


Association of Unity Churches International

Contact



Vol. 42, Issue 4

August/September 2008

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Prayer and Using Drums
In Your Ministry

Contact

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EDITORIAL PURPOSE

To support thriving ministries by providing timely, practical information for ministries and individuals.

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To read the full responses from past Feedback responses or to read past issues of *Contact*, go to www.unity.org/ContactMagazine.

Look For The Good

In response to Barbara Quinn's article *Look For The Good* (April/May 2008 issue):

Many people in Unity are misusing and misunderstanding your ad at www.lookforthegood.org.

They are using it to criticize those who provide information on candidate issues. As I read your article I can see where the misunderstanding may be coming from. For example, when you say "focus rather on the positive attributes of the candidates and their messages," I am sure you don't mean ignore important issues, and not be aware of what the candidate stands for. For instance, we could focus on only the positive of Hitler (he was a strong leader, charismatic, believed in himself, had a strong sense of purpose, good communicator). If we ignored his opinion concerning Jewish people, we might have voted for him. I know this is not what you are suggesting. Perhaps you can make this more clear in your article.

Roma Cox
Member

Have something to say about what you have read in *Contact*? Send your comments to dom@unity.org.

Perspectives

In response to David Elliott's Perspectives article (June/July 2008 issue):

Where do I begin? I, too, love Unity ... and I "cringed" when I read what I perceive to be misinterpretation of what you label "Unity jargon." Jargon, according to Webster being "nonsensical, incoherent, or meaningless talk or a specialized language of similar group." The two words you characterize as "Unity jargon" and as "detracting from any message" happen to be at the core of our Unity teachings.

Contrary to your statement of "There is no generally accepted definition of this word (Show-er), you will find in Webster's New College Dictionary, the second definition says: "shower (shō ər) is one that shows" the Way, in the case of Jesus, our Way-Shower.

As our cofounder Myrtle Fillmore has said: "You and I can develop Truth ideas, and offer them to the public; but only the few who want Truth more than anything else will stay to be inspired and encouraged by our efforts! So, we'll be happy with the few; and give thanks that the masses will some time receive that which is more precious than all that they think they want so much!" (*Torch-Bearer to Light the Way*, p. 159 by Neal Vahle)

Sandra Hymel
Unity minister

Reach Out to *Make a Difference*

by Marilyn Muehlbach
unlimitedmtm@netzero.com

This is an exciting time to serve as the Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Association of Unity Churches International. In fact, it's an exciting time to serve in any way with the Association. As James says, the world is hungering for what we have. The world needs what Unity people are and what Unity teaches. Now is the time for Unity to stand tall in its teachings and reach out to make a difference.

Many years ago I was driving my son and his friend to preschool. The boys were talking about God and death (heavy subjects for preschoolers) when the friend said, "Well, in church they say" My son replied, "What's a church?" Thus began my search for a spiritual home that changed my life. The church down the hill didn't feel right anymore. Some of the other churches we tried had good children's programs, but I couldn't bear to sit through the adult church. The wedding of a friend, the suggestion of a business acquaintance, and a pamphlet enclosed in a *Wee Wisdom* gift subscription converged to finally lead me to Unity. I was intrigued, so I kept coming back. I questioned, resisted, explored, stretched, grew, raised my kids and found peace, friends, a husband and a spiritual home. And that was just the beginning. Unity has made a huge difference in my life.

Since then I've continued down Unity's spiritual path, meeting new challenges that grew me whether I was ready or not, and

discovering new blessings all along the way. As I've visited Unity churches around the country, I've seen people learning and growing, and heard stories of miraculous transformation. I've seen Unity churches doing powerful work, reaching out to those in pain, supporting those who are making new choices, and celebrating with those who have overcome the obstacles in their lives. More recently I've seen our churches reaching into the community and into the world, digging wells, building schools, finding homes and hope for displaced families ... making a difference. The Association of Unity Churches International and Unity School of Christianity are working together to speak with one voice so that our Unity teachings can do the work of transformation and blessing on a larger scale. As the Unity movement (that's us!) aligns with our expanding universe, we see Spirit Rising everywhere we look.

Throughout this coming year, I ask you to watch for Spirit Rising—in your life, in the lives of those around you, in your church, in the Unity movement, and in the world. Then report back to us. Send us your story of how you are experiencing Spirit Rising in your life. Email us at exast@unity.org. And plan to join us next June 8-12 at the Doubletree Inn in Overland Park to celebrate the power of Spirit Rising when we come together in Unity.

*Now is the
time for
Unity to
stand tall in
its teachings
and reach out
to make a
difference.*

Letter From the Editor

No man knows the fullness of life
nor its joys until he has prayed in
meekness and thanksgiving...

—*Teach Us to Pray*, Cora & Charles Fillmore



In this issue, we focus on prayer. This is a change of pace for *Contact*, because we have generally tried to bring you stories about specific church successes. Of course, prayer is the root of all success. But, as we gathered articles about prayer, I knew that this issue would be different. Here, we share expressions of how people engage in prayer, whether privately or corporately.

Our message here ranges from a personal story of prayer, to how one church's prayers kept them present to their next steps; from insight meditation, to our roots in Christian prayer forms; and from contemplating the heavens, to how young adults plan and experience a prayer service.

In all, I hope you find something to inspire you, to renew your desire for that fullness of life that comes in meek and thankful prayer.

Field of Agreement

Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

by James Trapp, ceo@unity.org

This statement (Mt 18:20) reflects an approach to prayer known as the “field of agreement.” It reminds us that whenever two or more touch and agree on a God-inspired idea, that idea manifests.

The field of agreement has particular significance for our Association because we are more than an organization; we are a living organism with consciousness. It was through that consciousness we discerned our vision—“Centered in God, we co-create a world that works for all.” To support the vision, a cross representation of our membership identified our key strategic directions from which specific goals were developed. More important than the directions and goals, however, is the collective belief behind them. The field of agreement is a powerful way to build that collective belief so that our vision—a divinely inspired idea—shows up as our experience.

A divine idea is already complete on the spiritual plane. When a group has the heartfelt agreement on what they want to accomplish, the “how to’s” are revealed. Of course, we don’t discard doing our part. Yet, we recognize that our task is to set the direction and then the God presence makes the corrections along the way. Sometimes, before we enter the agreement, we let ourselves be distracted by asking, “Is it really possible?” “Where is the money going to come from?” “How are we going to get the people with the right expertise?” Yet, once there is a genuine field of agreement, the “how to’s” are taken

care of. When two or more are gathered in the same consciousness, a potent energy field is created that neutralizes doubt and attracts everything that’s needed for the idea to become visible.

The field of agreement can be a powerful prayer approach that any spiritual community can use. It begins by the community being clear on what it is agreeing to. Usually it’s the community’s vision and/or mission. One of the ways to help create that potent field of agreement is for the collective community to contribute to the creation of its vision and mission. When the members of the community are involved in the co-creation of those statements, not only will they give their outward support, they will support it in consciousness and energy.

There are practical ways to amplify the field of agreement within a community. It can be affirmed during every opportunity that the community is in celebration or Sunday services. It can be part of the prayer and meditation time with staff and the volunteer sacred servers. It can be put on the phone greeting, the website, the church letterhead, business cards as well as other printed material. Any opportunity to incorporate it into the collective awareness can be considered.

The field of agreement is a practice that a group, a spiritual community, and our Association can use to anchor on earth the divine and perfect spiritual ideas that are seeking to be expressed through and as us. When we are agreeing and vibrating in one accord, all things are possible.



It's All in a Whisper



by Teri Hawkins, revteri@kwc.net

If you want to get someone's attention, whisper. Whether in a tunnel of frustration, a cave of blame, or a moonless night of stress, it is the whisper of light that draws. The glimmering candle held at the end of the tunnel brings sweetness and calm. The flickering campfire within the cave brings acceptance and hope. And the sparkling star amidst the blackest night creates an exhalation of freedom.

There is a gentle whisper Unity offers this fast-paced, judgmental, problem-solving, demanding world we now live in,

and it is more than a nice thing to have in our repertoire of offerings. It is more than a technique or process—it is, in my opinion, the heart of everything great that has ever come, or ever will come through and to Unity. The whisper we offer is affirmative prayer.

Affirmative prayer is the perfect light to hold up in the dark night of the soul or the black moments of blame, confusion, and disagreement with others. Therefore it is perplexing how often in the face of conflict we turn immediately to the brightest light we can find and shine it into the faces of those we believe are blind to the Truth. An oxymoronic action we do over and over again, wondering why conflict remains.

When we became leaders in Unity, most of us did so after years of rewarded success for “shouting.” It takes personal, constant, affirmative prayer to stop the habitual shout of the ego to be right, give the answers, overwork, and make things happen. It is in the whisper we can hear our one and only responsibility as a minister or leader in Unity—and it is not to fill the seats. The only absolute, everyday requirement for a successful, peaceful,



Teri Hawkins

Get Centered With *Centering Prayer*

prosperous Unity community is to be centered in the whispering soft light of affirmative prayer. It is here that we remember we are One. It is through the delicious and constant consumption of prayer that we feed our own soul and thus able to offer a smorgasbord of wholesome soul food to any who seek fulfillment. It is the shout of the ego that says there is more than this to do.

When I decided to pioneer in Central Oregon, we began with three meditative visioning sessions. Once the vision was clear, I handed out two pages of paper with my offer of what was my ministry. The first page contained one word: Prayer. A second page elaborated and defined what I saw as prayer. It included: music, teachings, meditations, inspirations, play, laughter, tears, kindness, willingness, caring, joy, wonder, following, listening, passion, poetry and acceptance. This would not be my church, I simply would provide my ministry. Anything else desired would come from others. Our governing group has been, from day one, a prayer council. Our job is to enter silence together when there is a question. If we are not in common when coming out of silence, we return until we are. We affirm prosperity and have always had it. In seven years we have never had a political problem, in-fighting, or gossip. All leaders are prayerfully conscious of how to lovingly redirect such energy. We give tens of thousands of dollars every year to those who inspire us, and we have created products that are gifts to the world.

I believe with all my heart and soul that the only reason we need conflict resolution in Unity is because we have forgotten what we hold at the heart of our movement—the prevention. I know we all want to say we **do** pray, that sometimes there are impossible people and more than prayer is needed. We know that is the ego shouting. If we don't know that in this minute, we will the minute we pray. Why? Because our answers are always there—in the whisper.

Teri Hawkins is the minister at Unity Community of Central Oregon in Bend, Oregon.

Shannah McAleer, smcaleer@slcworld.org

Centering Prayer is a method developed by Father Thomas Keating. It is a blend of prayer and meditation that fits well with Unity thought. Two scriptures, "Be still and know that I am God" and "Peace, be still," are cornerstones of Centering Prayer.

The basics of Unity's teachings are simple and yet profound, and so is centering prayer. The five basics steps (as I practice them) are as follows:

1. Open to God for guidance in co-creating the perfect word and align with Divine Mind.
2. Hold it deep within the core of your being (similar to a mantra).
3. Choose a quiet place; close your eyes, becoming comfortable, and aware of your breathing.
4. When completely relaxed, bring your sacred word to mind and repeat it as often as you need. If you stray, return to that one, simple, and perfect word. Don't judge yourself if you find it difficult to stay centered. Remember, this is a lifelong practice. Simple—yet not easy.
5. At the end of your prayer time, give thanks that you have remembered your connection with God. You are never separate from God and any feelings as such are simply illusion.

Consider trying Centering Prayer and feel the peace!

Shannah McAleer, Ph.D., is associate minister at Spiritual Life Center in Sacramento, California.



Thriving in Unity

Get into it!

In June, at our international convention in Phoenix, our home office introduced a new initiative aimed at working more effectively with Unity ministries to grow our movement. This initiative, dubbed “Thriving in Unity: Get into it!” is offered to all ministries and encompasses three program options. There are also individual components in options 1 and 2.

Option 1: The Practice of Thriving

For many, daily living and survival seem to be an ongoing struggle. Often we are perplexed by the obstacles we face even though we are busy being “about our Father’s business.” We are not experiencing the fullness of divine abundance as leaders, as congregations, and as ministries. With the looming specter of tough financial times ahead, we must be even more vigilant in our practice of principle.

The Practice of Thriving is an eight-month program designed to assist you in guiding your ministry through a profound shift in consciousness that will open the flow of abundance on multiple levels. With monthly milestones and step-by-step instructions, you will have everything at your fingertips to make this rewarding experience as simple and effective as possible.

With spiritual stretching for both leaders and ministries, this is a good place to start if you or your ministry has found prosperity elusive.

The Practice of Thriving includes:

- A personal practice for you and your leadership team
- Suggested topics and talking points for your lessons
- Resources and course materials for classes
- Prepared promotional materials for lessons and classes
- A calendar with a suggested schedule for all activities
- Suggested themes for your monthly newsletters or emails
- A tracking sheet to help you measure and share your progress
- A submission form for recognition at next year’s 2009 People’s Convention

The entire Practice of Thriving Program will be available in August for launch at the ministry level in September 2008.

Option 2: Thriving in Unity— a Step Beyond

Is your ministry ready for the next level? Do you feel a growing sense of urgency within your congregation to express more fully in the world? With a solid foundation of support, perhaps the time is right to open to a fuller vision of how your ministry can serve its congregation and its community. If so, this option may be perfect for you.

The Thriving in Unity program is an eight-month program designed to not only assist you in meeting the goals of the Practice of Thriving program (option 1), but to also take you a step beyond. By intentionally focusing our application of principle to specific areas of our lives and our ministries, we can experience the movement of momentum leading to lasting transformation. This program offers 12 concrete action steps to assist you in beginning to build that momentum.

Not only will you receive the full Practice of Thriving program, but those who choose this level of participation will also receive a complete guide with resources and ready-made materials to allow you to bring Thriving in Unity to your ministry.

The Thriving in Unity program includes:

- Professional multi-media resources to introduce the program to your congregation
- Helpful resources to assist you in enrolling ministry leaders and staff
- Uplifting music and talking points for themed lesson topics
- Inspiring spiritual social activism activities that expands the ministry's focus
- Provocative educational and service-oriented activities to energize congregants
- Meaningful outreach and visitor interaction to invite and welcome newcomers
- Effective strategies for organizational evolution
- Clear metrics and simple tracking tools to measure and share your success
- A submission form for recognition at next year's 2009 People's Convention

The entire Thriving in Unity Program will be available in August for launch at the ministry level in September 2008.

Option 3: Transformation Experience Pilot Program

The Transformation Experience is a full-throttle quantum leap for ministries and leaders who are ready to completely redefine what ministry means. Not for the faint of heart, it will require a depth of spiritual grit and dedication to principle not yet manifesting at the organizational level.

This three-year commitment aims to do nothing less than radically transform you, your ministry, and our movement. More than just a set of challenging benchmarks or transformative activities, the Transformation Experience is a whole new way of being for our ministries. It calls every leader, every staff member, and even our congregations to the highest and fullest expression of our potential as members of a spiritual community.

The program covers topics ranging from evolutionary leadership development to leading-edge organizational development; from spiritual development for practical results to community impact; and from congregational ownership to congregation-led discipleship.

With the help of professional consultants and experienced home office staff, ministries **participating in the pilot program will:**

- Unleash the ministry's capacity to transform lives
- Increase the culture of ownership on all levels of the ministry
- Experience an influx of energy, creativity, and passion for fulfilling the ministry's mission and purpose
- Evolve beyond the pastor/flock paradigm into an empowered and co-creative spiritual community
- Enrich their wider community through serving as an inspired example of leading-edge leadership and innovative organizational practices

Those churches and centers wishing to be part of the Transformation Experience pilot program are encouraged to apply. Due to the intensity of the experience, a limited number of ministries demonstrating readiness in key factors that increase the likelihood of success will be invited to participate.

Applications for the Transformation Experience Pilot Program will be available on our Association's website in the fall of 2008.

Rather than providing these services on a fee basis, we will rely on tithes received from our member churches. You'll find more information and response forms at www.ThrivinginUnity.org.

The Call



by Sheila Gautreaux-Lee,
licensedunityteacher@comcast.net

In many cultures, both modern and ancient, the call to prayer ... to worship ... is as important as the prayer itself. You can see it in the sweeping drama of the majestic minarets of the Turkish Mosques that kiss the sky where the Muezzin call the faithful to prayer; you can hear it in the stillness atop the breathtaking cathedral of the Himalayas; and you can feel it in the high order of the Catholic ritual of the procession of the priests and altar boys with the swinging of the incense holders and crosses and chalice held high. In the heart of Africa, Australia and Native American lands, you see and feel and hear it in the call of the Drum. The call ... to worship ... to pray.

The drum has been used to call people together for thousands of years. Archeological digs have unearthed rhythm instruments in almost every culture as far back as they can date human life. What is it about the drum that makes it so cross-cultural and transgenerational?

The drum touches us at our most basic core level, the first and second chakra energy centers, that contain our primal nature. The drum strips away our pretense, our masks, and allows us to connect with that untouched, untapped core, where the purity and innocence that we truly are is still fully alive.

The drum removes the borders we have set up in our minds that separate us from each other and allow us to connect where the borders never existed—in the Spirit.

The drum tears down sectors, socio-economic groups, religious beliefs, gender affiliations and political alliances to bring us together as community.

Many Unity churches today have a weekly or monthly drumming circle as part of their extended ministry. Some have been started by the ministers themselves, who might have an interest in drumming; others have been initiated by enthusiastic congregants who are either drummers themselves or have experienced the drumming circle in other places; and still others have been brought to the ministry by persons in the community looking for a receptive venue to hold its Circle. Regardless of how it began, it has become an integral part of many Unity ministries and is a relatively easy way of helping the ministry spill over into the surrounding community.

At Christ Unity Church in Sacramento, California, we have a monthly Drumming Circle, facilitated by master percussionist, Michael Bayard. Initially, Michael and, then associate minister, Bruce Kellogg, created the Circle in 2005 as part of our midweek service line-up. It began rather simply, with various drummers and would-be drummers coming to just sit and play, along with those who just came to express through movement or meditation for approximately 20-30 people. Michael





Bayard would take the rhythm of a human heart beat and begin playing the heart beat on a large Native American Mother Earth drum, then all the participants in the circle would synchronize to the heart beat with their drum. This created an overall resonance and synchronicity with the whole group, as well as establishing a medium for shared consciousness.

This ministry has since grown in numbers (150-175) and intensity into a powerful, healing, and “music medicine” program each fourth Wednesday, with the drummers and participants sitting in four concentric circles—one inside the other. Currently, Michael is using many different and effective sound and vibrational modalities to activate and align the chakra system, for the purpose of healing and restoring the mind, body, and etheric body field.

He also utilizes the Aboriginal didgeridoo, voice chanting, various quartz bowls, the captivating and unique Sufi mystic song bowl, dancers and choreographers, chakra-colored lighting, and many guest musicians on varying unique vibration-producing instruments. All this is put together to underscore the intent of the program, which is to active the chakra system for the purpose of healing. Many people have had life-changing experiences, and have written numerous testimonials to this fact.

For additional information and support in designing a Drumming Circle prayer ministry for your church, contact: Michael A. Bayard, bayard@rhythmmagic.com, 916.683.2575, www.rhythmmagic.com.

Sheila Gautreaux-Lee is a licensed Unity teacher, ordained Interfaith minister, choir director and director of the Center for Applied Radical Forgiveness at Christ Unity Church in Sacramento, California, where her husband Jim Lee is senior minister. She is a published author of two books (*Praying Through a Storm* and *Messages*), is currently working on her third book, and has produced a powerful meditation CD *Light Visions*. She is a certified Radical Forgiveness coach and teacher, and has developed a strong Forgiveness Ministry at the church and throughout the Sacramento Valley.

Drumming Circle at Christ Unity Church in Sacramento, California.



Mars Madness

Seeing through our consciousness rather than our eyes ...

by Jim Rosemergy, roseij@embarqmail.com

When Nancy and I lived at Sunrise Beach, Missouri, we built a three-story observatory that housed a 14-inch computerized telescope. This light bucket could capture light radiating from astronomical objects billions of light years away. One of our joys was introducing the wonders of the heavens to our congregation. It often led us into prayer as we took in the vast beauty.

A few years ago when Mars made its close approach to Earth, we shared a “Mars Madness” party with the congregation. People stood in line for hours to see the red planet. While they waited, they drank planetary punch and ate star fruit, moon pies, and *Mars* bars. There were information sheets on Mars and the other objects they would see when they climbed to the observation deck of the High Meadow Observatory.

Seeing the Past

While four people joined me on the observation deck, Nancy operated the computer in the heated control room. Those waiting in line could see her slew the telescope to a variety of heavenly wonders. I would begin the tour by telling people that a telescope is a time machine. Light is fast; but it travels at a finite speed of 186,000 miles per second. Because of the expanse of space, it takes years, sometimes billions of

years, for the light (photons) to journey from its place of origin to their eyes.

From this fact, we can take a leap and realize that all we see with our eyes is in the past. When we see a friend across the parking lot, we actually see him not as he is, but as he was a split second ago. And when you add the fact that we actually see through our consciousness rather than our eyes, vision becomes an interesting thing.

Wonderment as Prayer

There are many wondrous things about astronomy and the new cosmology that are impacting us. Perhaps its greatest gift to us is the sense of wonder. The gasps that we hear from our astronomy guests when they see the rings of Saturn for the first time make a night shivering in the cold worth it.

How intriguing it is for someone to become aware that the elements of his physical body were birthed during the supernova explosion of a giant star. Such realizations cause us to think in new ways about the creation story and the creative work of our Creator. It begs us to consider our purpose and role in the greater neighborhood that is the cosmos.

Jim Rosemergy is the minister at Unity of Fort Myers, Florida.



Sacred Circle

An Alternative Prayer Experience

by Debbie Allen, astdev@unity.org

There are as many ways to pray as there are people praying. The method doesn't matter so much as the fact that we take the time to spend with God. "Sacred Circle" is just one of those many ways, as well as a focused effort at creating a welcoming space for young adults in particular.

This combined effort between folks from our Association's home office, Unity Institute, and Unity is a fun yet sacred way of joining in prayer. It happens every Thursday in Fillmore Hall at Unity Village concurrent with the Silent Unity 11 a.m. service.

Wiggle Time Is First

As you enter the room, you notice people are dancing and moving around to energetic music: this is called "wiggle" time. It allows the body to release stiffness and tension from sitting at a desk. It also gives time for stragglers to enter and pick up the quote/affirmation card for the day and prayer request sheets. After five to ten minutes, you hear the ring of the singing bowl calling the group together. The day's facilitator welcomes everyone, and reads the quote for the day.

Jesus told us that when two or more gather, "I am there with them." The group gathers in twos or threes to sit and discuss the quote for the day. Most quotes are from the Fillmores, but Emilie Cady has been known to show up. Soft music plays during the five-minute discussion.

Praying Together

The singing bowl again calls for silence as people move to put their prayer requests in the bowl and all join in a larger circle—some on pillows on the floor, others sitting in chairs in the circle. A ten-minute mediation on the quote for the day begins. At the end of this time, the affirmation is stated together, the prayers in the bowl are blessed, and the time closes with announcements.

When asked why they started Sacred Circle, co-creator Rachel Simpson says it was "to create a sacred place for prayer for an audience that was not being served. This type of service feeds people from many faiths without them feeling threatened."

This type of prayer service can build leadership by involving more people, and by inviting others to join to facilitating the prayer. Creating a space for budding leaders to stretch in a safe environment, while fostering an authentic experience for more people, serves in a larger way.

One participant shared, "This is the best hour of the week."

Debbie Allen is a licensed Unity teacher and Communications Coordinator at the Association of Unity Churches International.



A Stellar Summer for Unity in Unity



Two major events this summer will present new opportunities for collaboration between Unity School of Christianity and the Association of Unity Churches International: a webcast series with Deepak Chopra on his book *The Third Jesus*, beginning in October; and the 11 Days of Global Unity celebration Sept. 11-21.



Unity senior minister Wendy Craig-Purcell of San Diego will interview spiritual leader and author Deepak Chopra in a multi-part discussion of *The Third Jesus*. The book explores who Jesus really was, what he really taught, and the Christ consciousness available to us all, and is highly compatible with Unity teachings.



Chopra, a longtime friend to Unity, will be interviewed at the Unity Center in San Diego in late July. The interviews will be aired on Unity.FM (www.unity.fm) on Wednesday evenings beginning in October.

To help Unity churches participate in the web event, a study guide on *The Third Jesus* is planned. It can be used for church classes or study groups to accompany the webcasts each week. To request a study guide for your church, contact Mindy Audlin at Unity.FM (mindy@unity.fm).



In September, while Unity churches are holding prayer services, interfaith discussions, celebrations and other public events as part of the 11 Days activities that expand on this year's World Day of Prayer, Unity Village will host a variety of speakers, events and multimedia offerings. All will reinforce

this year's World Day of Prayer theme of "Celebrating Our Oneness; Healing the World." Highlights will include:

- A public talk and SpiritPath workshop by Gregg Braden.
- An Earthdance, featuring a variety of music and dancing.
- The annual New Thought Music Awards and a MegaPosipalooza Concert, co-sponsored by Itoi Ministries and the Association of Unity Churches International.
- A public talk by Lynne McTaggart, author of *The Intention Experiment* and *The Field*.
- A transformational film festival.
- The Midwest premiere of a provocative new play, "Liberating Jesus!"
- Arun Gandhi speaking on "Lessons My Grandfather Taught Me," followed by an interfaith panel discussion on "Religion and Nonviolence."
- An "Awakening the Dreamer" symposium sponsored by The Pachamama Alliance, aimed at helping individuals take positive action toward a more socially just, spiritually fulfilling and environmentally sustainable world.

All of the events are open to the public, and some will be live webcast from Unity Village. For a full schedule and more information, visit www.11daysofunity.org.

Unity® is a partner organization to the Association of Unity Churches International. It provides education, prayer through Silent Unity and publishing of *Daily Word*, *Unity Magazine* and other materials.

What *Christ* Means to Me

by Ann Marie Davis, amdavis57@yahoo.com

I had just received the last rites. I was told that I only had hours to live. Chemotherapy had weakened my immune system and I was in intensive care. My lungs were destroyed, all organs were failing. Doctors told me that, even if I were to live, I would never get off of the respirator.

My family told me I must surrender to a higher power. Not being able to speak, I nodded my head in agreement and fell asleep. The next morning was Good Friday, April 13, 1979. The doctors expected me to be dead.

This was not my first bout with cancer. In the 1960s, at age ten, I was one of the first children to be diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease. A new experimental treatment called cobalt radiation was tried on me and kept me in and out of remission throughout my school years.

Prayer Works

At ten, I was not necessarily afraid of death, but wanted to live and to experience all that life has to offer. I made a pact: "God, please let me live to be 30." I thought 30 was so old, who would want to live any longer than that! There's an old saying, "Be careful what you pray for." Sure enough, at age 30 I was diagnosed once more with a recurrence of Hodgkin's disease. This was my fourth time out of remission.

The first step was exploratory surgery to determine how advanced the cancer had spread. After the painful surgery, I was alone. For the first time, I faced the fear that I might die. I was scared.

A few days later, I began chemotherapy. After only three months, a weakened immune system led to my contracting Legionnaires' disease, which attacked and destroyed my lungs. I was rushed to the hospital and put in intensive care on a respirator. The next two weeks all my organs began to fail and the doctors had little hope of my recovery. By Holy Thursday, my lungs were destroyed. They had become brittle and could no longer be restored to elasticity.

Surrender Into God

My family gathered around me and we all surrendered my life into God's hands. On that Good Friday morning in 1979, I awoke from my morphine-induced state. I do not remember exactly what was said, but the doctors just stood around me. They could not explain it, except to say, "Medically speaking, you should be dead." They just smiled at me and I smiled at them.

It wasn't until days later that I understood fully what had happened. I was healed. I also was filled with a resolve. That resolve would evolve over time into a call to ministry.

Day by day, my body became stronger and stronger. I began to study the Bible and all the world religions. I was trying to find a philosophy that my new awareness could relate to, a philosophy that was loving and non-judgmental, and a belief system that encompassed all people of the world. A few years later, I was ordained a Unity minister.

The restorative power of the Christ is a living power. In the simple act of surrender, the living Christ is able to heal and restore any situation. The power of Christ remains relevant today and forever.

Ann Marie Davis is senior minister of Unity Center of Tulsa, Oklahoma.





I Come to the *Garden* ...



by Bernadette Swanson, Bernadette@unity.org
Are you feeling harried? Does your inner sanctuary have an “out of order” sign on it? What better way to rediscover your inner spa of serenity than by combining a walk through nature with a labyrinth.

A labyrinth is a tool for personal and spiritual transformation. It’s like a walking meditation or prayer. There are no decisions on which way to go. There is only one way in and the reverse way out.

Your “job” is to surrender, place one foot in front of the other, and listen with your heart along the way. Labyrinths are thought to enhance right-brain, intuitive, creative activity.

People are advised to commune or become one with nature as a way of relieving stress and of consciously connecting with God. By combining a labyrinth and nature, you enter a powerful transformational experience. According to The Labyrinth Company, “Research conducted by Dr. Herbert Benson at Harvard Medical School’s Mind/Body Medical Institute has found focused walking meditations are highly efficient at reducing anxiety and eliciting what Dr. Benson calls the ‘relaxation response.’”

Simple Paths, Powerful Prayers

The labyrinth path does not have to be large or complex, like the 11-circuit medieval Chartres layout at Unity Village. A simple 3-circuit path in your back or front yard, with the sounds of birds, wind and trees, will do. The sound of water in a fountain is an added bonus. The Labyrinth Society has information on patterns and building labyrinths. Be sure to check out the Resources page in this magazine.

Don’t have a backyard? You can print out a pattern and use your finger to trace its path. Better yet, take your finger labyrinth outside. The key is to set your intention for your experience, start the process, and surrender to Spirit.

A wonderful online labyrinth is at www.gratefulness.org, under Features, Labyrinth Pilgrimage. There you can be “carried” through the labyrinth, or you can choose to move yourself. Images of nature are interspersed along the path.

Techniques for Walking

There are many different ways to use a labyrinth. One simple way is to walk toward the center, or goal, with your hands facing down, symbolizing release. Walk out with your hands facing up to receive. Finish your walk with your hands together in prayer.

I encourage you to explore different techniques on the Internet. Our walk through the labyrinth can be seen as a metaphor for our lives. Each of us has our own journey with its twists and turns, yet we travel a path toward the same goal. Our steps are reminiscent of those on pilgrimages and tie us to that sacred tradition.

When standing at the entrance to a labyrinth, the phrase “take a hike” is really good advice to follow.

High Tech Meets Prayer

by Cheryl Harrison, charrison@tampabay.rr.com

If you needed a rendition of *The Lord's Prayer* in Aramaic, the language of Jesus, where would you look? Would you think to check YouTube? Would you be surprised to learn that there are 29 different versions of *The Lord's Prayer* in Aramaic on that video sharing website? Or that they're nearly all free for the taking, meaning you can put them on your website, use them in a class, or even show them at Sunday morning services?

Most of us who grew up B.I. (Before the Internet) tend to put prayer and high technology in separate categories, thinking one has nothing to do with the other. We are familiar and comfortable with prayer. Not so much with high tech. But in the world beyond our own ideas, prayer and high tech are intersecting in very interesting ways.

If you search Google for "prayer request," for example, you'll see that Google returns more than 2.5 million web pages on that topic. That many web pages are meeting a very real need for prayer support. Just one of those pages—at www.GodBlessTheAnimals.com—receives more than 800 prayer requests every month. In only two and one-half years, www.GodBlessTheAnimals.com has received more than 28,000 prayer requests, says co-minister Lauren McLaughlin, who with her husband John established and maintains the website from home in Clearwater, Florida. And the McLaughlins have never advertised the site!

Another Unity minister, Christopher Ian Chenoweth, pioneered his Internet prayer ministry with www.PositiveChristianity.org

in 1999. Today, he receives hundreds of prayer requests weekdays and sends Positive Daily Inspiration emails to more than 803,000 subscribers.

Of course, the use of technology for prayer is nothing new to Unity, if we consider that the traditional, land-line telephone is a technological resource. Churches have

offered "Dial-a-Prayer" lines for decades, and Silent Unity has been taking prayer requests by telephone for 101 years.

However, the ways that Unity ministries can meet the need for prayer support are quickly growing as technology advances and millions more turn to the Internet for prayer support. And the need for prayer is greater than ever; Silent Unity handles 1.6 million phone and email requests annually now and expects to receive 2 million per year by 2012. They also receive almost 500,000 written prayer requests annually.

How can Unity churches and alternative ministries use technology to help meet the need? Here are some suggestions:

- Accept prayer requests through your website.
- Link to Silent Unity's online prayer request form.
- Publish Silent Unity's phone numbers on your website.
- Publish sample prayers, such as The Prayer for Protection, on your website.
- Include inspiring prayer-related videos on your website. (For examples of free videos, visit the Prayer Video Library at www.FriendsofMinistry.com.)
- Post podcasts of prayers and meditations from your services on your website.

Cheryl Harrison is the founding director of Friends of Ministry, Inc. She is the former marketing, events, and volunteer director for First Unity Church in St. Petersburg, Florida.



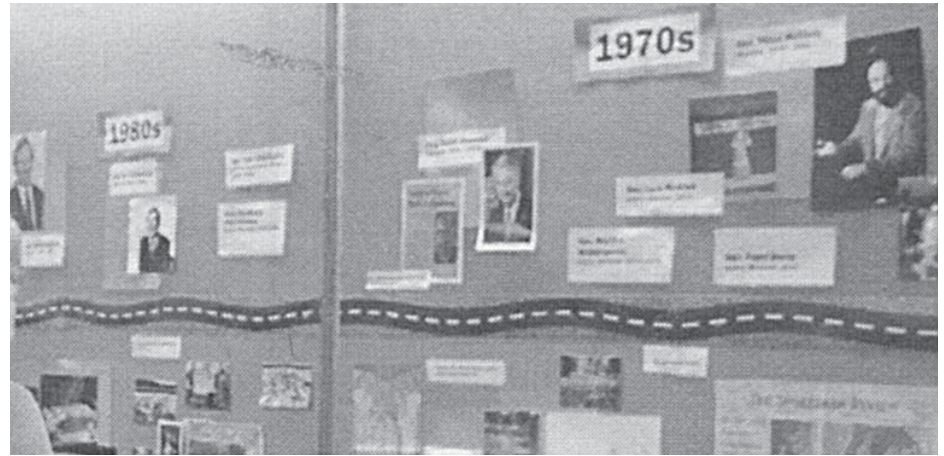
Eastern

Unity in Buffalo, New York, has a Walking Club. Depending on the weather, members of the church meet each Sunday after church and go for a walk. Each week is a different location. This year the plan is to go to the zoo, a nature preserve, and Niagara Falls, just to name a few! Senior minister **Mary Masters** states, "Everyone is welcome and can join at anytime. It is a great way to stay in shape and see some of the beautiful sights of New York!"

In Memoriam: George R. Rieger, retired minister from Salem, New Jersey.

Diane Clevenger, minister of **Unity of Roanoke Valley in Roanoke, Virginia**, during Easter sunrise service.

Northwest



Unity Church of Truth pictorial time line from the 1920s to today.

Unity Church of Truth in Spokane, Washington, celebrated its 95th Anniversary in April 2008. Special guests included members who had the most years in attendance and Association president James Trapp.

Southeast

In Memoriam: Thomas Newman, retired minister from Dahlonega, Georgia; **Nancy Hiscoe Clark**, minister from Asheville, North Carolina.



Photo by Kyle Green, *The Roanoke Times*

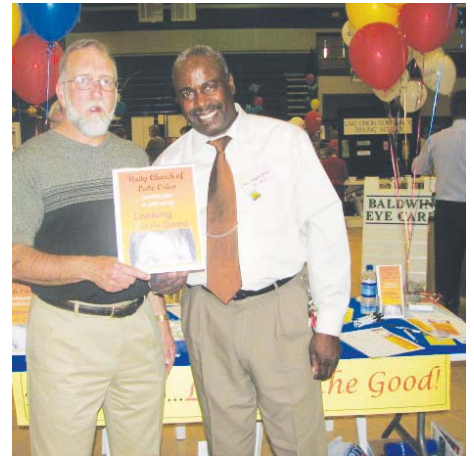
Southwest



Members of Unity Church of South Bay on a Whale Watch Excursion.

Unity Church of South Bay, located in **Torrance, California**, is spreading the word of Unity. Whenever members have a group outing, like the Whale Watch Excursion, they take the banner and proudly display it for all to see. **Carole Gordon**, church office manager, reports, “The banner also went to the Aquarium of the Pacific where we celebrated minister **Trish O’Connor-Weisman’s** 83rd birthday. Events that excite and unite our congregation, and let others know about Unity, help our church to grow and prosper.”

Great Lakes



Unity Church of Lake Orion, Michigan, promotes the Look for the Good awareness campaign at a community expo. (See more at www.lookforthegood.org.)

In Memoriam: Marcus Burden, minister from Cleveland, Ohio.

South Central

The United Methodist Church in Lee’s Summit, Missouri, holds a “Trunk or Treat” in its parking lot every year for Halloween, providing a safe trick or treat environment for kids. People dress up and give out candy from the trunks of their cars. The church estimates they handed out hot chocolate and candy to about 1000 kids last year.

Members of United Methodist Church participating in the annual “Trunk or Treat” community event.



You can read
this book later.



21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating

Reviewed by Lisa Wittman, lisa@unity.org

You've seen it all before: time management advice that shows up everywhere in the media, with countless books and new products every year. So why don't we all have our PDAs, our planners, Outlook and everything else programmed like clockwork so we can get more done in less time?

Let me start by saying that this book won't do it for you either. In fact, after reading it, it's clear to me that having all the gadgets and more ideas won't solve the problem. What this book does offer is an overview of some of the best ideas ever put together in one place, with specific exercises to do right now to help get us on track.

I found it a great, concise review of some ideas I've seen before as well as new ones. Tracy offers a sane approach, saying, "But the

fact is that you are never going to get caught up. You will never get on top of your tasks ... And forget about solving all your time management problems by becoming more productive You can get control of your time and your life only by changing the way you think, work and deal with the never-ending river of responsibilities" Whew! I could feel the relief of not having to add mastering time management to my already impossible list of tasks for home and work.

Tracy's approach is that we must spend time on what really makes a difference in our lives. Sound familiar? With its very approachable compilation of ideas, you'll find something to help you with your time.

The title refers to the need to do the most important task first, a habit that, Tracy says, can be learned. Since we can never accomplish all the possible tasks, he says we must be selective in what we do, and take action on the most important thing immediately. These principles are certainly applicable to all aspects of our lives, whether they are personal or work-related.

Among the helpful features of the book are the end-of-chapter instructions on what to do to act on the information in that chapter. In true, time-management form, they are broken into bite-sized pieces that can be done in a short time. Doing them was rewarding enough to motivate me to continue.

At the conclusion of the book, a short chapter summarizes all of the ideas for an easy reference. This book would be useful for ministry staff as well as for congregants.

Eat That Frog!
Brian Tracy
Berrett-Koehler
Publishers, Inc.,
©2007
128 pages

Second Edition, Revised and Updated with Two New Chapters

Eat That Frog!

International Bestseller
More Than 500,000
Copies Sold

21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating
and Get More Done in Less Time

Brian Tracy

Ministering to Ministers

A new prayer ministry—for ministers from ministers—that provides compassionate, safe, and confidential prayer support to our brothers and sisters in ministry.

By Ann Marie Davis, unitytulsa@sbcglobal.net
and Sophia Falke, reverendsophia@yahoo.com

Does any of the following sound familiar? “I felt like a failure and there was no one that I felt safe enough to admit that to.” “The country western song had played out in my life ... I lost my husband, my house, my dog, and my church.”



Ann Marie Davis

Or are you in transition, under review, or quietly hurting? Are you feeling stressed with all that is expected of you? Are you grieving for any reason? Are you retired or between ministries and feeling separated from other ministers?

When you find yourself in these situations, who do you call? All too often when we call within our movement, the only message we receive is, “What is it in you that created this?” Is this what we really need to hear when we’re hurting? Does this help us heal?

So who do ministers call when they need help? Now you can call **Ministering to Ministers**, a new team recently approved by the Association of Unity Churches International, but operating independently from them.

Ministering to Ministers (M2M) is a group of ministers who have “been there” and are reaching out to other ministers. Every call to M2M is confidential. We are here to listen with a compassionate ear and to pray with you for healing your situation. We will listen and pray with you with an open heart, offering a safe environment, free from judgment. It’s as simple as that.



Sophia Falke

Our mission is to provide a safe, confidential prayer space for our brothers and sisters in ministry. We hold sacred space of possibilities with individual ministers.

Ministering to Ministers is confidential and separate from any Association department or team, yet it is approved by the Association of

Unity Churches International Board of Trustees. We keep no records on whom we are praying with. We rely on God as our source of inspired prayer.

How Ministering to Ministers Will Serve You

- We listen, so that you may feel heard.
- We offer compassionate prayer to reframe and transform the situation.
- We see God’s presence within every person and situation, supporting you in knowing that all is well.
- We know that in this prayer work, “It is not I, but the Christ within that does the work.”
- We support you in releasing and letting go of attachment to the outcome and creating the space for God to do the healing work.

How to Reach Us

Call 816.347.7300 and leave your name, phone number, time zone, and best times to call you. This is an “answer only” phone line. Your message will be picked up by a member of the Ministering to Ministers prayer team, who will return your call within 24 hours.

Ann Marie Davis, minister of Unity Center of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Sophia Falke, minister of Unity in Green Valley, Henderson, Nevada, recognized a need for unconditional and easily accessible listening and prayer support to ministers and spiritual leaders in the Unity movement. They joined together to form this team and coordinate its prayer ministry.

Creating Sacred Space Through *Partnership*

by Eileen Goor and Mary Owen

Can a church and a business co-create a facility that works for everyone? Hear from a church and business who said, “Yes!”

The Church

Like many other churches, New World Unity (Springfield, VA) came to a point in our development where we could see potential for additional activities if we had a space of our own. We had been renting a school auditorium for our Sunday celebration and using the minister’s home for classes, meetings, and administrative tasks. On occasion, we rented a Lutheran church for events like candlelight services, weddings, and funerals, but we were always in the position of having to work around their schedule.

As we searched for space to serve the activities we had in mind, we found several challenges. Land and rental prices in the Northern Virginia area were very steep, and we did not have a substantial amount of money in our Expansion Fund. In addition, it was difficult to find buildings with owners willing to house a church or land that could be shifted to the appropriate zoning. Some other aspects that presented challenges were finding a handicap-accessible space, adequate parking, desired aesthetics, and accommodations necessary for children’s programming.

Grounded in prayer and meditation, we continually reminded ourselves the right and perfect situation would manifest in God’s time, which from our human perspective frequently felt like “the eleventh hour.” This was to be a seven-year process which

Eileen Goor (right), former senior minister of New World Unity, and Mary Owen (left), business owner

could only be realized when we let go of our preconceived notions of what having “a space of our own” really meant.

The Business Owner

While running a successful psychotherapy business, I had held a lifetime dream of providing a spiritual retreat center for families called “R” Place. Through the years, I shared my vision, hoping to find others who would partner in creating a center, but never found the right combination of people or financing to make this happen. Also for years, I had never found a church to which I felt drawn. The vision I had of a healing retreat center being welcoming and alive with energy was the way I also envisioned the church to which I would be attracted.



When I became involved with New World Unity, my vision of a retreat center began pushing itself more persistently into my daily consciousness. Upon hearing that New World Unity was looking for space, a “picture” came to me of my retreat center and the church partnering to share a space where both visions could be realized, and I approached the minister about this possibility.

The Church

The proposal for sharing space with a retreat center created great excitement in the community. Because we were always clear that our work was to raise consciousness, not funds, and knowing Spirit would reveal the means for our community to serve as we were called, we had never focused time and attention on fundraisers or considered a capital campaign drive. Hearing this proposal verified that the way for us to do the work we were called to do could unfold without making finances the focus of our attention.

The Discernment

Once the concept of co-creating a space for both New World Unity and “R” Place arose, there was a joint spiritual discernment to address the question, “What is ours to do?” Out of that discernment came the clarity of moving forward in partnership. Subsequent discernments took place to support the unfolding of the partnership.

The Unfolding

During the development stages, both partners strived to construct a sacred plan for honoring and integrating the work of each other in a shared and supportive way. Joint meetings were held during the initial planning stages between representatives of both the church and the retreat center. This support and cooperation carried through all aspects of the project including the land and building search, planning of the facility and coordination of shared supplies, equipment and personnel for the efficient use of resources with an effort to be financially, ecologically and energetically conscious.

Lessons Learned

Revelations continued to unfold as the partnership unfolded and a reciprocal nurturing and supportive relationship developed. The church and retreat center discovered that flexibility is necessary to adjust to each entity’s ongoing changes as well as the changes within the partnership including use of space, schedules, and financial agreements.

Faith was at the center of the partnership. Even when our full dream did not appear to be manifesting, we reminded ourselves

“that faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Fortunately, whenever there appeared to be questions, and even conflicts, we remembered it is important to stay grounded in discernment. All participants were clear that the experience strengthens our trust in a Spirit-led life.

We realize this partnership is significantly different than the way most churches or businesses operate. Yet, sharing space, resources and personnel, as well as the talents of many people who are mutually involved, has benefited both parties immensely. We now know that a business and a church can co-create a partnership that fully expresses Spirit and good business practices.

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The December/January theme for **Contact** will be **Spiritual Social Action.**

If you provide services or products that relate to **social action, peace, conflict resolution, etc.**, there is ad space available for you to reach 7000 *Contact* subscribers. For ad rates and information, see www.unity.org/ContactMagazine or email graph@unity.org no later than October 1.

Prayer Traditions



by Lisa Wittman, lisa@unity.org

A year ago, I graduated from a three-year program to become a spiritual director. The wonder of the program, as with so much spiritual education, was that it fed my mind, but it also fed my heart. As a spiritual director, one of my functions is to help people recognize where God is at work, and to help deepen their prayer lives.

There are many beautiful Christian prayer traditions that seem all but lost to most modern people. As I looked at Unity's five-step prayer process, I recognized many of the Unity steps are emphasized in one or another of the traditions. This is not by any means an exhaustive list, nor are these forms necessarily practiced separately. Here are some of my favorites.

Relaxation

In *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, Cynthia Bourgeault discusses centering prayer and how it opens us to God for our growth. She quotes a prayer called Welcoming Prayer, which is all about being present to what is, at any moment in our lives. When I use this prayer, it helps me to relax into God's presence with the beautiful reminder that all things are for my benefit. It's shown at right (sidebar). Whenever I get into a "tight spot," if I can remember to pray this prayer, it reminds me of how I really want to respond.

Concentration

Praying with icons, despite its ritualistic reputation, can be a great form of concentration. I've heard the story that

Myrtle Fillmore used to place a picture of Jesus in front of her as she was praying. This works best if I remember I'm not praying to the icon (idolatry), but it is a representation of the presence of Christ within me. Rather like the exercise of imagining sitting across from your spiritual teacher and talking with him or her, I focus on the eyes of the icon, imagining the being of Christ beholding my own being in its entirety. There is something about Orthodox icons that helps me to feel the gaze of Christ, and to feel that I am known and beloved. When I am trying to pray and am sleepy, this also gives me a good focal point to rest my eyes upon. You can find icons online at www.printeryhouse.org.

Contemplation

Centering prayer is the doorway into true contemplation, which is communion with God. Through centering, we go into the silence. This is where it gets tricky. The ultimate goal is to have no thoughts at all, to simply behold God directly (contemplation)—a state that spiritual veterans say we cannot attain, but only God can give us. For those times we do not receive that state, what can we do? Most of us have continuous thoughts that are difficult to turn off. In centering, we accept that. We simply watch the thoughts go by, without getting attached and involved with them.

A great analogy is that our mind is a river, and thoughts are boats traveling down that river. We watch from the banks as the boats go by, but we do not board, we simply allow them to float past us peacefully on their way. We are sitting quietly, letting our thoughts go by, and if we realize we have "boarded" a "boat," we don't get aggravated; we simply get off and go back to sitting quietly on the bank. Twenty minutes is the recommended time period for this practice. I have found prayer beads can help—I move to the next bead every time I realize I've gotten on a boat, and that helps me to interrupt my thinking.





Realization

The roots of *Lectio Divina* have been traced back to Judaism and to Jesus' time. Practiced widely by the "Desert Fathers," (monks who went to the desert to live apart, during the first few centuries C.E.) it means, literally, "holy reading." It refers to the use of scripture in prayer. It is often taught as a four-step process, but after using it for a time, you may find that it is more fluid and natural. Here are the four "movements:"

1 Reading and listening: The idea is to select a passage, and to repeat it slowly, with the goal of being in the reality that God is speaking to you now—you "real-ize" the words, according to Thelma Hall, in *Too Deep for Words*. You are open and receptive in listening for the meaning of the words. For me, once I have repeated it, invariably a word or phrase will have a particular energy for me, and I begin to focus on that word or phrase.

2 Reflecting: If you like using the imagination, you can place yourself in the story being told in the passage and note how you feel and what it's like. If you prefer, you can simply savor the word or phrase. This has been compared inelegantly to a cow chewing its cud, or simply taking the word into your heart and absorbing it, chewing on it.

3 Touching the heart: So far, we have mainly concentrated on the mind. At this point, we engage the heart by feeling whatever the word has brought up for us. We share the feeling with God, speaking a prayer in our heart. Whether it is gratitude, fear, pain or love, we share it internally and allow ourselves to feel it.

4 Resting in God: This is akin to centering prayer, where we have been in our mind and heart with the first phases, and now we simply let go and rest. We allow our thoughts to pass by without engaging in them.

Starting with the Psalms or the Gospels will be helpful in learning this practice, but you can use

it for other spiritual reading as well. This process can help us to truly hear God's voice, and to bring it to realization—to bring it into the reality of our lives.

Gratitude

One of the best practices I have found for expressing gratitude is singing—a longtime tradition of the church. I believe that when I am singing my gratitude, I am praying. The praise songs popular in many more traditional churches offer an example of music that lends itself well to this, but you can use whatever resonates for you.

Amen

Volumes and volumes have been written about prayer and these practices. My hope is to give you a taste of Christian traditions, to stimulate your curiosity as to how Unity intersects with them, and to provide you further resources on the Resources page. I wish you a life of prayer in God.

Lisa Wittman is VP of Communications at the Association of Unity Churches International.

Welcoming Prayer

Welcome, welcome, welcome.

I welcome everything that comes to me in the moment, because I know it is for my healing. I welcome every thought, feeling, emotion, person, situation and condition.

I let go of my desire for security.

I let go of my desire for approval.

I let go of my desire for control.

I let go of my desire to change situations, conditions, other people, and myself.

I open to the love and presence of God, and the healing and grace in this moment.

Prayer by Mary Mrozowski, quoted in *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, by Cynthia Bourgeault

Honoring Ministries for Giving

At this year's convention business meeting, we honored ministries whose cumulative giving has reached \$100,000 or more. Our records go back only to 1993, so the 39 ministries honored have supported our Association well since then. Many were present to receive their plaques, which will be renewed as new milestones are reached. Afterwards, we hosted a lunch for all honorees present. Our gratitude as an entire Association of ministries was palpable during the business meeting. Thanks to all ministries whose faithful support has made our work possible! We've listed the honorees below.

Unity Church of Mesa
Mesa, AZ

Unity of Phoenix
Phoenix, AZ

Christ Unity Church
Sacramento, CA

Christ Church Unity
San Diego, CA

Unity Way Church
Vista, CA

Unity of Washington, D.C.
Washington, DC

Unity of Delray Beach
Delray Beach, FL

Unity on the Bay
Miami, FL

First Unity Church
St Petersburg, FL



Fox Valley Unity
Batavia, IL

Unity in Chicago
Chicago, IL

Unity Church of Overland Park
Overland Park, KS

Unity of Louisville
Louisville, KY



Unity Christ Church
Gaithersburg, MD

Detroit Unity Temple
Detroit, MI

Unity of Livonia
Livonia, MI

Renaissance Unity
Warren, MI

Unity South Church
Bloomington, MN

Unity Christ Church
Minneapolis, MN

Unity Church of Independence
Independence, MO





- Unity Church of Christ
Teaneck, NJ
- Unity Church of Christianity
Valley Stream, NY
- Unity of Charlotte
Charlotte, NC
- Unity Church of Raleigh
Raleigh, NC
- New Thought Unity Center
Cincinnati, OH
- Unity Church of Christianity
Columbus, OH
- Unity Church of Christianity
Tulsa, OK
- Asociación Unity de Cristianismo Práctico
San Juan, PR
- First Church Unity
Nashville, TN

- Unity Church of Dallas
Dallas, TX
- Unity Church of Christianity
Dallas, TX
- Unity Church of Fort Worth
Fort Worth, TX
- Unity Church of Christianity
Houston, TX
- Unity of Roanoke Valley
Roanoke, VA
- Unity of Fairfax
Oakton, VA



Thanks to all ministries whose faithful support has made our work possible!



- Unity of Bellevue
Bellevue, WA
- Seattle Unity Church
Seattle, WA
- Unity Center of North Spokane
Spokane, WA
- Unity Church of Madison
Madison, WI



Accessing Resources

Have you ever had questions about where to access resources for Sunday talks, special services, classes, prosperity, and any number of other questions that come up in the course of your ministry? Then you'll want to check out the Info Xchange at our website. Click on "Network" on the home page at www.unity.org, and you'll see a link for this page. Here's a sampling of topics, some of which have numerous posts, some waiting for you to send us your info:

- **Ask** your peers about resources, procedures or ideas.
- **Building Campaign Find** Ideas for starting a building campaign, how to find architects, builders and other vendors.
- **Bookstore Ideas** Got a great supplier or ideas on volunteer staffing—post it here.
- **Church Board Ideas & Resources** Let us know what resources your board has used.
- **Circulation Day** Items churches would like to give away, i.e., hymnals, chairs; or one-time sale of an item such as an organ or piano.
- **Class Leader Resources** Class outlines, PowerPoint slides, notes, theses.
- **Green Living** Ideas for environmentally friendly practices in your church, your community, your home.
- **Humanitarian Aid** Organizations engaged in helping others.
- **Links** to affiliated organizations and useful resources.
- **Membership** Resources for current and new members.
- **Music** Suggested songs for various illustrations, how you use music in your services.
- **Outreach & Marketing Church** Growth ideas to help grow your ministry.
- **Peace Resources**
- **Prosperity Resources** Ideas and resources for classes, programs, Sunday talks.
- **Renewal and Self Care** for Unity professionals.
- **Sermon Notes, Special Services & Rituals**
- **Small Group Ministry Resources** Discussion guides.
- **Spiritual Social Action** Outreach or service projects that churches are doing in their community or on a larger scale.
- **Travel Opportunities** Travel sponsored or led by a Unity church or minister for Unity folks.
- **Volunteers & Ministry** Ideas for recruiting and developing volunteers.



We have a start on this page, but we need your input to make it the best it can be! More topics can be added at any time, and we would love to share your info with the rest of the movement. (You'll see parameters on the page as well.)



The Ministry of Presence— *Prayer*

By Lei Lanni Burt, llburt@lightandloveministries.org

On January 8, 1987, I received a phone call at 5:00 a.m. regarding the death of my close friend's thirteen year old son. I was shocked beyond words. I had known this young man since our time together as his first grade Unity Sunday school teacher. More recently, I had lived with the family for about six months while serving as spiritual leader of a Unity church. Within hours I was on the plane to be with the family that I loved so much. Questions raced through my mind. How did he die? What would I say? What could I possibly do for this family at a time like this? Then from deep within came the realization that there was nothing to say or do, that my work was just to be present, remain as God-centered as possible, and hold that inner sacred space of the awareness of God's presence in a situation where God may seem absent. I believe that our willingness to be with people, wherever they are, without fear, judgment or the need to rescue, and with a conscious

focus on God's presence, is a practice of prayer.

Activity of Spirit Carries Us

In a phone conversation with my friend after returning home, she related that she didn't remember anything about the day after finding her son dead, except waking up and seeing me standing beside her bed. She went on to say, "You walked for me, you talked for me, you even had to think for me. You were with me in a way that I couldn't

be for myself." My friend's conversation confirmed my belief that as we keep our hearts and minds open to God, the activity of spirit fills the space and carries us through whatever experience we are going through and has the power to do the same for others we are with.

My friend gave me the gift of experiencing the power in the ministry of Presence which ignited my passion for this deeper way of being. Holding spiritual space, and praying from that space has become a spiritual practice that has evolved my growth and blossomed into sharing this practice with countless others through the Prayer Chaplain Program.

In my many years of ministry and experience with the Prayer Chaplain Program, I have had the sacred opportunity to participate in and observe the transformative power of prayer. So often, prayer chaplains shared that they stepped into the Prayer Chaplain Program to be of sacred service to others and discovered that holding spiritual space and praying with others created spiritual growth and transformation for themselves.

Continued on page 34



Insight Meditation Keeps Us in the *Now*



by Robert J Brumet, M.S., brumetrj@unity-worldhq.org

There are many types of prayer practices, but with all the interest in living in the present moment, insight meditation is particularly timely.

Awareness

Insight meditation has two key elements. The first is that of *awareness*. This means being continuously aware of one's experience in every moment. In other words: we are aware and we know that we are aware.

Each moment we each have a variety of internal experiences—thinking, feeling, sensing, judging, etc. We pay close attention to these experiences. And much of the time we are also engaged in some external activity—walking, talking, eating, driving, etc. We pay attention to this as well.

Usually our awareness is filtered through our thoughts, judgments, and memory associations. Almost everything we see or hear immediately conjures up a whole parade of memories, thoughts, and judgments.

Attention

In this meditation practice, we cultivate something called *bare attention*. This means being aware of *what is*, apart from our thoughts and judgments about what is. We practice distinguishing that which is experienced directly from the meaning that we give to these experiences.

We practice this bare attention as continuously and precisely as we are able. And we are always practicing. We are not setting continuous awareness as a goal to be achieved, but rather an intention to apply in each moment.

Acceptance

The second key element of this practice is that of *acceptance*. This means acceptance of our internal experiences—our thoughts, feelings, sensations, etc. It means opening to and allowing each experience to arise within us without clinging to any of it and without resisting any of it. Practicing acceptance means that we recognize our clinging and resistance and let it go, if we can. And if we can't let it go, then we accept the resistance itself as part of what is here.

All of this is very difficult to immediately implement in the midst of our daily lives. So we begin with the practice of sitting quietly for a period of time. In this quiet time we may focus on one small aspect of our experience—such as a body sensation—and work with awareness and acceptance of that small piece of our reality. If we attend a meditation retreat, where we can engage the practice for several consecutive days, then we gradually deepen and broaden our practice to include other experiences in our lives. Over time we begin to integrate more and more of this practice into our everyday life.

Robert Brumet serves on the faculty of Unity Institute in the area of Spiritual Development and Pastoral Studies.



Calendar of Events

2008



August 10-15

Skills Demonstration Seminar; contact Shirley Kennedy, lkc@unity.org

August 11-15

SEE Classes, Unity in Marin, Novato, CA; call 415.475.5000

August 21-26

Canada Regional Conference, Edmonton, Alberta; contact Sharon Clements, revsharon@rogers.com

August 25-29

Peacemaking Skills Institute; contact Cathy Christy, dmast@unity.org

September 11-21

11 Days of Global Unity; contact info@11daysofunity.org

September 14-20

Sound Connections New Thought Music Conference, Unity Village, MO; contact Richard Mekdeci, music@unity.org

September 22-25

Ministerial Candidate Admissions Interview Week; contact Jo Ann Spruill, registrar@unity.org

September 29-October 3

Eastern Regional Conference, Hershey, PA; contact Richard Bunch, richardbunch@unityrichmond.org

October 6-10

Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders, Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (www.lmpeacecenter.org/MSTI.html), San Diego, CA; contact Blair Tabor, revblair@unitysandiego.org

October 13-16

Southeastern Regional Conference, Stuart, FL; contact Charline Manuel, charmanuel@msn.com

October 13-16

South Central Regional Conference, Unity Village, MO; contact Wendy Burroughs, revwendy@liveyourgreatness.org

November 2-7

Skills Demonstration Seminar; contact Shirley Kennedy, lkc@unity.org

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Prayer

Continued from page 31

Purity of Presence

For me, the steps of this practice: holding spiritual space, listening from the heart, praying from the heart, and holding in confidence what is shared, are not exclusive to prayer chaplains. These steps help me anchor into my Divine essence as I go about my daily life and assist me in “being” present wherever I am and whatever I’m doing.

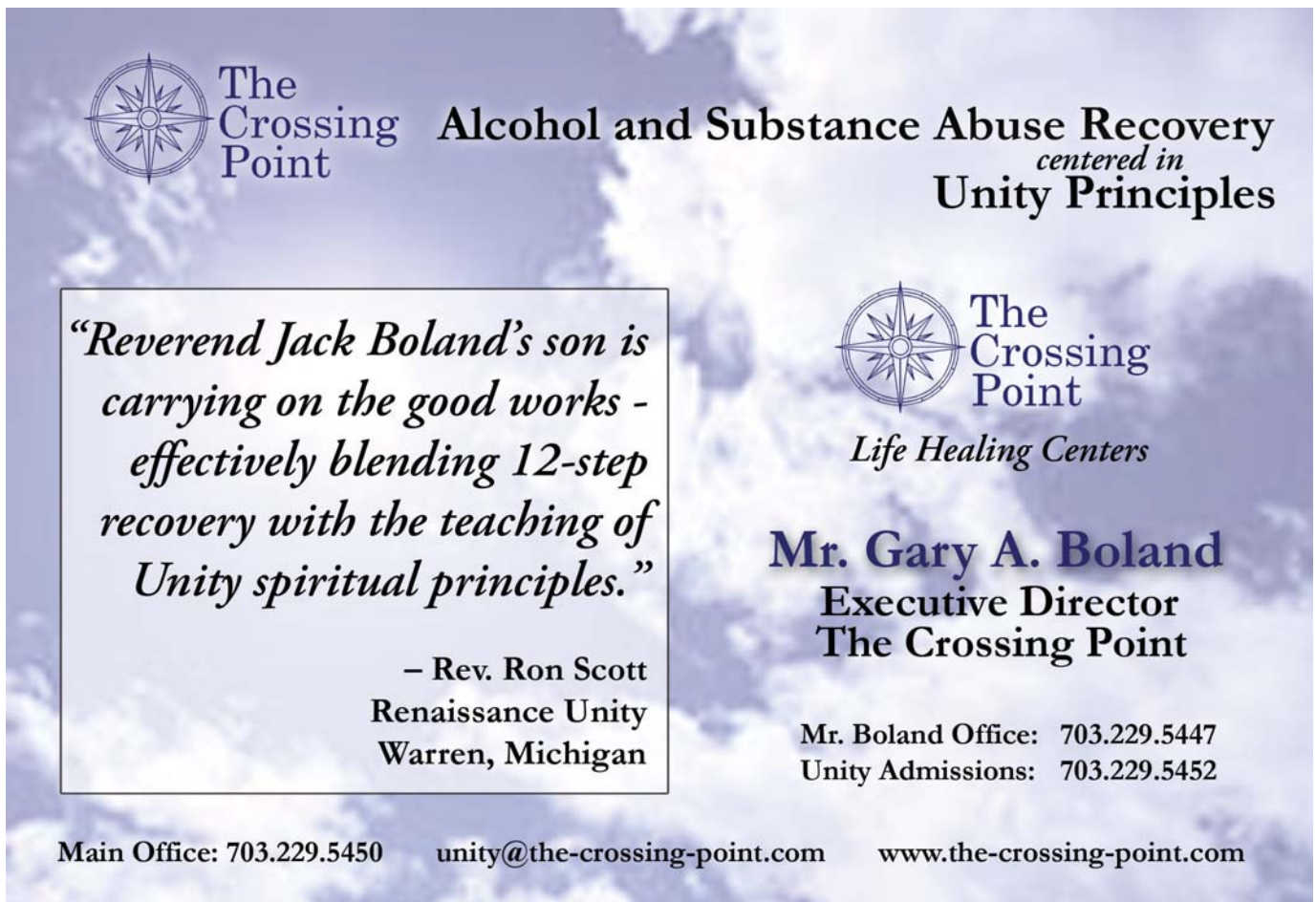
A profound experience I had several months ago happened in a grocery store in front of the produce counter. I was pondering what kind of lettuce to purchase and a woman came up and stood relatively close to me. She began to speak and I knew she was speaking to me. She related that she did not know why she was here in


the store as she had just received the news of a family tragedy. I turned to look at her and she said, “Are you a praying person?” I immediately said, “Yes, I am.” Her response was, “Will you pray with me?” Of course I said yes and we prayed.

Myrtle Fillmore, one of Unity’s cofounders, said: “As you learn to see the fullness of God’s life and love and power and substance in others, you will know that you need not pour out your own for them. You will have the knowledge and the light to call their attention to what they have and to prompt them to use it.” (*Myrtle Fillmore’s Healing Letters*, page 163)

For me, Myrtle describes the purity of prayer, holding that sacred space no matter what appears, trusting the fullness of God’s spirit, and “being” the ministry of presence. I invite you to join me in holding the space of infinite possibilities for every man, woman and child on our planet, one prayer at a time, one heart at a time, one soul at a time—it does make a difference!


Lei Lanni is minister of the alternative ministry Light and Love Ministries in Phoenix, Arizona, and serves on the Association board as the Keeper of the Flame.



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— Rev. Ron Scott
Renaissance Unity
Warren, Michigan

 **The Crossing Point**
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Mr. Gary A. Boland
Executive Director
The Crossing Point

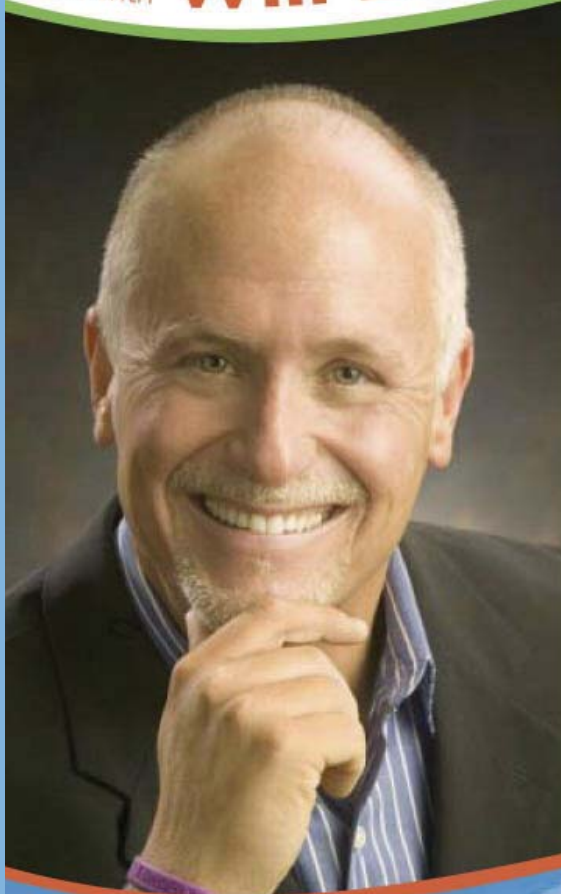
Mr. Boland Office: 703.229.5447
Unity Admissions: 703.229.5452

Main Office: 703.229.5450 unity@the-crossing-point.com www.the-crossing-point.com

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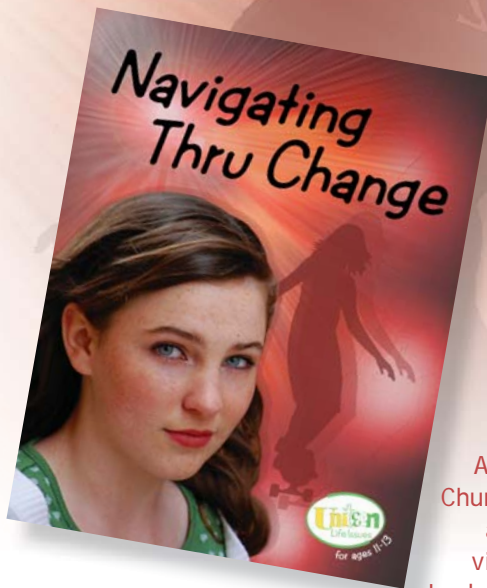
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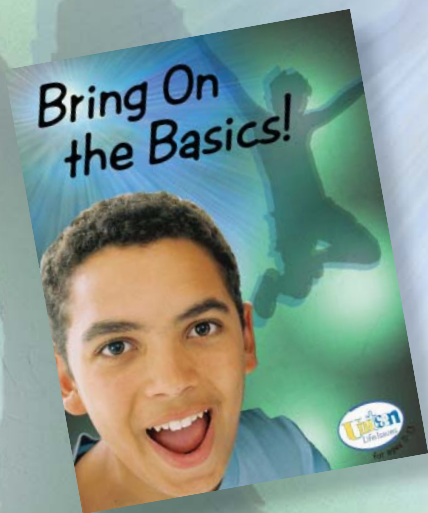


To order, call the Association of Unity Churches International at 816.524.7414 or visit www.unity.org. Look under Shop. Prices do not include shipping.

Bring On the Basics! #6844 \$14.95

- Seven lessons explore how to bring Unity's basic principles into everyday life.
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Get ready for a fun yet spiritually enriching time with: activities, discussions, and media suggestions. All activities are geared to the needs of this age group. All lessons are connected to Unity's basic principles.



Fall 2008: Our next curriculum in this series will focus on spiritual social action. To be notified when new curriculum is available, sign up for *E-link*, our bi-monthly education e-newsletter, at www.Unity.Org/enews.

Check out other books in the Life Issues series, including *Relationships*, *Self-Image*, *Fair Play*, and *Choices and Consequences*. Uniteens have field-tested various books in this series to ensure their relevance—and fun quotient!

Financial Statement

FOR THE PERIOD OF
10/1/2007 TO 5/31/2008

Total Fund

	Actual (YTD)	Budget (YTD)	Annual Budget
Love Offerings (Undesignated)	\$ 1,793,178	\$ 1,861,747	\$ 2,792,621
Love Offerings (Designated)	170,755	37,133	55,700
Grant Incomes	276,945	366,963	550,444
Program Incomes	330,595	614,983	922,474
Total Revenues	\$ 2,571,473	\$ 2,880,826	\$ 4,321,239
Program Expenses	(1,657,219)	(2,091,585)	(3,137,378)
Support Services Expenses	(710,237)	(896,394)	(1,344,590)
Total Expenditures	\$(2,367,455)	\$(2,987,979)	\$(4,481,968)
Increase from Operation	\$ 204,018	\$ (107,153)	\$ (160,729)
Less: Tithe Paid	(167,070)	(186,175)	(279,262)
Increase in Net Assets	\$ 36,948	\$ (293,327)	\$ (439,991)
Capital Expenditure	(33,314)	(81,000)	(121,500)
Depreciation	73,770	73,773	110,659
Templeton Grant	103,420	103,420	103,420
Unused BE Grant FYE 9/2007	223,146	223,146	223,146
Beer Estate to Receive 9/2008		0	200,000
Net Cash Flow	403,970	26,011	75,734
Less: BE Fund for Designated usage (371,607)			
Cash Flow for General Operation	32,363		

Prayer-related Alternative Ministries you may find helpful

Joseph Wolpert Ministries

Prayer ministry. Website www.josephwolpert.org or prayer@josephwolpert.org.

Light & Love Ministries

Dedicated to assisting ministries of any faith in establishing a Prayer Chaplain Program. Website: www.lightandloveministries.org.

Living in Unity

Dedicated to creating opportunities which affirm, celebrate and share with the world our divine integrity regardless of race, creed or sexual orientation through invitational guest lecturing, workshops and classroom study of Truth literatures. Contact: Thomas Schumacher, trs1946@prodigy.net.

New Foundation Unity

A traveling ministry whose purpose is to help Unity ministries reconnect with the roots of Unity through classes and healing. Website www.newfoundationunity.org or reveleanor@gmail.com.

Pastoral Services Unlimited

Provides a variety of pastoral care services. Contact: Mary Rose Shonkwiler, revmaryrose@yahoo.com.

Prayer Frontiers

Through an Internet ministry, workshops and classes, Prayer Frontiers focuses the power of prayer to heal, prosper and transform lives. Website www.prayerfrontiers.com.

Sacred Journeys

Teaches Unity principles through innovative workshops, retreats, consultation and writing. Contact Kathy McCall at Kalm12@aol.com.

Unity in Action

Dedicated to teaching and demonstrating that knowing Truth is not enough, we have to live it. Contact Margie Brach at mbrach@kc.rr.com.

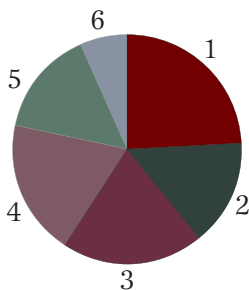
Unity Life Coaching and Sacred Gatherings, Inc.

Offers minister-officiant services (weddings, etc.) locally, and individual/group spiritual life coaching, sacred gatherings, and teleclasses (locally and internationally). Websites www.unitylifecoaching.org and www.distinctiveweddingceremonies.org.

Unity Renewal Ministries

Alternative prayer ministry, serving those who serve with spiritual, self-care support, especially ministers and other spiritual leaders. Website www.unityrenewalministries.org

WHERE DOES OUR MONEY GO?



- 1) Education, Leadership & Ministry Development
- 2) Minister & Ministry
- 3) Communications
- 4) Administration & Building
- 5) Executive Office
- 6) Tithe

DOES OUR ASSOCIATION TITHE?

10/1/2007 to 5/31/2008

Complaint-Free World	\$13,866.00
Unity work in South Africa	5,474.00
<i>The Secret</i>	3,974.00
Unity Institute	25,207.00
Silent Unity	15,287.00
Unity	9,892.00
Spiritual Life Center (Unity)	25,000.00
International New Thought Alliance	17,288.00
Association for Global New Thought	25,735.00
Academy for Peace of Costa Rica	7,949.00
St. Luke's South Hospital	1,500.00
The I Am Foundation	15,898.00
Total	\$167,070.00

Resources You Can Use

LABYRINTHINFO

www.labyrinthociety.org

The Labyrinth Society website has a world-wide labyrinth locator. Also covered are history, different designs, events, online market, membership, etc.

Easy directions for drawing a 7-circuit labyrinth:

www.mymaze.de/home_e.htm

Under “2 Interpretationes,” choose “how to make one in 5 and 9 steps.”

An informational flyer on walking the wheelchair-accessible labyrinth at Unity Village is available from Unity Customer Service, 1.800.669.0282. *Walking a Sacred Path : How to Walk the Unity Village Labyrinth* is also available at the bookstore and the visitor’s center.

The Labyrinth Company **www.labyrinthcompany.com**

A labyrinth locator site:

<http://wwll.veriditas.labyrinthociety.org/>

The “wwll” at the beginning stands for “world-wide labyrinth locator.” It seems to work well. (There are nine labyrinths within 25 miles of Kansas City and Unity’s is on the list.) It gives addresses, links to maps, lists public or private, hours, construction material, etc.



Adventures in Prayer: Praying Your Way to a God You Can Trust by Sharon Connors
Adventures in Prayer addresses the most frequently asked questions about prayer, and combines inspiring responses with real life examples and elegantly meaningful practices. There are step-by-step strategies to building a trusting relationship with God that really works.



Praying Through a Storm: How Prayer Works; How To Make It Work for You by Sheila Gautreaux-Lee, Authorhouse, 2003; ISBN-13: 9781410792297.



www.gratefulness.org

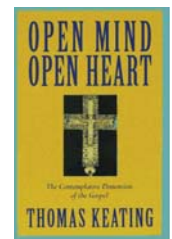
A Network for Grateful Living (ANG*L) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to gratefulness, a universal principle that serves as the core inspiration for personal growth, cross-cultural understanding, interfaith dialogue, intergenerational respect, and ecological sustainability.



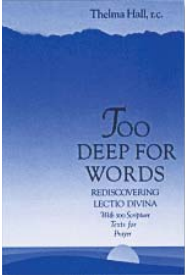
Psalms for Praying, by Nan C. Merrill, is a reworking of the Psalms with a positive twist, Continuum International Publishing Group; 10 Anniv. edition, ©2006



Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening, by Cynthia Bourgeault, Cowley Publications, ©2004



Open Mind, Open Heart: The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel, by Thomas Keating, Continuum International Publishing Group; 20 Anniv. edition, ©2006



Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina, by Thelma Hall, Paulist Press, ©1988

www.centeringprayer.com, the website for Contemplative Outreach, and organization that promotes the practice of centering prayer and contemplation.

www.spiritualityandpractice.com

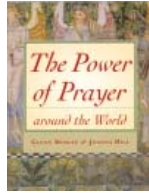


has classes and other online courses related to spiritual practices.

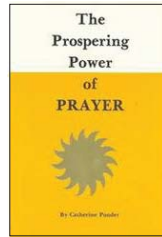
Prayer: The Master Key, by James Dillet Freeman, ©1968, Doubleday & Co. Inc.

Pray Up Your Life, Charlene Manuel, by Crystal Heart Press, Inc.

Teach Us to Pray, by Charles and Cora Fillmore



The Power of Prayer Around the World, by Glenn Mosley and Joanna Hill, Templeton Foundation Press



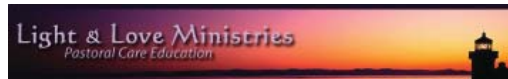
The Prospering Power of Prayer, by Catherine Ponder, ©1983



www.freeandunlimited.com, Janet and Wayne Manning, Internet prayer ministry



To Bless the Space Between Us, by John O'Donohue. A deeply insightful look into the significance of blessing as a source of strength and as a way of life.



www.lightandloveministries.org, Lei Lanni Burt prayer chaplain ministries

For personal and ministerial use
by the Reverend Sandra Rae Hymel, Unity minister

One Thought Can Change Your Life!
(Inspirational Words for Daily Living)

Based on The Twelve Powers of Man by Charles Fillmore.
Retail: \$24.95



God is NOT in the Bible! (A Practical Guide for God's "Choosing" People)

This book assists you in making reflective choices.
Retail: \$17.95

Out of the Darkness, Into the Light

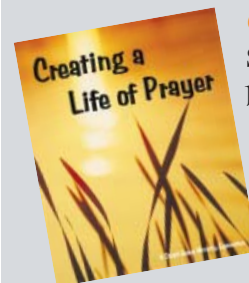
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Association Resource



Creating a Life of Prayer—
Small Group Ministry
booklet.

To order Association materials,
go to www.unity.org or call
816.524.7414.



Spirit Rising

2009 Unity People's Convention
DoubleTree Hotel, Overland Park, KS
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For more information, see www.unity.org/convention



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