in one family – the human family."

Others remind us of our belonging in a family larger still. Unitarian Universalist Gary Kowalski says it's not the devil but the divine residing in the details – "the lavishness and extravagance that bless every niche, nook and cranny of creation, so that out of the millions of species who inhabit our globe, not one creature has been left half-painted, merely sketched in or without a role to play within the larger picture."

Imagine that: a grand performance with a role for every one of us to play – every person, every bird and beast and blossom, every speck of stardust and drop of water in the ocean. We *all* belong, not by virtue of being the same, but by virtue of *being*.

In fact, belonging – in this radically inclusive, uncategorical sense – was the core message of salvation proclaimed by Jesus and his early followers. We *all* belong. Incredible. Imagine what could be if we actually believed it. It is an understanding of salvation that points like a quivering compass right toward beloved community.

Of course, there is a catch. For as we learn in any committed relationship – whether with another person, a community or cause, or the natural world itself – belonging is a two-way street. Finding where we belong is not only about meeting our own needs; it is about identifying and playing out our own role in the larger performance we call life. Remember: not *one* of us has been left half-painted or without a role to play. What is your role? Where and to whom do you belong? And how will you claim that belonging? How will you live it out?

Poet David Whyte recalls the story of Jesus walking across the storm-tossed

water, calling to Peter in the disciples' boat to join him. "Finally," Whyte says, explaining Peter's decision to step out of the boat, "after all this struggle and all these years . . . you've simply had enough of drowning, and you want to live and you want to love and you will walk across any territory and any darkness, however fluid and however dangerous, to take the one hand you know belongs to you."

What is the outstretched hand that you know belongs to you and is beckoning you now? Will you step out of the boat to take it?

Karen Hering
Consulting Literary Minister



JUST WORDS

Just Words

"I think you should put Unity in context." "Unity in context?" "Yes, it is really helpful to know how we compare to other Unitarian Universalist congregations and other Protestants." So, encouraged by folks, I will try to do just that.

A few weeks ago Stefan Jonasson, Director of Large Congregations at the UUA came and met with about 45 members of the congregation. Stefan has great passion for our liberal faith, statistics and Unity Church in particular. He essentially spoke for three hours and everyone was sorry when he stopped. His enthusiasm and knowledge were inspiring. He told stories of early members of Unity Church. He told stories of our religious ancestors and their efforts with the Scandinavian immigrants of Minnesota and Canada. He placed our church in numerical context, but also in cultural contexts.

I am sad to say that currently Unity Church is the 10th largest Unitarian Universalist congregation in North America. I am sad to report that because in most denominations we would not be considered large, but merely a large mid-size congregation. I am sad that we aren't larger in numbers and in influence. But to put it in context, across all Protestant denominations, the average membership of most congregations is 150.

The largest congregation is in Tulsa, Oklahoma (the church I grew up in), and has about 1,600 members. The remaining top ten churches fall between that number and ours at 855 pledging members. What is interesting to note, however, is that Unity is third in average attendance. Most congregations show an average Sunday worship attendance of about 56% of their membership. Ours hovers around 550, which indicates that we have about 65% of our membership in attendance on any given Sunday during the church year. If you combine the adults and children who are involved in religious education classes, you come to an annual average of 778 folks in the building during worship all year long! That number is third behind much larger congregations. To put this in context, evangelical congregations regularly have a higher number of folks attending worship than our members. The mainstream Protestant congregations cannot make that claim. As a matter of fact, another factor to consider is the decline of church attendance and membership across all mainstream Protestant denominations. All are in decline, some dramatically so. Unitarian Universalism has not declined but as the population grows, we are a smaller percentage of the population.

There are four large Unitarian Universalist congregations in the Metro Twin Cities: Unitarian Society in Minneapolis, First Universalist Church also in Minneapolis and White Bear which was a spinoff from Unity in the 1960's. Later this month thousands of Unitarian Universalists will gather in Minneapolis as we do in a different city each year. Minneapolis was chosen in part because of the strength of our faith in the Twin Cities. We have the largest concentration of UUs outside of the Boston area. The ministers of these congregations are involved in an effort to increase our name recognition and our influence. We dream of the day when you tell folks you attend a Unitarian Universalist congregation they won't say, "What is that?" But instead will say, "Oh, I've always wanted to know more about Unitarian Universalism. It sounds like something I might be interested in. Will you tell me why you attend your church?"

— Janne Eller-Isaacs

The Wheel of Life In Gratitude

May 16, 2010

Until I go west I'm still in Minneapolis at the Benedictine Health Center.

The waiting is filled with gratitude for each of you who have helped me.

Thank you!

The Reverend Sarah Barber-Braun

In Memoriam

Maureen Faith Meckesy

July 10, 1951 – May 6, 2010

Patricia Argyros

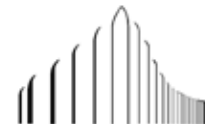
March 4, 1929 – May 13, 2010

Summer Worship Schedule Reminder!

Beginning Sunday, May 30, and continuing throughout the summer, one Sunday service will be held each week at 10:00 a.m.

Independence Day

The Church Office will be closed Monday, July 5, in observance of Independence Day.



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Unity Church—Unitarian
732 Holly Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-228-1456 • fax: 651-228-0927

www.unityunitarian.org
unity@unityunitarian.org

JUNE/JULY WORSHIP INFORMATION

From May 30 through September 12, one Sunday service will be held each week at 10:00 a.m.
Sermon podcasts and archives are available online at www.unityunitarian.org.

June Worship Calendar

June 6

***Life's Longing For Itself* — Janne Eller-Isaacs**

Like concentric circles rippling out on a pond, we belong to ever expanding groups: first to ourselves, then to our family and extended families, our communities, neighborhoods, nation, the world, and to the planet itself. Janne and Worship Associate Katy Taylor will explore the roles of belonging and letting go as we celebrate and acknowledge those high school students among us who are bridging into young adulthood.

June 13

***Real Self Reliance* — Rob Eller-Isaacs**

"It is easy to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great person is the one who, in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude." Emerson's words point toward a creative response to the inherent tension between independence and belonging. As we turn toward summer Rob and Worship Associate Nick Rath's will offer the service.

June 20

***Where I Belong* — Lissa Gundlach**

On the eve of General Assembly in Minneapolis, join Lissa Gundlach, Worship Associate Ann Kirby McGill and Nathan Eckstein for a special service celebrating Lissa's ministry at Unity and exploring dimensions of belonging to the larger body of Unitarian Universalists.

June 27

***Belonging: Here and There* — Rob Eller-Isaacs**

There will be two opportunities to gather for worship this morning. You're encouraged to join thousands of Unitarian Universalists by attending the General Assembly "seeker service" featuring UUA President Peter Morales and the GA choir under the direction of our own Ruth Palmer. The service will be held at the Minneapolis Convention Center at 9:00 a.m. in the morning. The 10:00 a.m. service at Unity Church will be offered by Rob Eller-Isaacs.



July Worship Calendar

July 4

My Jesus in Pieces:

***Believing Again After Things Fall Apart* — Tom Esch**

Many of us grew up in families that embodied a well-defined creedal belief system, with fairly solid boundaries and definitions related to the divine. Then at some point that religion we were given, gradually or maybe suddenly, fell apart. Things just did not make sense to us the way they used to. As Yeats said, "Things fall apart; the center cannot hold." How do we make sense of the broken parts of our former beliefs? What do we do with the pieces?

July 11

***Is this a holy thing to see?* — Chico Hathaway**

Though we'd often prefer to look away, we need to look honestly at the world we are creating. And when we look, do we see holiness there? Our challenge is to act in a way that lines up with our Unitarian Universalist faith, and by so doing bend the universe to create a world where holiness prevails.

July 18

***Shifting Sands, Shifting Truths* — Laura Schlatter**

Sometimes just when you think you know your world, it shifts. Like a kaleidoscope given a sharp twist, the images slide in an instant into something new and challenge you to learn everything all over again. What keeps the center holding when everything else moves? Is there anything you can know for certain? Laura Schlatter and Worship Associate Dutton Foster will explore the moments when our certainty is shaken and the choices we make in the face of change.

July 25

***Authentic Living* — Luke Stevens-Royer**

Finding and following an authentic, fulfilling, and purposeful life can cause one both exhilaration and terror. Following our heart and our passion can create strained relationships with family, friends, and the wider community. Such is the way of life - the complexities of living with integrity and joy, and facing the risks that accompany such a journey.

August 1

***Things of this World* — Patricia Ohmans**

"Love calls us to the things of this world," wrote the poet Richard Wilbur. And yet for some of us, our "mountains o' things" can be a way of shielding ourselves from experiencing love and life deeply. How to navigate between asceticism and acquisitiveness? Patricia Ohmans and Worship Associate Laura Schlatter will offer a service on things and their meaning.

PLEDGE TEAM / BOARD OF TRUSTEES

From this House to the World

Pledge Drive 2011

Lia Rivamonte, Pledge Team

It's a mad, mad, mad world: the stock market plummets, the Greeks riot, terrorists attack; oil slicks, floods, war, hunger, earthquakes—suffering everywhere. At times there seems to be no end to the pain and destruction in this world and it's not just "out there." We experience this pain to one degree or another in our own families, in our own hearts right where we live on a daily basis.

Unity Church is not a retreat from chaos and suffering. We do not come here to hide; we know better than to believe that cosseting ourselves from what we fear might hurt us is not an effective defense from anything. Not that we don't seek comfort here in this our church home; we can and often do. We crave a sanctuary from which we can draw sustenance, find joy and reinvigorate ourselves. Our church home does not disappoint in this regard: our ministers inspire, music and worship service bring beauty, credos spoken by our youth provide hope, meals and gatherings bring fellowship, our social outreach efforts expand our capacity for compassion. We are the muscle, the food and the fire for each other in this house.

If you agree, now is the time to take action. Become a canvass team member and infect your fellow congregants with your passion for this "house." Give voice to your dreams and enthusiasms, gather support and act as a witness for Unity.

Financial support in the form of pledges allows Unity to shelter what is precious—our hopes and dreams—and serve as the protective skin for what cannot and should not be contained: our collective love—dynamic, ever-expanding and ebullient.



From Lissa Gundlach Hallman Ministerial Intern

Spend just a few minutes with Unity's minister Janne Eller-Isaacs and you may hear the tell-tale ring of her phone. She leaves her phone's ringer on most of the time, springing up when it rings to answer. She is always responding— to pastoral calls, family calls, friend calls. She always has time to respond with a loving word or a friendly, "I'll call you right back."

The phone's ring is most appropriate to Janne's ministry. It the first few bars of the song "Seasons of Love" from the musical *Rent*. The song begins:

"Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes. How do you measure, measure a year?"

The song has always had meaning for me, and as my time draws to a close here at Unity I find myself witnessing to Janne's ministry and reflecting on my own.

How do I measure my year in the life of Unity Church?

As the song suggests, I choose to measure my time in love. Each year, seasons of love unfold at Unity in rituals of the liturgical year and in rites of passage that mark birth, maturation, membership, union and death. As I have been honored to minister to rites of passage this year, I have been even more privileged to observe the seasons of love at Unity as they unfold in the artful ministries of the Reverends Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs.

While I have drawn meaning from every rite of passage, every In-Gathering and Celebration of New Lives, my most meaningful learning this year has been in witness to memorializing a life at Unity. There were small intimate gatherings as well as those where community spilled out of Unity's Sanctuary and into Parish Hall. I remember scrambling with Unity's incredible staff to accommodate with chairs and programs as we opened the doors of the sanctuary to help everyone feel connected. I remember feeling grief as I haven't before experienced; feeling my love try to embrace all, reaching wider and deeper than I thought possible. I have learned to confront death with grace, hospitality and compassion.

From my wise mentors, I have learned that the seasons of love often come at unexpected moments, sometimes shifting as quickly as clouds passing over the sun from celebration to grief. I have learned that your loving presence is the most powerful and transcendent witness a minister can offer. It is ultimately the legacy we leave after we die. The Reverend Forrest Church of All Souls Church in New York City once wrote: "The only thing that can never be taken from us, even by death, is the love we give away before we go."

The ministers of Unity Church model to the staff, members and friends how to give away love in abundance, how to weather the seasons of love by embracing one another in work and life. I have learned be a grateful recipient of that love. Every time I hear the song "Seasons of Love," I will think of Janne's ministry of love made visible by answering the call. It is now time for me to answer my own call, to minister and to love. The love at Unity will sustain me as my ministry in the world unfolds.

"How do you measure a year in the life? Measure in love. Seasons of love."

Thank you, Unity Church, for all the moments so dear.

Farewell Party for our Ministerial Intern Lissa Gundlach Friday, June 18 • 5:00–8:00 p.m. in the Greenspace

Come to a barbeque in the Greenspace to celebrate with Lissa as she ends her year-long ministerial internship at Unity Church. Bring items for the grill and a dish to share! The event is open to all and family-friendly. Stop by or stay for the whole evening!

Deepening the Conversation

Race and Privilege in Literature

As the Anti-Racism Leadership Team works to promote opportunities for more and deeper conversation, we find that people's thoughts, feelings and understandings come from many sources – from experiences, from relationship and discussion, from the heart. Many have looked to literature, from a variety of writers, to deepen their understanding. We offer some suggestions.

North Country: The Making of Minnesota, by Mary Lethert Wingerd

New — the untold history of how the land of the Dakota and Ojibwe became the State of Minnesota. For two centuries, Native people and Europeans in the region maintained a hesitant, largely co-beneficial relationship. This racially hybridized society was a meeting point for cultural and economic exchange until the western expansion and violation of treaties by the U.S. government.

The Fall and Rise of Racial Equality in Early Minnesota, by William D. Green

In the 1850s, as Minnesota Territory was reaching toward statehood, settlers from the eastern United States moved in, carrying rigid perceptions of race and culture into a community built by people of many backgrounds who relied on each other for survival. A companion to Wingerd's book, Green unearths previously untold stories of African Americans in early Minnesota.

Notes from No Man's Land: American Essays, by Eula Biss

"I fought with this book. I shouted, 'Amen!' I cursed at it for being so wildly wrong and right. It's so smart, combative, surprising, and sometimes shocking that it kept me twisting and turning in my seat like I was on some kind of socio-political roller coaster ride. Eula Biss writes with equal parts beauty and terror. I love it." ~ Sherman Alexie

Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong, by James W. Loewen

"It is both a refreshing antidote to what has passed for history in our educational system and a one-volume education in itself." – Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States* (another good book to read)

Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships Across Race, by Frances E. Kendall

Racial privilege is hard to see for those who were born with access to power and resources. Inviting readers to think personally about how race — theirs and others — frames experiences, relationships, and the way we each see the world, "Understanding White Privilege" focuses squarely on white privilege and its implications by offering specific suggestions for what we each can do to bridge the racial chasm.

Everyday Antiracism: Getting Real about Race in School (Paperback), by Mica Pollock

In "Everyday Antiracism," leading educators deal with the most challenging questions about race in school, offering invaluable and effective advice. Contributors include Beverly Daniel Tatum, Sonia Nieto, Pedro Noguera, and others.

Board of Trustees

From Ray West, Trustee

Throughout April, Unity members gathered together to discuss "Unity Tomorrow." Discussions that consider our facilities and their appropriateness for the church and our community; now, tomorrow and 50 years from now. It was, quite simply, a discussion about change.

People don't like change. Some dislike it enough to deny that it has happened, despite all evidence to the contrary. The face I see in the mirror every morning is unchanging. Yet, I'm quite startled to randomly run across photos of myself from a decade ago. What happened? The more often our exposure to a person or thing, the more inured we are to the day to day differences we find. The church is a part of our lives that seems unchanging, a constant we depend on. But the church, and it's membership, is always changing.

That was a recurring theme of Stefan Jonasson's, the UUA's Director for Large Congregations, a friend to Unity and a thoroughly engaging speaker, when he came to speak in May. Appearing before a group of Unity members and the board, Stefan asked us to consider, "What should we expect and plan for as a vibrant congregation?"

While sharing many stories from our own history, Stefan repeatedly stressed the concept of "Organizational DNA," and how a church is not just an organization, but an organism. He also stressed the need to avoid being trapped by the idols of what we perceive our identity to be.

Stefan challenges us to know our "current market" versus our "potential market" and to consider this as a theological question. None of us is the same person we were when we joined Unity. Our association with the organization, and with each other, changes us. We are different than when we joined, members and ministers alike. Even the building is drastically different than it was in 1905. We have changed. The church, as a physical entity AND as an organism, continues to change. To not change is to certainly die.

The average lifespan of the Protestant church is 76 years. A third of the way into our second century, we know that longevity, adaptability and resilience is built into the Unity DNA. If it wasn't, we would have drifted off half our lifetime ago.

Unity Tomorrow Congregational Forum



What are our next steps?

How does the planning process proceed?

Where will we focus our efforts?

What's the timeline?

Turn to back cover!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Beginnings and Endings with the Center for Victims of Torture Ministry Team Thank You to the Congregation

The mission of the Center for Victims of Torture is to heal the wounds of government sponsored torture in individuals, their families, and communities. For the past six years a group of Unity Church members has been working as a Community Outreach ministry team to support this work. Over the years we have accomplished our task of building lasting institutional trust between Unity and CVT. It is, therefore, time to celebrate our efforts, be thankful for the opportunity CVT has given us to participate in our larger community, and watch while the next chapter of Unity's relationship with CVT continues to unfold.

As we are ending our team's work together, we have realized the many different ways the Unity congregation has supported both CVT and our efforts as a team. We began our work with an Easter Offering in 2003, followed by gifts of a welcome quilt and 1000 origami cranes made by families in the church when the St. Paul Healing Center opened its doors. As a congregation we painted both the inside of the new St. Paul Healing Center and the beautiful Victorian porch that wraps around the front of the house. Together, we have collected hats, mittens, toiletries, and winter coats and sent \$5,633 out the church door to support CVT programming. We have made hundreds of rice bags, used to sooth physical pains from torture. Additionally, the CVT Healing Garden is filled with plants nurtured by Unity RE kids and a bench given to CVT by our team.

We supported all of this direct service by providing opportunities for the congregation to get to know CVT and their healing work. Highlights for our team were the Wellspring Wednesday intergenerational night where activities sparked conversation and a banner was painted with wishes for continued healing for clients. We also hosted education forums and led a summer service focusing on torture as a moral, rather than political, issue.

The physical space of the church itself has been key to our success as a team. For nearly two years, CVT clients met in the church basement for an art therapy group. More clients benefited from our space by attending a shorter term knitting group. Finally, a CVT client was one of the featured artists in the Parish Hall in early 2009.

Some of the most important work we did was to organize the voice of the congregation against the use of torture by any person or organization working on the behalf of the United States. You signed petitions and sent letters to our elected officials requesting legislation that supported the healing of torture victims and the end of such victimization. Together with hundreds of churches united with the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, we celebrated when President Obama responded by signing an executive order stating that our government would not condone torture as an interrogation tool.

Individual team members have served various roles with CVT. At the request of CVT, team members have spoken at public venues about the impact of torture and the work of the healing centers. We have provided rides for clients to appointments at CVT, befriended survivors and established long-term relationships with them as they settle into the Twin Cities. Other team members have been part of a story-collecting project with the intent of preserving client's stories for prosperity.

While the team is ending, many of the efforts above will be continuing, including some of those involving the congregation. The Youth Social Justice group plans to make more rice bags in the fall, there will be more Sunday collection plates donated by the congregation, and likely more educational opportunities.

Over the course of the last six years, the team has requested and received much support from the congregation.

Swimming upstream against the status quo hasn't always been easy, but the team received much bolstering from this congregation. We are proud to have begun this relationship with the Center for Victims of Torture, and feel greatly enriched by this opportunity. We are confident this is the beginning of a long relationship together. Your efforts have supported ours and made a difference in the world. For this we are tremendously grateful.

— — — — —
Unity's CVT Ministry Team will be celebrating the work that's been done since 2004. We welcome anyone from the congregation to join us for a light dinner at the church on an evening in June (date TBD). Bring a drink or appetizer to share. Please call Pat Haff at the Church Office to learn the date and let her know if you think you would like to attend.

Project Home Volunteer Coordinator Needed

Unity's Project Home Team is looking for someone with computer skills to serve as Volunteer Coordinator for 2011. Please contact Anna Newton for more information.

Evergreen Foodshelf

The third Sunday of every month is Evergreen Food Drive Sunday. Donations can be brought anytime and should be placed in the barrels located at both the Holly and Portland Avenue entrances. Suggested items for Sunday, June 20, are cooking oil and detergent.

Whole Farm Coop

Buy meat, cheese, produce and more from local, sustainable farms and pick it up at Unity Church! For a June pick up, order from wholefarmcoop.com or call 320-732-3023 by Wednesday, June 9. Orders will be delivered to Unity Church on Wednesday, June 16.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

What's Up?

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)

from David Byfield (651-659-7563) and Marty Rossmann (612-624-3082), Unity Church UUSC Representatives

The UUSC motto is "Advancing human rights is the work of many joining hands" Summer Experiential Learning

UUSC lives out its motto by, wherever possible, partnering with other organizations. After initial plans were made for renovating a Minneapolis home the week before General Assembly, UUSC leaders realized it was wiser to partner with the two previously planned Twin City Unitarian-sponsored Habitat for Humanity builds in St. Paul and Minneapolis. So, the JustWorks Camp was cancelled and Unity Church members are encouraged to contact the Unity Church Affordable Housing team for information about the June Habitat build on the East side of St. Paul the last two weeks in June.

Shareholder Advocacy

Working with shareholders is one way UUSC lifts up human rights and works for real change. Two recent victories are: 1. American Funds divested its almost \$190 million in PetroChina, a Chinese oil company that was identified as a major financial and military supporter of the ongoing genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan. 2. Intel, one of the world's largest manufacturers of semiconductor chips, adopted a human-right-to-water policy as the result of a shareholder resolution co-filed by UUSC.

Human Rights and Social Justice Goals

The UUSC vision is to build a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights. Four specific program focus areas are: 1. Economic justice 2. Environmental justice 3. Civil liberties and 4. Rights in humanitarian crises. In future *commUNITY* notes we will explain some of the projects UUSC is undertaking to achieve their goals (such as campaigning to make a living wage a reality for workers).

Involvement/Membership in UUSC

UUSC is financially independent from the UUA. In September we will ask for volunteers to join us, creating a team to promote knowledge of UUSC and enhance the number of Unity members committed to UUSC. Together, we can partner to further the UUSC goals.

Evergreen Needs YOU!

The Evergreen Projects Team holds monthly food drives for Sharing Korner Foodshelf; provides a variety of services for the Jeremiah Program, a residential campus for low-income single mothers and their families; and supports the Family Place, a day program for area homeless families. The Evergreen Quilters provide "joyful fundraising" for these projects through the making and selling of handmade quilts.

Currently, there are several opportunities to cook and serve for families in immediate and temporary need.

Jeremiah Program in St Paul offers access to safe, affordable housing and quality childcare so that single mothers are able to complete post-secondary education, launch successful careers, and create a stable and prosperous future for their children. Five people are needed for each date — Thursday, June 3, and Tuesday, September 21 — for Unity's "Cook for Kids" suppers at Jeremiah. Volunteers provide one part of a meal for about 20-30 moms and kids (age 5 and under) including a main dish, a vegetarian dish, beverages, salad, and a dessert. Volunteers agree to serve and then clean up the Jeremiah House kitchen between 5:00 and 6:30 p.m. To volunteer call Karen Buggs at 651-297-0111

Family Place is the only day shelter for homeless families in Ramsey County. It provides a myriad of services including meals, housing assistance, financial counseling, personal care, and enrichment programs for pre-school-age children. All ingredients for the Sunday dinner will be purchased (with funding support from the Evergreen Quilters) and taken to Family Place. Volunteers will prepare the meal in the kitchen at Family Place near downtown St. Paul, serve and clean up. Time commitment is from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m. Call Mary Barrett at 651-225-9708 to volunteer for a meal at Family Place.

Unity Helps in Amicus Hygiene Item Drive

Amicus is celebrating the soon-to-be summer season by stocking up on hygiene supplies for clients who have been recently released from a correctional facility. It's as tough out there as it has ever been for people with felony records seeking a second chance. The ability to provide a few useful hygiene items can serve as a real day brightener for those Amicus works with. To help restock, Amicus is running a Hygiene Item Drive from May 17 through the end of July.

What You Can Bring

Deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand lotion, soap, sanitizer, shampoo, and washcloths.

A tote bag or duffel bag is always useful to carry items as many of our clients spend a good deal of time on the street.

Please bring your items to Unity Church and leave them with Community Outreach Ministries Coordinator Pat Haff. Questions? Please contact Amicus Communications Director Steve Nelson at 612-348-8570 or steve@amicususa.org.

Thanks as always for your ongoing generosity and caring.

JUNE AND JULY OFFERING RECIPIENTS

June/July Group Meetings

Men's Retirement Group: Monday, June 7, 21, July 12, and 26 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Contact: Phil Morton at 952-934-3578

Unity Singles Group: Watch *This Week at Unity* for events. Contact: Bonnie Reiland at bonniereiland@aol.com

A New Look at the Bible: First Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

Afterthoughts: Sundays after the 10:00 a.m. service. Contact: Paul Gade at 651-771-7528

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: Sue Conner at 651-646-6667

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

Evergreen Quilt Group: Contact: Peggy Wright at 651-698-2760

Unity Book Club: Tuesday, June 8, at 7:00 p.m. Open to everyone!

Job Transition Networking Group: Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Contact: Wendy Frieze at wendyfrieze@mac.com

Boston Pilgrimage



October 23–28, 2010

You are invited to join our ministers for a pilgrimage to the Unitarian Universalist holy sites! We'll visit Plimouth Plantation, Harvard Divinity School, the Oracles of Concord, Walden Pond and the historic churches of Boston. There will be time for sightseeing as well as conversation and reflection. More information including cost and accommodations to come! If you are interested in participating in this pilgrimage, please contact Song Thao at the Church Office to have your name added to the list.

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.**

June 6 — Tennessee and Kentucky Flood Relief (100% of offering): When Unitarian Universalists in Iowa experienced flooding of their homes and property in 2008, people from around the country, including Unity Church members, sent more than \$25,000 to help them with the recovery efforts. Now our friends in Tennessee and Kentucky are experiencing the same kind of trouble after the May 4th flood that took 29 lives and caused great property damage and devastation to many people. The purpose of the Tennessee and Kentucky Flood Relief Fund is to bring practical financial assistance, ministry and spiritual care to those affected by the tragic floods.

June 13 — Frogtown Gardens: The mission of Frogtown Gardens is to grow a greener, healthier neighborhood. Its members work to protect and enhance green space, demonstrate the value of backyard gardening for food, and advocate for healthy sustainable development in the Frogtown neighborhood of St. Paul. This newly minted non-profit is working to create a Frogtown Farm, an urban farm and park on 13 vacant acres in the middle of the neighborhood. The Farm is envisioned as a nature sanctuary, recreation space and teaching center, where neighbors and others can learn about traditional and cutting-edge techniques in small-scale, urban backyard-sized farming. Patricia Ohmans, a 30-year Frogtown resident and Unity Church member, is one of the four founders along with Tony Schmitz, Soyini Guyton and Seitu Jones.

June 20 — Affordable Housing Team Habitat for Humanity Build: The Unity Church Affordable Housing Ministry team is co-sponsoring a Habitat for Humanity 'green' build as a partner in Faith Builders during the last two weeks in June. The other neighborhood churches involved in this partnership are Assumption Catholic Church, the Cathedral of St. Paul, St. Clement's Episcopal, and House of Hope Presbyterian. A Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity 'green' build integrates building practices that reduce detrimental impacts on the natural environment, promote healthy indoor air quality for occupants, and reduce energy costs while increasing the long-term affordability of homes. This offering will go towards Unity Church's share of the cost of renovating a home on the east side of St. Paul.

June 27 — Crisis Nursery: The greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery works in partnership with parents in crisis and the community to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect.

July 4 — SWAMP: The St. Paul Public Libraries offer five SWAMP (Student and Mentoring Program) sites. Participants range from middle school to adult learners who are not native English speakers. SWAMP provides school supplies and important Internet access for students who do not have home computers. The Unity Church collection will go to the SWAMP program at the Rondo Community Library. Several Unity Church members have worked with the Friends of the St. Paul Public Libraries which is the parent organization of SWAMP.

July 11 — Sarah's House: As part of the ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Sarah's House has served over 500 women from nearly 50 nations, especially women who are in need of housing, safety and community on a temporary basis.

July 18 — SteppingStone Theatre for Youth Development: SteppingStone Theatre actively engages children and youth in the creative and expressive powers of theatre, enabling young people to participate in and contribute to the rich cultural heritage of our community. They teach children and youth about history, diverse cultures, literature and the arts, while making learning engaging and creating a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

July 25 — Rainbow Families: Rainbow Families works to build a safe, just, and affirming world for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and their children. Many members of Unity Church are involved with Rainbow Families.

COMMUNITY / FELLOWSHIP / LEARNING

Guided Meditation in Ames Chapel

Tuesday Evenings, June 1, 8, and 15 • 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Buddhist meditation is a centuries old spiritual practice of breathing, mindfulness, and attention to teachings. Join Lissa Gundlach for a weekly guided meditation in the Ames Chapel. Each week we will briefly listen to teachings, practice sitting and walking meditation and support one another in our developing practice. Come every week or drop in. All ages and levels of experience welcome. Ames Chapel

Present Moment, Wonderful Moment!

A Retreat Opportunity to Begin and Deepen Meditation Practice at Unity

Saturday, June 12 • 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Mindfulness Meditation with Mark Nunberg from the Common Ground Meditation Center in Minneapolis

Join Unity's growing community of meditation practice with a special opportunity to find peaceful refuge from the distractions of daily life in a meditation retreat. Begin and grow your meditation practice in a warm and supportive community. The retreat will include sitting and walking meditation, guided movement, talks on spiritual practice, and time for questions and discussion. All ages and levels of experience welcome. Bring a bag lunch for a community meal; and your favorite mug for tea. Snack will be provided. Suggested donation \$20.00. Email or call Lissa (lissa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 ext. 129) to register.

Beyond Our Walls Tour

Saturday, June 12 • 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. • \$20.00

Hop on a vintage bus and join members of the Board of Trustees and the Anti-Racism Leadership Team to learn from some of our neighbors to the north. We'll visit sites in vibrant neighborhoods, explore Wing Young Huie's University Avenue art installation, and taste wonderful local specialties. The \$20.00 covers breakfast, the bus, and guides for the adventure. Reserve a seat on the bus by contacting Martha Tilton at the Church Office.

Caregivers Group

Thursday, June 17 • Noon–2:00 p.m.

This group will not meet in month of July.

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.

Unity Gardeners

Unity Gardeners welcome anyone interested in enjoying our beautiful gardens with hands-on experiences. The gardeners are setting up a summer schedule for weekly watering and weeding. Anyone wishing to join them this summer should contact Ethel Griggs at c.griggs@comcast.net.

Heart to Heart

A Couples Enrichment Weekend

November 5-6-7, 2010

Heart to Heart is a program designed to enrich communication and intimacy in your relationship. This will be our 16th annual fall retreat. 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 Laurel and Eric Lein at 651-227-0486.

Wellspring

A Year of Spiritual Deepening

New group forming which will be limited to 10 participants

Do you yearn for deeper connection to your faith and to the people here? Do you wish you had a better grasp of our traditions, history and theology? Do you dream of a day when you have the time to create a daily spiritual practice? Then you might want to know more about Wellspring, a new year-long curriculum designed with spiritual deepening as the goal. Please read further for more information.

This year Unity Church has been asked to field test a new curriculum called Wellspring, designed by our former intern Jen Crow and other members and staff at the Rochester, New York Unitarian Universalist Church. Wellspring was created to respond to the need for spiritual grounding in our own tradition and offers a five-spoke model of spiritual deepening. The five spokes of Wellspring include: daily spiritual practice, twice a month meetings with the Wellspring group, engagement with Unitarian Universalist history and theology, meeting monthly with a spiritual director and discerning our unique call in life. Jen writes, "Engaged together, these five spokes create a powerful synergy that has fostered significant transformation in the lives of many of the participants. Most experience a deeper understanding and connection with Unitarian Universalism and their own spiritual lives."

Our wellspring group will begin with a retreat in September and will meet twice a month through May. Each session will have reading assignments that support our exploration and engagement of the topics and themes of the program. You can find out more about this program by contacting Janne Eller-Isaacs at the Church Office or coming to the informational meeting on Sunday, June 13, at 11:30 a.m.

LITERARY MINISTRY / UNITY LIBRARIES

Writing as a Spiritual Practice • Literary Programs

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.

OPEN PAGE Writing Session

Sunday, June 13 • 12:00–2:00 p.m. • Unity Church • Free

Reflection Topic: *Faith*

In the early Buddhist, Jewish and Christian texts, faith is not a noun but a verb. It is a way that we live, a leap that we take. In the Pali language of the original Buddhist texts, it meant literally “to place the heart upon.” This writing session offers an exploration of faith as something we do. How and where do we offer our hearts? And what does it mean when we do? The session is free and open to all. Registration not required, but an e-mail to karen@unityunitarian.org is requested to help in planning space and handouts.

A Wave in the Mind: Three OPEN PAGE Summer Evening Sessions

Monday, June 21, *The Longest Day*

Tuesday, July 27, *The Circumference of Prayer*

Tuesday, August 24, *Faith in a Seed*

7:00–9:00 p.m. • Unity Church • Pre-registration required; \$25/each

Virginia Woolf said that writing is a matter of being attuned to a larger rhythm and movement. It begins, she said, when “a sight, an emotion, creates this wave in the mind, long before it makes words to fit it.” Our task in writing, she continued, is to set that wave moving again, so that “as it breaks and tumbles in the mind, it makes words to fit it.” These three summer writing sessions, each on a different theme, offer an opportunity to catch and ride this wave in the mind. **E-mail pre-registration is required by one week prior to each session.** Registration fees are payable at the door. To register or to receive advance notification of each session, e-mail karen@unityunitarian.org.

On-line literary resources

For more information about the *Faithful Words* literary ministry and additional writing programs offered in other locations, visit www.unityunitarian.org/WritingMinistry.htm. Meditations offered on each month’s worship theme are also available on-line at www.unityunitarian.org/MonthlyThemeResources.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.



What’s New at Unity Libraries?

To Steve Nelson:

Tahkk, Muchas Gracias, Merci, Arigatô, Shukran, Mèsi, Asante, Toda...

No matter how many different ways we find to say it, “Thank You” hardly seems enough to show our appreciation for Steve Nelson’s many years of service to Unity Libraries, after he stepped down from the Library Team at the end of May. Steve has been on or leading the Unity Library Team for longer than any of us currently on the team can remember (since before 2004?); or in other words, a remarkably long time. In addition to leading the Library Team for many years, Steve led/managed The Bookstall, participated in the Library Steering Committee (where the literary journal originated), and organized and supported many library team events such as author readings and signings, Library Open Houses, our UU women’s history program, and Café Unity (he even came up with the name).

There are too many accomplishments to name them all here, but under Steve’s leadership, the Whitman Children’s Library was revived, remodeled for kid-friendliness, and the collection brought into the 21st century. The Anderson Library was thoughtfully collected, well-staffed, and good service and outreach became the hallmark of Unity Libraries. When you are on Steve’s team, you feel your contribution to the life of Unity Church is valued; his collegial spirit allows for consideration of different viewpoints.

We will miss Steve on the Library Team, but thankfully, we will still be honored with Steve’s work and involvement in many other areas of Unity, including the Restorative Justice Team and the award-winning Unity Singers.

All of us on the Library Team, including staff liaison Barbara Hubbard and the wonderful Bookstall volunteers, want to acknowledge Steve’s significant contribution and say, “Thank you. Job well done. It’s been an honor to work with you.”

Unity Church Book Club

The Unity Church Book Club will meet from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 8. The book they will be discussing is *Misdemeanor Man* by Dylan Schaffer.

Everyone is welcome — even if you haven’t read the book!

Book for discussion on Tuesday, June 13: *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell.

MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH / PARISH HALL ARTISTS

Remember Merging of Waters!

Remember to bring back water from your summer travels for our ritual Merging of Waters in September! Families can help their children make special, beautiful containers to keep the water in while we're apart from one another.

June 6: Grand Old Day Parking Alert!

Congregants should be aware that street parking will be limited due to the Grand Old Day street festival. The parking lots will be managed by Unity youth and adults so that worshippers can park while fair-goers contribute money toward our youth and community outreach ministries.

June 6: Senior Bridging Sunday

The congregation is warmly invited to join Unity's graduating high school seniors for coffee and pastries at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, June 6. Come find out what they'll be doing next. During the 10:00 a.m. service, the youth will be recognized and blessed in our Bridging Litany.

General Assembly Multigenerational Worship

June 25 • 7:45 a.m.

Unity friends Kerri Meyer, Ruth MacKenzie, Mike Huber, Mary Jo Nikolai and Elizabeth Giffin lead the assembly of Unitarian Universalists in a multigenerational worship service celebrating the power of song to unite people of all ages in a common spirit. Dozens of Unity members will participate as puppeteers and singers. If you're planning on being at GA, don't miss this moment! 7:45 to 8:20 a.m. on Friday, June 25, in the Plenary Hall at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Contact Kerri with questions.

Summer in the Garden

Children's Sunday Programming

At every 10:00 a.m. service from Memorial Day to Labor Day, our children will participate in a summer gardening project in the Greenspace outside. We share our fresh, healthy produce with neighborhood elders who receive services through the Summit-University Living at Home/Block Nurse program.

Parents should sign their children in downstairs in the Yellow Hallway. Apply sunblock to children and dress them in gardening clothes each Sunday. Pre-registration is not necessary, but weekly participation will be governed by Safe Church ratios of one adult to every seven children. Volunteer weeders and waterers are welcome to help during the week. Contact Kerri in the Church Office.

Oops! Missed R.E. Registration this Spring?

No worries. Put Wednesday, September 1, on your family's calendar! Space for all ages remains in the 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. programs. This will be the last opportunity to register children for Religious Education in time for the start of Sunday School on September 19.

- New families registering their children for the first time should come at 7:00 p.m.
- Returning families should arrive at 8:00 p.m.

Meet in the Arthur Foote Room on the second floor of the church. Childcare provided. The session should conclude by 8:30 p.m.

June/July Parish Hall Artists

Bonnie Cutts

Combining observations of the world around me and my love of painting, I was brought to this point of discovery in my artwork. Textural surfaces, subtle and bold colors and a dramatic use of materials all work together in my mixed media paintings. Photos and drawings crept into and onto the canvases while exploring the multiple layers of the materials I was applying. Thoughts of home and memories of travels both come into play in the images. Plant materials from inside and outside find their way into the paintings, somehow always relating to life, being alive. Look at the vessels, find the tropical leaves. Take a look inside and out and see where it can take you. And enjoy the visual journey.

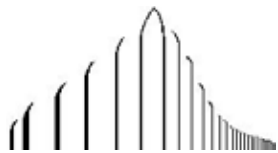
Cynthia Starkweather-Nelson

Over the years my work has reflected what is happening in my life. Moving between abstract and representational the work maintains the connection to visual journaling that has been integral to the painting. Growing from student to artist to parent to educator and now back in the studio, the work has been an ongoing flow of images and ideas developed through personal experience.

Currently water is an essential subject matter in my work. With invaluable time available to meditate and reflect – the work has taken on an introspective atmosphere. Images gathered from waterscapes surrounding our cabin are developed into paintings, drawings and prints. What draws me to the subject is the beauty, subtlety, and mystery found in closer examination of my digital images.

Working on this series has allowed me to examine in depth what is not immediately visible but is captured instantly by the camera. Sometimes there are pleasant surprises in the compositions captured, the play of light, depth of surface, richness of color the active world under the surface. Seeing these images as metaphor for the richness and complexity of the human spirit I hope to convey a sense of this mystery to the viewer.

A reception hosted by the artists will be held on Thursday, June 10, from 5:00–7:00 p.m. All are invited to attend.



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732 HOLLY AVENUE • SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55104
651-228-1456 • FAX: 651-228-0927 • WWW.UNITYUNITARIAN.ORG

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Unity Tomorrow Congregational Forum



What are our next steps?

How does the planning process proceed?

Where will we focus our efforts?

What's the timeline?

Having heard from more than 400 people, including the children of the church school, the Unity Tomorrow Team is ready to make its recommendations to the Executive Team and to the Board of Trustees.

The Board is having a special meeting on Wednesday, June 9, at 7:00 p.m. to receive and consider the recommendations. Board meetings are open to the membership.

Then, following the service on Sunday, June 13, from 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. the Executive Team, Trustees and members of the Unity Tomorrow Team will present the recommendations and respond to questions and concerns at a congregational forum. Everyone is welcome and childcare will be provided.

Unity "Walk-In" Choir Sunday, June 13

Come and sing with members of the Unity Choir on Sunday, June 13. Come for a rehearsal at 9:00 a.m. and sing at the 10:00 a.m. service! Come for some fun and music quickly learned!

WANTED!

Summer Musicians

Summer is a great time to share your musical gifts with your Unity family and friends. Summer lay-led services begin on July 4 this year and continue through August 29. If you are interested in participating in the music contact Kathleen Bartholomay at 651-698-2431.

One Voice Mixed Chorus Presents...

GREAT!
Different is Good.
a family concert

June 4-5, 2010

Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre, Minneapolis

Visit ovmc.org for times and tickets.