



# March-April Connections

2020

## Join Us in Worship

### March 1

Rooted in Climate Justice  
Rev. Brian Sauder  
*Offering:* Faith in Place

### March 8

Fourth Grade Chalice Ceremony:  
Worship for All Ages  
Rev. Emily Gage  
*Offering:* Austin Scholarship Fund

### March 15

The Call of Wisdom  
Rev. Alan Taylor  
*Offering:* Planned Parenthood

### March 22

The Wisdom of Tenderness  
Rev. Alan Taylor  
*Offering:* NAMI National Alliance  
of Mental Illness

### March 29

Choir Sunday  
*Offering:* NAMI National Alliance  
of Mental Illness

*(continued on next page)*



Introducing the newest addition to our Welcoming All program series!

## WORDS & WITNESS

**a story sharing event**  
live on stage at 1019 South Blvd  
Saturday, March 14 / 7–10pm

You won't want to miss this opportunity to forge deeper connections with others in our UT community through telling—and listening to—personal stories on the theme of “Belonging.”

To register as a storyteller or a story listener, click [here](#). For **Story Telling Tips, Guidelines and Expectations** click [here](#). This event is open to adults born 2005 and before. Refreshments will be provided. BYOB. Childcare available upon request at [childcare@unitytemple.org](mailto:childcare@unitytemple.org).



Rev. Alan C. Taylor, Senior Minister  
ataylor@unitytemple.org

**Worship** *(Continued)*

**April 5**

Welcome Sunday  
Rev. Emily Gage  
Offering: UU Advocacy Network  
of Illinois (UUANI)

**April 12**

Easter  
Rev. Alan Taylor  
Offering: Hephzibah

**April 19**

Earth Day  
Rev. Alan Taylor  
Offering: Faith in Place

**April 26**

Coming of Age  
Rev. Emily Gage  
Offering: New Moms

## Deepening As a People of Wisdom

It is common to mistake knowledge for wisdom, but wisdom and knowledge aren't the same. Wisdom embraces knowledge, but wisdom has more depth and relevance to our lives. Wisdom is born of experience and reflection. Ralph Waldo Emerson noted that wisdom comes when we "pass our experience through the fire of thought"—and for him, "thought" meant not just the mind but also the heart and gut.

Here at Unity Temple, our community provides multiple spaces where wisdom can be intentionally cultivated. Our faith affirms the wisdom latent within, waiting to take form, to guide each of us, individually and as a congregation.

Contemporary theological Frederick Buechner echoes Emerson as he calls to us: "Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace."

As we navigate the prolonged winter of March, may we reflect on our experience and approach our shared life with humility. So much is in bud.

Warmly,



With the news surrounding the coronavirus outbreak around the world and cases in the U.S., it's natural for fears and questions to arise. With that in mind, we are encouraging you to reflect on how to care for yourselves, just as we are reflecting on how we will continue to operate as a community if the virus spreads. Many thanks to our colleague Rev. Cindy Landrum who recently shared her congregation's plan and to our staff who have thought this through with us. We

are monitoring how Oak Park Public Health officials are responding, which can be read [here](#).

During worship and religious education as well as at various congregational functions, we will encourage alternative ways of greeting one another so that no one needs to worry about having to touch other people. That said, we are aware that UTUUC is the only place where some people receive human touch. We are aware that some people will choose to continue to be open to hugs and handshakes; however, we don't want anyone to feel any pressure to have direct contact with others.

Go [here](#) to learn of the guidelines set forth by UTUUC. If you are anxious and would like to speak with one of our Pastoral Associates reach out to [pastoralassociates@unitytemple.org](mailto:pastoralassociates@unitytemple.org). We're happy to meet with you.

### Greetings to All-

I think the understatement of the week is when Rev. Emily Gage affirms each Sunday, “There are many wonderful things happening here at Unity Temple.” We on the Board are honored to serve this caring and vibrant community. I am happy to provide some Board updates.

Attendance at the Annual Meeting was strong, including increased participation from adults with young children, due in part to Children’s Programming offered under the guidance of RE Assistant Val Ridenour, as well as to pre-Annual Meeting workshops and lunch. Thank you to everyone who contributed and attended! And a huge thank you to Dave Willard, BoT President, and Joan Suchomel, Parliamentarian, for leading us.

We heard you! Read Board meeting minutes [here](#). The agendas for BoT meetings are posted one week in advance. The BoT meets the second Tuesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at 1019 South Blvd. All members are welcome. If you have items for consideration,

contact me in advance at [president@unitytemple.org](mailto:president@unitytemple.org).

We are excited to offer additional opportunities for congregants to engage with the Board. We want to hear your ideas and concerns, answer questions, and communicate ongoing Board initiatives. Stay tuned.

As a Board, we are charged with attending to the welfare of the congregation by clarifying vision, upholding our values, living into our mission, and maintaining financial integrity. Thankfully, we have incredibly talented, dedicated lay leaders and staff who help all of us realize these goals.

This year, as a community, we are doing a deep dive into the first part of our four-part mission. We are discovering that the spiritual journey of Welcoming All is about growth and transformation, as individuals and as a congregation. Change can be challenging, exciting, and sometimes filled with uncertainty, even fear. Acknowledging that reality, leadership is exploring how to offer an expanded support structure for

**March 10 / 7:00-8:30**

**April 14 / 7:00-8:30**

1019 South Blvd.

Board meetings are open.

Please email [board@unitytemple.org](mailto:board@unitytemple.org) with questions

those times when hurt, conflict, or misunderstandings arise.

When you see them in church, please remember to thank outgoing trustees, Karen Haskins-Brewer, Bill Crozier, and Dave Willard for the time, energy, and thoughtful reflection they have devoted to this congregation. And, while you’re at it, don’t forget to encourage current trustees, Ed McDevitt, Aisha Ellis, Rich Pokorny, Julie Willoughby, Kimberly Brumirski, Stephanie Kiesling, Erik Wise, and Terri Powell. Please know that we all appreciate your ongoing generous support.

Happy Spring! See you on Sunday.

*Willa Shultz, Board President*

## UTUUC 2020 Auction Was a Tremendous Success!

With the help of so many members, friends, and businesses, we soared to new heights in our 2020 auction.

- Everyone flocked to our opening and closing celebrations, and online activity surpassed our wildest expectations.
- Like baby birds testing their wings, we jumped out of our safe nest & took a chance on a new auction website. Feathers may have been flying once in a while, but our new bigger nest is more accessible to all.
- We welcomed birds of all different feathers to fly with us. Thanks to groups like our UT Youth Group, Choir, RE, Soul Connections, Mindful Reflections, Fund Drive supporters, and others who got involved.
- We received a record number of donations this year and raised more money than we thought possible in a year that saw so many changes.

Before you settle back into your nest, please mark your calendar now for next year’s auction. Based on recommendations from many of you, we plan to hold our auction two months later next year – in March and April of 2021.





## Faith Development

Rev. Emily Gage, Minister of Faith Development  
egage@unitytemple.org

# What Does It Mean to Be A People of Wisdom?

Many years ago, when I was interviewing with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, the group who credentials ministers in the Unitarian Universalist Association, one of the panel members asked me this question: What is scripture? That is to say, what is scripture to you? I remember saying something about how I felt like my scripture was a loose leaf notebook of wise and/or beautiful words that I had collected. Occasionally, I would add more pages when I discovered something helpful, on a rare occasion, something might leave the collection.

This question about scripture caught me by surprise; through some grace I was able to answer it. And truthfully, I thought. For as long as I can remember I have had notebooks in which I have recorded sentences and paragraphs (and an occasional entire page) of some book I have read or some lecture I have heard as some piece of truth. A piece of truth that has given me hope or inspiration or a needed perspective.

I do this in part because I love words, and holding words close helps orient me. Words are my main currency. They are a great source of wisdom for me. When I have needed any of those things, I have paged through those words for sustenance. Or a reminder of something important.

One of the things I appreciate deeply about Unitarian Universalism is that we celebrate how meaning can come from so many sources. I mean, you never know where you are going to find a truth that sticks with you. The

Rev. Carl Seaburg delivered the charge to the minister at my ordination, a portion which offers advice to the new minister. He joked about using an automatic transmission as inspiration, and then proceeded to analyze Park, Reverse, Neutral, and Drive in a number of different ways, and how each is useful at different times in ministry. Lots of wisdom there. And the Rev. Woody Widrick, my internship supervisor, in my ordination sermon, reminded the gathered of these wise words from *The Little Prince*: “The eyes are blind. One must look with the heart. What is essential is invisible to the eye.” I can’t tell you how many times I have thought of these words in the past couple of decades.

As I page through my most recent book of collected wisdom, a few sentences pop out at me. From a conference on working with children: Dan Gartnell: “The kid that bugs the heck out of you is the one that needs a relationship with you the most.” And

Rikki Lee Jones: “You never know when you are making a memory.” From a ministers’ conference: the Rev. Ashley Horan writes: “Our history is not our fault, but it is our responsibility.” And Rasheeda Graham Washington: “Some things are not meant to be resolved, just a tension to be managed.” From a writing workshop, where the direction was to create a six word message of hope, I see I wrote: “Tell stories. Share love. It matters.”

Wisdom can be found wherever we look. We need only open our minds and hearts. I look forward to hearing about some of the wisdom that guides you. As it says on the front of my latest collected book of notes and truths: “Wisdom begins in wonder. – Socrates”.

May we be filled with wonder as we greet this month.

## Adult Religious Enrichment

### UT Class Conversations Workshop

Unitarian Universalists around the country are beginning to recognize that there are people from all socioeconomic classes within our congregations. We may think this isn't the case here at Unity Temple. But we are learning that there are some among us who choose to keep their class identities confidential – not because they are ashamed of their class—but because sharing their whole selves is sometimes painful.

In the spirit of welcoming ALL at Unity Temple, our UT Class Conversations team has developed our own unique workshop. Drawing from materials from the UUA and UU Class Conversations, we will explore class within our congregation and the broader community where our members live. Whether you identify as middle class, working class, upper class or poor, you will be enlightened and encouraged by our time together.

How do we separate ourselves from others? Please join us as we explore the ways we define class and hear about some of the experiences of people within our congregation. Saturday, April 25, 9am-noon at 1019 South Boulevard. To register for the workshop or free childcare, or for more information contact [adultre@unitytemple.org](mailto:adultre@unitytemple.org).

## Mindful Reflections Community

The Mindful Reflection Community sponsored its first New Year's Eve celebration in Unity House, and had 57 people in attendance! The evening started at 5:00 p.m. with an appetizer and dessert potluck featuring delicious food. Jay Cohen, sangha member and regular sangha facilitator, started the evening with our usual 20-minute meditation period and followed it with his own special dharma talk.

His talk was based on the 3 refuges in Buddhism, "Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha." Jay modified it to talk about bringing mindfulness, wisdom, and community into the new year. These refuges are available to all of us and he offered some suggestions for how we can use them in our daily lives.

After the talk, Jay gifted each participant with a homemade bookmark that had three beads at the top and a tree charm at the bottom. The beads remind us of the three refuges and the tree charm reminds us of the bodhi tree where the Buddha was awakened. Participants were encouraged to create their own ways of using these refuges they enter 2020.

It was a special and sacred evening and all agreed it was a great way to start a new year. We think we have created a new December 31 tradition for the Mindful Reflection Community! Plan to join us next year!

The Mindful Reflection Community held its first Mindful Poetry Workshop

on February 8, with 23 people in attendance. Terry Cahill, poet and former member of Unity Temple, facilitated. Terry C. teaches poetry to youth at Marwood (the UU youth camp) and has facilitated poetry workshops for adults as well.

Terry creates an environment that enables participants to write poetry with enjoyment and confidence. Through deep listening, participants could share with the writer what they found creative and meaningful in the work. It was a thoroughly enjoyable time together! We expect that Mindful Poetry writing will be an ongoing part of our sangha's offerings.

Mindful Reflection Community continues to sponsor Sacred Wanderings at the North Pavilion in Thatcher Woods, on the first Saturday of each month from 8:30 to 10:30am. We generally have 10-13 people attend during this winter months. We meet no matter what the weather conditions are and attendees know to dress accordingly.

Sacred Wanderings is part Japanese Forest Bathing and part Mindful Reflection meditation. It is facilitated by certified Forest Bathing instructor Al Estock as well as Kevin Kuhn and Terry Kinsey, both meditation facilitators. After our sitting and walking meditation, we enjoy hot tea and share our experiences in a sharing circle. Please join us anytime!

Our regular Mindful Reflection Community continues to meet every Tuesday evening from 7 to 9pm. Attendance continues to grow, and we now average about 35 participants each evening. We are very excited to offer childcare to anybody who needs it. Contact Terry for information. Please join us regularly or sporadically. Stay for the entire evening or leave whenever you need to.

For information, contact Terry Kinsey at [mindful@unitytemple.org](mailto:mindful@unitytemple.org)





## Faith in Action Eco Justice



Rev. Colleen Vahey  
Faith in Action Coordinator  
cvahey@unitytemple.org

**March 26 :: Immigration Justice Advocacy Day** Join our Immigration team, the Campaign for Welcoming Illinois Policy Team, and grassroots leaders to meet with state legislators in Springfield and advocate for expanded protections in state immigration laws. This is the type of activity that helps curb ICE from doing things that separate families, such as raids and random arrests. Register **here!** Questions? Contact: **immigration@unitytemple.org**

**April 4 :: The Naturally Beautiful Conference** Gain the power and knowledge to be nature's best hope. Learn to nurture nature thru gardening practices. Be inspired to feel hopeful and take action. Bring beauty and health to your garden and community. The conference will take place at Unity Temple from 12:45-4:30pm. Visit **here** for tickets and more information. The Eco-Justice team has some complimentary tickets available for members. Contact **ecojustice@unitytemple.org**



**UUtheVote/VoteLove** News You Can Use: One of the best ways to make sure you vote is to vote early! And for those of us living in the Oak Park area, you can vote starting Monday, March 2, at Oak Park Village Hall. Find the hours and other voting locations **here**. A government-issued photo ID is helpful but not required. You can also register to vote if you need to. Bring two forms of ID, one of which has your current address. For more information contact **votelove@unitytemple.org**



More than 100 Unitarian Universalists attended the Community Renewal Society Martin Luther King Day Assembly to learn about the CRS platform for renewal – increasing police accountability, reforming the criminal justice system, restoring rights and opportunities, and passing a Fair Tax. To learn more contact: **restorativejustice@unitytemple.org**



Members attended the February 11 Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) Summit - learning about key efforts to make Illinois the most welcoming state in the nation. Gratitude to Mony Ruiz-Velasco, Betty Alzamora and all on the Campaign for a Welcoming Illinois for their policy and organizing work. Join us March 26 in Springfield to advocate for immigration justice (see above announcement). Photo credit: Paul Goyette

## Sunday Morning Information

### Ex Libris Bookstore

Ex Libris continues to be open after each service on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month. Come browse for titles about Unitarian Universalism, social activism, meditation, children's topics and others.

### Name Tag Requests

Newcomers, friends and members alike are invited to wear a name tag. If the name tag fairy has made off with your name tag and you need a new one, please add your name to the list at one of the welcome tables located in the foyer or contact Tina Lewis at **tlewis@unitytemple.org**.

### Entering and Exiting Unity Temple

The back door by the kitchen will remain locked at all times to ensure safety and security. If you need assistance unloading items, please ring the doorbell. Our front doors will generally be open from 8:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. depending on activities planned for the afternoon. Please exit through the back door if the front doors are locked. If you are unable to exit through the back door, please ask for assistance in order for the front doors to be locked behind you. Thank you for your patience, understanding and cooperation.

### Something New at Coffee

**Hour::** In an effort to create a more relaxing space to be with friends after service, we are offering information tables during Coffee Hour on the first and third Sundays of the month through May. On the second and fourth Sundays we will set up tables and chairs for people to stay and visit with one another. In addition, we will offer light refreshments and provide a children's activity table.



### Coffee Hour Cookies Always Needed

Cookies are made possible by generous donations. Please drop homemade or store-bought nut-free cookies in the kitchen on Sunday mornings. Gluten-free options are always appreciated as well.

## Unity Temple Gives

The generosity of our congregation is making a difference in people's lives. Every Sunday our collection plate offerings are donated to a worthy charitable organization in support of our mission and values. Your weekly collection donations contributed the following amounts to these organizations:

Jan 5	UU Service Committee: \$1,109.25
Jan 12	UU Prison Ministry: \$1,333.35
Jan 19	Community Renewal Society: \$1,304.90
Jan 26	UTUUC Emergency Fund: \$1,241.50
Feb 2	UU Advocacy Network of Illinois: \$1,104.4
Feb 9	Austin Scholar's Program: \$1,668.98
Feb 16	Team Brownsville: \$2,134.53
Feb 23	Meadville Lombard: \$1,278.29

## Board of Trustees board@

### unitytemple.org

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Unity Temple 875 Lake Street Oak Park, IL 60301	Gale House 124 N. Kenilworth Oak Park, IL 60301	UT Community Center 1019 South Blvd Oak Park, IL 60301
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## Connections Submissions

**Connections is published every other month.** Please include "Connections" along with your committee name in the subject line when submitting. **Next submissions deadline is:**

April 10 (for May / June)

If you are promoting an event or group, please use the publications submission link on the lower left-hand side of the UT leader resources page, here. Events planned to be held at Unity Temple must be confirmed for the online calendar before they can be promoted. Email [publications@unitytemple.org](mailto:publications@unitytemple.org)

**Electronic Cafe ::** Members in good standing of the UTUUC congregation are invited to participate in our online community called "Realm". In order to do that, members are invited to Realm via email and must then claim their login within a couple of days of receiving that notice. Some congregants have not yet created their accounts so we will be emailing you an invitation soon. The email will explain the advantages of Realm participation and provide an activation link. Watch your inbox for an email whose subject is " See you at our electronic café!

**We Value Your Privacy! ::** We have recently gone through our UTUUC member listings in Realm and tightened up privacy settings. In no case did we loosen settings. In general, we made contact information for adults visible to staff, to group leaders and to members of groups that you are a part of. For children, we made the settings even more restrictive by setting contact information to be visible only to staff and group leaders. When you log in to Realm, you can adjust these setting for yourself and your family to the level you desire. We do not recommend setting privacy to make information visible to "everyone"! Questions, [relling@unitytemple.org](mailto:relling@unitytemple.org)

## Our Staff

For calls, dial 708-848-6225 and the extension:

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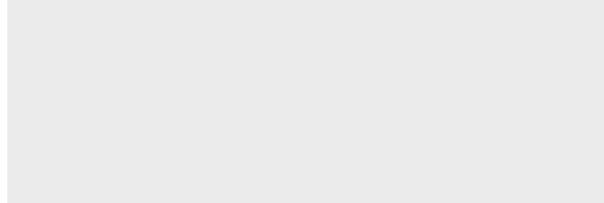
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March Theme: WISDOM

APRIL Theme: LIBERATION

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