

A Brave Space

**Maura Williams, guest writer for the Beloved Community Communications Team
Member of the Racial and Restorative Justice, Artist in Residence, and Art Teams**

Fourteen inmates of the Minnesota Correctional Facility–Shakopee,

the only women’s prison in Minnesota, enter the group room for a Restorative Justice Healing Circle. This will be their routine for the next ten Thursdays. The women, though dressed alike in gray sweatpants and sweatshirts, represent different ages, backgrounds, races, crimes and sentences. Each takes a chair in the circle, uncertain what this experience, for which they signed up, will require of them. I take roll and send the attendance sheet to the control desk.

We talk about Restorative Justice (RJ) and the Circle process; about providing a respectful place to center on accountability and healing. And how, in contrast to the punitive consequences assigned by our criminal justice system, RJ seeks to restore wholeness to all impacted by a crime: victims and perpetrators and the broader community.

My co-facilitator and I lay out expectations. This entire series will be conversation, we say. We then discuss as a group what values we wish to honor and uphold during our time together. Words like courage, honesty, respect, compassion are offered.

There is coherence between the physical setup of the Circle, the quality of conversation that ensues, and building trust:

- The talking piece designates the speaker and gets passed left from the speaker’s heart to the woman on her left. We ask people to speak from the heart in their sharing, and that emotional honesty evokes sympathy.
- Echoing the shape of a circle, there is no hierarchy, no “boss”

or intended outcomes so the conversation flows with emphasis on understanding. Everyone is equal in Circle.

- What someone says in Circle does not get shared outside Circle. Confidentiality is the highest priority, especially in this place.

I think of Circle as a non-white-centered way for people, both known and strangers, to engage in a slower, more attentive way to be together, in which we focus on who someone is rather than what they do. We remind the women that they are not their crimes, and then we ask them to tell their stories. All in the group feel respected and safe and, over time, the group becomes non-judgmental in their listening.

When I think of my own experience of meetings, I am reminded of how dominant culture seems to be driven by productivity:

- Meetings are confined by time and agenda, focusing on moving the group’s business forward.
- A few empowered individuals typically monopolize the conversation; all perspectives in the room are not usually solicited.
- Data-supported objectivity often overrides personal insights; it is presumed that there is one right answer within an either/or approach to problem solving.

Some have felt that the Circle process has at times been misappropriated when adapted to meet white cultural patterns. This happens when getting the work done supersedes relational values. See “White Supremacy Culture Characteristics” by Tema Okun for more on this: bit.ly/okunwsculture.

I learned the Peacemaking Circle

process (ethicalleadership.org) from members of the Inland Tlingit Nation of Yukon Territory, Canada, who have been sharing “community-based justice” for years. Circle Keeper training confounded me at first. I had expected to be instructed on facilitation techniques, but training consisted of days of sitting in Circle, listening to people respond to questions about life experiences, personal challenges and aspirations, or just what was on their hearts. We were being trained to listen.

Circles are used in a variety of situations from school to organizational settings, providing a respectful space to resolve conflict, determine appropriate amends, talk about wrongdoing, and to deepen relationships among people of differing backgrounds and experience. For example, I recently served as a Circle Keeper for *Museums Advancing Racial Justice* hosted at the Science Museum of Minnesota, with the Smithsonian. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) professionals from around the country attended, and I learned this can be lonely work. At the beginning and end of each of the three days, participants attended circles to deepen their experience and new relationships, that will support their important work.

Circle has required me to be fully present, both in my speaking and listening. It has required that I share myself more authentically (challenging for an introvert). {Continued on page 7}

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES | OFFERING RECIPIENTS

Sunday Worship Services

Summer Sunday services, from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, are held at 10:00 a.m., both in the Sanctuary and via livestream. Sundays in the Garden for children and youth is held during the 10:00 a.m. service.

July 7: *Encountering Herr Buber and Mr. Douglass*

LauraSue Schlatter | Peggy Lin

Livestream: youtube.com/live/aAJc-PppPsg

What does it mean to have a conversation or an encounter with another human that invites the divine into relationship? When we talk about “going deep quickly” and knowing each other “in all our fullness,” what do we mean? Why are these things important? And what do Herr Buber and Mr. Douglass have to teach us about all this?

July 14: *Hoy por ti, mañana por mí/Today you, tomorrow me*

Rev. Lara Cowtan | Chris Russert

Livestream: youtube.com/live/tl6AQkNaMcA

In a consumer society focused on limited resources and rugged individualism, many are left feeling estranged from one another and numb. How might we move from a culture of scarcity towards abundance, understanding the power of sharing, and embracing our human vulnerability as a strength? Each of us can help and be helped, and through our empathy can find and build bridges of resilience, community, and hope.

July 21: *The Road to Joy*

Jess Goff | Kevin Ward | Sara Ford

Livestream: youtube.com/live/ogCFrjwcuGI

What happens when a book changes your life? You buy copies for your friends? Or maybe you talk about it in a summer service. In 2016, the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote *The Book of Joy*. Some of their ideas are weird and unattainable (like — Can you really train your mind to have mental immunity? Can you really have empathy for your enemies?), but then again maybe joy can happen. Jess Goff and Kevin Ward will share their favorite passages and meditate aloud how this book has transformed them.

July 28: *Queer Migration*

Rev. Laura Smidzik | Peggy Lin

Livestream: youtube.com/live/70n9YBf0vX4

As hostile laws are adopted across the county, queer families and individuals are making their way to states like Minnesota. We will paint a picture of what is happening, how Unitarian Universalists are connected, and supporting the effort to find safety and sanctuary for those who are migrating to Minnesota.

Flowers for Worship

If you would like to bring flowers for a summer Sunday worship service, please email martha@unityunitarian.org.

Offering Recipients

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

July 7

Freedom School, held each summer in the Rondo Education complex, is a free, six-week program for students in grades K-8. Freedom School provides nutritious meals and addresses proficiency in reading and math while connecting learning with lessons in community, responsibility, music, field trips, and fun. This collection will buy books for the summer 2024 program. Unity has partnered with Freedom School for the past ten years.

July 14

Keystone Community Service is the largest provider of food shelf services in the East Metro. Its Meals on Wheels and Food Mobiles travel throughout Ramsey County providing services that are accessible, dignified, and break down barriers. Ramsey County has higher rates of food insecurity than the Minnesota state average. The demand for Keystone services has tripled in the past two years. Unity's Anna Newton is a persistent spokesperson for Keystone.

July 21

Prepare and Prosper works to build financial health by providing access to quality tax and financial services. Prepare and Prosper reshapes the financial landscape by partnering and innovating to offer services, products, and options that build wealth — not strip it away — for families working hard to realize a brighter financial future. Prepare and Prosper works with people, communities, and systems to break down barriers and develop solutions to promote financial opportunities and success while advocating to advance state and local policies and practices that directly affect low-to-moderate income families.

July 28

Bedő Kornélia Women's Association, which is the Unitarian Women's organization in Homoródszentpéter, plays a central role in village life by promoting the spiritual, cultural and social wellbeing of the local women and the congregation. While the village has fewer than 200 inhabitants, this 45-member association is the largest women's association in the Hungarian Unitarian Church. This collection will help fund participation by the women from the village in the Fourth International Convocation of UU Women and People of Progressive Faiths in September 2024 in Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár and help purchase a new piano for the church.

Visit unityunitarian.org/sunday-offering.html to nominate an organization to receive the Sunday offering.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Let Us Prepare the Soil

Claire Cooke, Trustee

If there are fewer plants in the world today, and I do believe this to be true, it is not for a lack of beautiful things to grow. It is a matter of soil, not seeds.

This summer, as I continue the spiritual practice that is board work, I reflect on what we as Unitarian Universalists are growing in the garden that is Unity Church—Unitarian as well as the garden of the world. I see us planting so many seeds — programs, projects, outreach, partnerships, relationships. Specifically at Unity, I think of the Currier Fund for Racial Justice and the new ministry on our horizon. All of these seeds, tightly packaged potentials of Beloved Community.

Each year our Coming of Age youth are asked to consider, “What is the role of the church in the creation of the Beloved Community?” A great question for all Unitarian Universalists that asks how we create the soil (culture — soil in which humans grow) that is nutrient rich and life-giving enough for beloved community to take root.

I love *Tending the Soil* by Ricardo Levins Morales. In this zine of organizing wisdom, lesson five introduces the idea that the soil is more important than the seeds:

Almost anything will take root in rich, nutritious soil, whereas it's hard to get anything to grow if the soil is barren, toxic and won't hold moisture.

The seeds are our projects, our initiatives, our campaigns, our organizations, our institutions that we want to build.

The soil is the compost of beliefs, ideas, values and narratives that create the environment in which we are working.

Our cultural soil is not far off from the state of our actual soil. While there are thriving green spaces, increasingly the ground is paved, polluted, or bombed to oblivion. The physical manifestation of beliefs and values that permeate our culture — isolation, individualism, and othering. Beliefs intentionally bred through white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism create perfect soil for exploitation, extraction, and oppression to grow. In turn giving rise to staggering disparity and climate crisis.

Insidiously, the beliefs and narratives that permeate our sick soil, have made themselves invisible to evade removal. Ease and comfort masquerade as synonymous for a fulfilled life. False equivalencies disguise our harmful ideologies, making our commitment to living our true values even more important. We all do better when we all do better, not a catchy slogan but an inescapable truth and drawing the circle wide, not an altruistic act but an action inseparable from our own well-being.

I give thanks for the life-giving beliefs Unitarian Universalism provides. The challenge is identifying where our culture's harmful beliefs act through us. Hidden in our lives.

In her article, “Lead Me to Practice Discomfort” (Beloved Community News: unityunitarian.org/beloved-community-news/lead-me-to-practice-discomfort) Marjorie Otto describes the importance of building a spiritual practice that connects us to discomfort. Reality is uncomfortable. So to move toward the just and abundant world we seek, we must connect to discomfort (anger, guilt, fear, and shame), allowing our emotions to guide us. A challenge we can meet with the right tools and skills.

For me this means attending an Active Hope workshop series at Unity exploring the work that reconnects through a spiral of practices that

move through gratitude, grief, greater awareness, and action. A framework for composting beliefs that turns away from harm and towards the world that we wish to see.

There are an abundance of seeds for us to grow. Let us prepare the soil. Compost and mulch. Plunge hands deep into the beautiful, dark earth. Moist, textured and life-giving, we are in the context of cultivation. Friends, let us garden.

Consider Joining Unity's Board

You can engage in supporting Unity in lots of ways — including through board service. With nine members on the board serving three-year terms, three positions open up each year. Think about whether board service could be a good fit for you.

You can read more about the trustee role and the characteristics we're looking for in candidates at unityunitarian.org/board-of-trustees.html. The application link is posted there, too. We seek candidates, conduct interviews and then bring a slate of three candidates forward to the congregational meeting held in November.

If you are interested in learning more, reach out directly to trustees, including the three on the recruitment committee: Jackie Boyd at jduffboyd@gmail.com, LauraSue Schlatter at laurasueschlatter@gmail.com, and John Steiner-Manning at johnhsmanning@gmail.com.





Your Minister of Congregational Care

Rev. Lara Cowtan

Hard to believe, but it has been ten months now since I arrived in St. Paul and at Unity Church last August. In that time, I have delighted in getting to know many of you, to journey alongside of

you though some of your life transitions. It feels like we have already been through so much together.

The Executive Team hired me last June with a specific focus on pastoral care, not as an interim, though I do bring skills of transitional ministry, but to be a stable ministerial presence during a time of so much change. I am grateful and really looking forward to starting this next chapter with all of you and with Rev. Oscar Sinclair.

We will have lots more time to get to know each other, but for now, let me share a bit about myself. Below is a very brief life story.

I am originally from Winnipeg, Manitoba. I was a shy, sensitive and athletic kid, raised in the UU church there, spending my summers at my grandpa's cabin on Lake of the Woods, swimming, sailing, climbing trees, picking blueberries and playing with frogs. My mother, Charlotte Cowtan, trained and was ordained as a UU minister and my family moved in '82 for her to serve the UU Church in Flint, Michigan. Many in the Twin Cities know my mom, either from her ministerial internship at First Unitarian Society or as the district executive or as the interim minister at First Universalist.

As a teenager, I moved away from my family to finish high school in Calgary. After struggling with severe intestinal disease and illness for a few years, I decided to become a nurse, working in Toronto, Los Angeles, Napa, then Hoboken. There I met and eventually married and moved in 2005 with my husband back to his native Switzerland. In 2010, I started a lay-led UU fellowship in Basel, Switzerland, to meet a need among the international and English-speaking community for a liberal religious community. This led to my becoming involved in leadership with the European UUs and then the International Council of UUs and then the path to seminary at Meadville Lombard in Chicago. I was ordained in 2017 by the UU Church in Westport Connecticut, then served as a guest minister and consultant to congregations and organizations across Europe and the UK. In 2019, I returned to Winnipeg and began working as a hospital chaplain. The pandemic turned the world on edge, and I moved again to serve for three years as the interim minister to our congregation in Vancouver, BC, then moved once more, down here to St. Paul. And here we are!

My website, laracowtan.com, is a bit out of date but has more detail and photos, if you are curious. Please reach out to me over the summer at lara@unityunitarian.org.



Welcome Words

Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant

As we settle into summer, I find myself contending with the grief of goodbyes and the happy anticipation of the new. I continue to be so grateful for the vibrancy of this Beloved Community,

and the creativity with which we balance stability and change. Enjoy these months of sunshine — and, it appears, a good deal of rain — and I look forward to hearing all of your stories of summer fun and travel!

Pathway to Membership Classes

The offerings below invite you to explore a deeper connection to Unity Church and the commitments and opportunities of membership. Contact Philippa Anastos, Membership Coordinator and Program Assistant, philippa@unityunitarian.org or 651-228-1456 x110.

Finding Yourself at Unity: For Visitors and Inquirers
Sundays 11:15 a.m.

Drop-ins welcome; childcare available

Gannett Room or online via Zoom: bit.ly/fyonline

Join the repeating eight-session cycle at any time. Weekly church emails include the session topic or find the session schedule at the Welcome Table in Parish Hall. June offerings:

- July 7: No session, July 4th holiday weekend
- July 14: Social Justice and Community Outreach
- July 21: UU History
- July 28: TBD

Lectio Divina

Lectio will meet once per month during the summer, at 7:10 p.m., online: July 10, August 14, and September 11.

Zoom: bit.ly/Lectio2023-24

Participate in a centuries-old monastic practice of listening, contemplating, and responding to sacred texts; modified with poetry for Unitarian Universalist small group spiritual practice. Led by Lisa Wersal or Shelley Butler. A different poem at each session. Questions? Contact Shelley at library@unityunitarian.org.

commUNITY is the monthly newsletter of Unity Church. Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Subscriptions are free to those who make pledges to Unity Church and are available to others for \$30/year.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH | FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Act for the Earth: Get Outdoors Together!

Join Act for the Earth for family-friendly outdoor activities this summer — recharge, share a meal, enjoy the fellowship. In case of heavy rain, we will still meet for dinner!

Lake Phalen Walk

Wednesday, July 10 | Walk: 5:30-6:30 p.m., dinner after Park on English Street, just north of Arlington Avenue East. Kathy Sidles will lead us south on the Bruce Vento Regional Trail, and back along the east shore of Lake Phalen. Who knows what we will find (birds and bumble bees?), and the lake is gorgeous. Dinner at Saint Paul Brewing Co. Email Kathy at kesid@aol.com if you plan to participate.

Bike Ride Along the Mississippi

Saturday morning August 24 | Watch for details!
Bike 10 miles (optional longer route) along the river, with lunch at City House (an old grain elevator)! Email Anna at asnewton3@gmail.com if you plan to participate.

Success: Habitat for Humanity's Work Week

Faith Builders from four area churches worked together in June on a deep renovation of a home in Roseville as part of Habitat for Humanity's affordable housing program. Thank you to all who offered their time and/or money to local, quality affordable housing. We're proud to report that with support from the Housing Justice Team, Unity Church contributed more than 48% of the volunteer hours to lay flooring, trim windows and work on landscaping. Additionally, the congregation provided \$1,518 from the Sunday offering toward the cost of supplies. Thank you for your support!



Unity Church members provided the equivalent of 18 full days of work on this needed renovation. Getting existing homes back on the market is one of the quickest ways to increase the supply of much needed affordable housing.

GREEN ENERGY MORNING

SATURDAY AUGUST 17
9-NOON

Sign up for a home energy audit. Learn about heat pumps, insulation & solar panels.

Free and open to the public!

Check out electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. Find out about rebates & tax incentives.

Go green and save money!

UNITY CHURCH • 732 HOLLY AVE, ST PAUL
MORE INFO AT UNITYUNITARIAN.ORG/ACT-FOR-THE-EARTH

Fellowship Groups

For more information email Philippa at philippa@unityunitarian.org.

Afterthoughts offers time after the 10:00 service to discuss the service.

Caregivers Group meets on the third Thursday of the month at noon. No meeting in July.

Evergreen Quilters: This quilting group meets the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month.

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

Living With Grief Group meets on the third Tuesday of the month.

Men's Coffee Group meets every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. for light-hearted conversation.

Men's Conversation Group meets on Zoom July 8 and 22, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Men's Retirement Circle: Monday, July 1, 15, 29, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

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

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

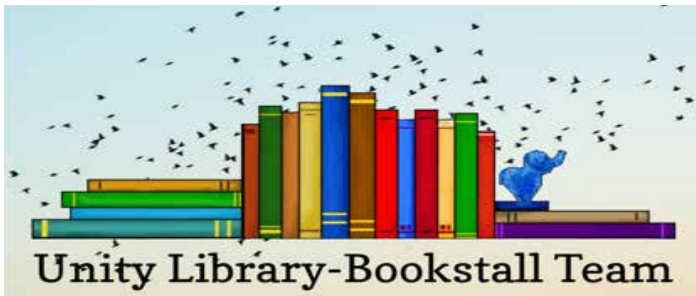
Textile Arts Group Bring your knitting, embroidery, etc. Email Philippa for meeting times

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

On July 9 the group will discuss *Driving Dad Home* by John Halter. This meeting will be held in-person in Robbins Parlor with the author in attendance. The event will begin with a reception at 6:00 p.m. All are welcome — even if you haven't read the book.

Women in Retirement meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., in the Center Room. Social hour at noon!

Young Adult Group (ages 18-35)
Email kp@unityunitarian.org



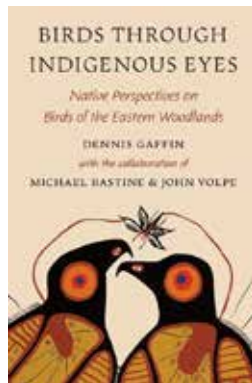
Look Up and Listen to the Birds!

Shelley Butler, Library-Bookstall Team

Recently, I visited the Dakota sacred site of the Wakan Tipi Cave, in the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. The sanctuary is being restored but access to the entrance to the cave is accessible, though the entrance to the cave itself is blocked off for good reason. The first white man to visit this ancient site disregarded the ancient petroglyphs and carved his own name at the entrance to the cave, only the first of many degradations of the sacred cave. I looked and listened while there, which engendered greater curiosity and a search for knowledge. Summer is a good time for all this.

Take a look at these new books in the Anderson Library (librarycat.org/lib/UnityChurch):

***Birds Through Indigenous Eyes* by Dennis Gaffin** (Princeton U Press, 2024) is an original work of ethno-ornithology that offers a rare close-up look at some Native views on birds and opens rich new perspectives on the deep connections between birds and humans.



***The Birds That Audubon Missed: Discovery and Desire in the American Wilderness* by renowned naturalist Ken Kaufman** (Avid Reader, 2024) examines the real, the not-so-real, and the missed scientific “discoveries” of John James Audubon and his peers, and how this reflects our perception of the natural world. Of course, Native Americans had this knowledge for a long time before white men.

***The Backyard Bird Chronicles* by Amy Tan** (Knopf, 2024), a book of drawings and essays, is described as a “gorgeous, witty account of birding, nature, and the beauty that surrounds us. Coming in early July.

Books in the Anderson Library you may have missed:

***Better Living Through Birding: Notes from a Black Man in the Natural World* by Christian Cooper**

***An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us* by Ed Yong**

***Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom... Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer**

July Parish Hall Exhibit

Ian Hanson is a photographer and adventurer based in Southeast Minnesota. He grew up on a small hobby farm kicking up dust and watching the corn grow. He started photography in high school when he took Yearbook.



Since then, Ian has traveled to every continent, including a stint living and working in Antarctica. From sailing in southeast Alaska, hiking the Himalayas in Nepal, or living with Maasai in Tanzania, Ian seeks out unique experiences to add to his understanding of the world we live in. With adventure taking place primarily during shoulder seasons, he spent the warmer months as a wedding and event photographer around Minnesota.

In 2023, Ian began his long-awaited journey to participate in the art festival scene. His prints and calendars have been shipped around the globe, and he continues to look for more opportunities to point his car towards the horizon with unique images in mind.

His work consists primarily of the found. He is drawn to textures, balancing of light and shadow, and scenes that open up before him rather than contriving his own. Water has become a common theme through which he sees himself and humanity reflected in nature. Whether frozen in sheets of glacial ice or drenching a coastal rainforest, Ian draws from the elemental mood to help us find out who we are.

Sarah Lilja: The Power of Nature

The natural world is an inspiration. Capturing the beauty of nature in photographs is a spiritual and therapeutic process for me. When I shoot, my senses are fully engaged in the world around me and also in what my lens reveals. Photography is a process of discovery that deepens my experience of and engagement with the natural world.



My photographs invite viewers to connect deeply with nature. I am passionate about using my camera to document and explore unique perspectives, drawing attention to unseen details, vibrant colors, and distinctive compositions. I want my photographs to inspire and expand people’s experience of the natural world.

Beyond its compelling beauty, nature has great power to help us slow down, breathe deeply, and connect with her healing spirit. Research has documented that engaging with photographs of the natural world helps reduce stress, boost energy, and increase relaxation. I hope that the photographs in this exhibition engage your senses, lift your spirits, and bring positive healing energy into your life.

From the Archives Team

A Look at Unity's Past: Summer Camp 1964

55 children, 20 adults, 1 family home — oh, my!

In August, 1964, members of Unity Church gathered to launch another week of summer camp. The camp took an enormous amount of work to put together, and Betty Whitman, Religious Education Director, was the organizer. It was run completely by volunteers. Most were women, many mothers of day campers. According to the 1960 census, fewer than a third of married women had jobs outside the home. These volunteers were eager — and able — to offer their talents to provide an interesting, fun week for their children.

James and Henrietta Klingel opened their home on Pilot Knob Road for the camp. Car pools were organized in Minneapolis, Mendota Heights, Newport, South St. Paul, Afton, Lake Elmo and several neighborhoods in Saint Paul. Some families sent two to four children to camp.

A total of 55 children were arranged into small groups. Each group had a detailed agenda for the day's activities. In many activities, campers had a choice of things to do: nature, science, arts and crafts, singing, dancing, radio, swimming (the Klingels had a pool), working on the camp newspaper *The Driveway Journal*, or crafting a worship service that included stories about Unitarians in the arts and sciences.

Each activity had one or two adults and one junior high assistant. Activities were staged at locations around the Klingel home: tent, playground, sandbox, catalpa tree, tree near the driveway curve, the garage, patio, swimming pool — locations easier to remember than room numbers.

Many of the traditions begun in these early summer camps are continued in today's Unity Chalice Camp: all campers are welcome; there are arts and crafts, outdoor activities, and lots of fun. Counselor and counselor-in-training opportunities for high schoolers give many students their first employment opportunity. Campers age 5-13 are welcome. The 2024 Chalice Camp runs for two weeks, July 8-12 and July 15-19. (See back cover to register!)

The 1964 summer camp was held in August, just nine months since the assassination of John F. Kennedy and three months prior to the election of a new president. These events must have been on the mind of the volunteer who composed this prayer for the Wednesday worship service.

Let us give thanks for all who have handed on to us wisdom and courage, for all who have made it possible for us to live in greater freedom. May we, too, determine to add at least a little to the world's store of knowledge and bravery. May we use well the freedom which is our heritage. Amen.

The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Dr. Guillermo Mateo

October 18, 2021– December 6, 2023

In Celebration

Michelle Mecey and Jeff Jalkio

Married Sunday, June 9, 2024

A Brave Space {Continued from front cover}

I have learned that conflict can be expressed considerably and without escalation, and to better trust my intuitive reactions. I credit Circle, at least partly, for my growing impatience with expert opinions, analytical explanations, intellectual grandstanding, and judgments, all behaviors commended in dominant culture.

I used to think that ending racism requires us all to interact more with people that don't look like us, in order to dispel the knee-jerk racist perception of those people as "other." This still seems true, but it is how we interact with people, no matter their race, that is critical. Recognizing that there is something to learn from other cultures about how to be together can catalyze the shift we yearn for towards Beloved Community.

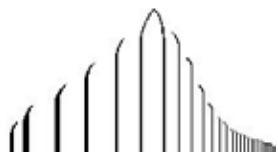
Our Healing Circles at MCF-Shakopee are consistently comprised of mostly white inmates, and is demographically more in line with the state population, unlike men's prisons. Written evaluations at the end of the series include statements like:

I feel better about myself; like I am willing to move on, and let go of what landed me here in prison. I owned my part even though I didn't want to.

I am compassionate with peers because I recognize that it isn't what's wrong with her but more what has happened to her to get such action.

We never know if there are happy endings for the women we get to know. Though they speak of change and creating better futures for their kids, some return to the same neighborhoods, relationships, and lifestyles where old expectations do not support fresh beginnings. But most are resilient and resourceful survivors, empowered by the unique bond of Circle. They have laughed and cried together. They have seen themselves in each other's stories and have been there for each other.

I hope that this experience will help each woman pursue the long process of healing and forgiving herself; that she will hold in her heart the group of exceptional women who listened to her story attentively and respectfully, and that she will continue to source in herself the strength to speak her truth bravely.



UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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Business Entrance: 732 Holly Avenue | Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-228-1456 | fax: 651-228-0927 | www.unityunitarian.org | unity@unityunitarian.org

Rev. KP Hong, Minister of Faith Formation
Laura Park, Executive Director
Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Interim Senior Minister
Louise Livesay-Al, Chair, Board of Trustees

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**TIME SENSITIVE
MATERIAL**

In The Justice Database: *Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi*

Formerly known as Lower Phalen Creek Project, *Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi* is a Native-Led, East Side environmental stewardship nonprofit. The *Wakan Tipi Center*, under construction and due to open in 2026, is so named to honor the significance of *Wakan Tipi Cave* as a Dakota sacred site, and will serve as an intergenerational gathering place that honors *Wakan Tipi* and the *maka paha* as Dakota sacred sites. bit.ly/JusticeData



Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf: Help Our Neighbors

In May we donated 343 pounds of food and household items to Hallie Q. Brown. Altogether since January we have donated 1,482 pounds. During July the food shelf needs tissue, toothpaste and toothbrushes, mouthwash, shampoo and conditioner, body wash and soap. Nonperishable food is always welcome. If you able, please donate over the summer months. Thank you for all of your support!



St. Paul Saints Game

A baseball game makes the perfect summer outing — so join us in August as we cheer on the St. Paul Saints! The exact date will be announced in the newsletter and weekly emails — keep an eye out!

Chalice Camp

Week 1: July 8-12

Week 2: July 15-19

Chalice Camp at Unity Church is offered Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., for children and youth ages 5-18 (youth in grades 7-12 serve as junior counselors and counselors).

Campers will explore the heritage and history of Unitarian Universalism through varied and engaging activities, everything from puppet shows to field games. Chalice camp offers children a safe, child-friendly environment to be exposed to topics such as racial inequality, gender, social class, and our identities while incorporating the fun and excitement of typical summer camp activities.

Registration: unityunitarian.org/chalice-camp.html.