# Wings



FIRST UNITY CHURCH - Serving the spiritual needs of the St. Louis community for over ninety years.

The Newsletter of First Unity Church Of Saint Louis

# December 2014

- Inspiration
- Information
- Illumination

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# **Prayer for Protection**

By James Dillet Freeman

The light of God surrounds us; The love of God enfolds us; The power of God protects us; The presence of God watches over us; Wherever we are, God is!

The "Prayer for Protection" is known the world over, and Unity is often asked how it came into existence. James Dillet Freeman explained once in his *Unity*Magazine column, Life Is a Wonder:

Let me tell you how I wrote Unity's "Prayer for Protection."

When World War II was raging in Europe, we received many letters and phone calls from people caught in the conflict, but for a long time we did not have a prayer for protection that we were all satisfied with. This is how one came.

Silent Unity has always written a special Christmas Prayer Service just for Silent Unity workers. And in 1940 I was asked to prepare this service. We had never before needed a prayer for protection, but in 1940 we needed one, so I wrote one to go with the Christmas service. What I wrote was a little four-line yerse:

"The light of Christ directs me; The love of Christ enfolds me; The power of Christ protects me; The presence of Christ upholds me."

I had hardly finished this Christmas service before Silent Unity came to me again and asked me to write a protection pamphlet that we could send to people, so I did. It was called *His Protecting Spirit*. They told me they wanted affirmative prayers for protection on the back page. Among these was the verse from the 23rd Psalm: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me" (Ps. 23:4 KJV).

One of the young women who worked in Silent Unity was reading my manuscript as I wrote it, and as she finished it, she came up to me and said: "Jim, if I were a woman in England and they were dropping bombs on my roof, or if I were a soldier and someone was pointing a loaded gun at me, I wouldn't want to feel like I was walking through the valley of the shadow of death. Can't you do better than that?"

I thought, you want me to do better than the 23rd Psalm? You have to be out of your mind. But rolling around in the back of my mind was the little verse I had written as a prayer for protection at Christmas. I had written it just for Silent Unity, but now it came rolling up to the front of my mind and demanded that I pay attention to it. It enticed me to see what I could make of it.

-Continued on Page Six



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For our **Candle Lighting Service** this year our choir is teaming up with the older Sunday school children again. The

children add so much energy and light to the music when they sing. If your child is singing in this special service on December 21st, please plan to bring them to a short rehearsal on Saturday morning, December 20th, at 9am. This will give them a chance to run through the song with the choir a couple of times. Thank you so much for supporting and encouraging your child(ren) to participate in this very joyful time.

Following the Candle Lighting Service, join us for a **Pot Luck Christmas Party** to celebrate Jesus' birth and the birthdays of all our Unity friends who were born this month.

Prepare for the New Year right at our annual Unity **Burning Bowl Service** on Sunday, January 4<sup>th.</sup>



## **Poinsettias**

In keeping with our First Unity tradition, poinsettias will be available for

purchase and dedication again this Christmas. The plants are \$8.00. Please get your orders in by Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>.

This month the Ladies' Night
Out Group will meet on Dec.

15<sup>th</sup> at Mary Tumminello's
home at 5111 Kennerly Pine
Dt. Bring a white elephant gift
to exchange and a side dish. For more
information call Mary Tumminello – Home:
314-843-1807 Cell: 314-814-4530.



**December 9:** Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker by Jennifer Chiavarini at Bread Company from 2 – 4 p.m. **January 13:** The Aviator's Wife by

Melanie Benjamin

# Laughter Yoga with Jodi

Simple stretching, breathing and guided meditation! Join in for a positive spiritual experience on Thursdays, 4:00 - 5:00 PM, in Fellowship Hall.



# **Holiday Food Drive**

Feed My People has asked for some extra support for the next couple of months. Your generous gifts of food and other supplies

will assure a merry Christmas for so many families who wouldn't have so much to be thankful for without your gifts. So when you are doing your holiday shopping, consider picking up an extra item or two for the collection barrels that will be in our lobby. Your donations are always greatly appreciated.

www.feed-my-people.org

# Route 66 Jazz Orchestra Holiday Concert December 10<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm

This very talented group of professional musicians

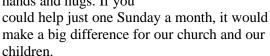


will be performing along with vocalists Valerie Tichacek, Ron Wilkenson, and our very own Dean Christopher. Tickets at the door: \$10 adults \$5 Children. You won't want to miss it!

# Our Youth Education

department is growing. We sure could use extra

hands and hugs. If you



### **December Affirmations**

**Inner Peace:** The peaceful presence of God is within me.

**Guidance**: Spirit is my compass on each step of my journey.

**Healing:** Wholeness is my divine birthright. **Prosperity:** I give from my heart, and I am richly blessed!

**World Peace:** I honor all expressions of

God.



# Christmas traditions around the globe

Although Americans celebrate the holiday with candlelight services, piles of gifts, large feasts, lights and trees, people in other countries mark Jesus' birth in many interesting ways:

- Nine days before Christmas in Mexico, Las Posadas processions reenact Joseph and Mary's search for a place to stay in Bethlehem.
- Instead of decorating trees, Italians place fruit on small wooden pyramids.
- Ukrainian Christmas trees often feature an artificial spider and web. According to a folk tale, a poor woman who couldn't afford decorations awoke one Christmas morning to find that spiders had "trimmed" her children's trees with delicate webs
- On Christmas Eve, the streets of Caracas, Venezuela, are blocked off so people can roller-skate to church.
- In Brazil, the gift-bringer is known as Papai Noel (Father Noel), who lives in Greenland, according to legend. When he arrives in Brazil, he wears silk clothing because of the summer heat.
- It's considered bad etiquette to send red Christmas cards in Japan because funeral notices are customarily printed in red.

# **Upside Down?**

Even amid increased secularization, God makes the core Christmas message

Christmas message known. Take, for example, the story of a "winter pageant" a mother attended at her son's grade school. Songs of reindeer, snow and Santa included one titled "Christmas Love," in which the youngest performers held up letters as the song progressed: "C," "H," etc.

When a little girl unknowingly held her "M" upside down, the older kids snickered and the adult audience smiled acceptingly. But as the song drew to a close and all the letters were revealed, surprised recognition struck the Christians in the room.

"CHRISTWAS LOVE," read the string of student-borne letters. God's truth had penetrated the human clutter and confusion around Christmas — as it has power to do throughout our lives: "Christ was love." And of course, he still is.

## Christ in You

Angelus Silesius (aka Johann Scheffler), born in Germany in the 17th century, was a physician, priest, hymn writer and poet. He knew Christ as far more than a historical figure. Silesius allowed Christ to dwell in his heart and to guide his life as completely as possible. He wrote this poem about allowing Christ to be born and live in each of us.

Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,

If he's not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn.

The cross on Golgotha will never save thy soul;

The cross in thine own heart alone can make thee whole.

# **Christmas Eve Prayer**

Give us, O God, the vision which can see your love in the world in spite of human failure.

Give us the faith to trust your goodness in spite of our ignorance and weakness.

Give us the knowledge that we may continue to pray with understanding hearts.

And show us what each one of us can do to set forward the coming of the day of universal peace.

—Frank Borman, Apollo 8 commander

# "Quotable Quotes"

Maybe Christmas, [the Grinch] thought, doesn't come from a store.

—Dr. Seuss

I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.

Charles Dickens



I heard the bells on Christmas Day Their old, familiar carols play, And wild and sweet The words repeat

Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful.

Norman Vincent Peale

He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree.

Roy L. Smith

Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love

Hamilton Wright Mabie

Christmas, my child, is love in action.

Dale Evans Rogers

Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won't make it 'white'.

Bing Crosby

Christmas, children, is not a date. It is a state of mind.

— Mary Ellen Chase

We find a delight in the beauty and happiness of children that makes the heart too big for the body.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Peace on earth will come to stay, when we live Christmas every day.

—Helen Steiner Rice

# **God Is the Answer**

By Dana Gatlin

# **Buried Talents, Continued**

Let us consider what God has given you, undisputedly. God has given you life, a something so tremendous, potent, and marvelous that no scientist has ever been learned enough to analyze it, to say what it is composed of, or whence it has derived its sustaining energy or initial spark. God has given you a body machine in which to house and employ this life force, a mechanism so complex yet so accurately perfect in its intricate workings that the most ingenious human mind could not duplicate it. He has given you a world to reside in and explore, a place so filled and crammed with multivaried opportunities and possibilities that all the human chronicles, records, books, and libraries known to earth are not adequate to describe it. Most important of all, most amazing and thrilling gift of all, He has given you a mind! A mind—just how would you describe this gift? It is by reason of and through the power of your mind that you know you live at all. It is through your mind, the thoughts you think with it, and the impressions you store in it that you build and are conscious of living whatever may be your experience of life. In short, your life becomes just what your mind makes it for you and just what it tells you life is.

God has given us the power to think. One of my own greatest thrills came when it dawned on me for the first time what this actually means. I had pondered the glory and majesty of God, speculated and yearned and prayed to become identified with the wonder-working God power, and then it suddenly came to me—why, I had it! The power to believe! to choose my beliefs! This power of mental choice, of absolute freedom, and of pure, unswerving conviction was my point of union with my almighty

Creator; my own, inalienable identification with God power! With this power I could create even as God creates. With it I could mold and form my every thought, endeavor, and purpose as an individual; could mold and form my aspirations and my experiences of life, my lot, my destiny! I had this power! Every moment of every day I had it! Through this power of mental choice, belief, and pure conviction I was one with the very power of God! Words are inadequate to describe the thrill of my realization. For the first time I beheld my own thought as something not set and static, but something alive—that brings forth fruit!

As I humbly gave thanks to the Father for this tremendous discovery, there came over me a deepening sense of my personal responsibility. I could use this living potency of my own thought, my chosen mental belief to improve every phase of my human lot, to the glory of the All-Creator, or I could choose not to use it thus. In the latter case, what? The inner meaning of Jesus' parable then disclosed itself with such manifold angles as to include the sum total of human existence. For the first time I comprehended God's law of increase (and conversely, "decrease"), and I saw it was not an unjust or ungenerous law, but the only method by which God's earthly children you, I, and every one of us-might in themselves earn the treasures that are stored in "good measure."

Any element of God presence, God power, God law becomes true for you according to the strength of your conviction. Any element of God principle works for you according to your active use of it, in proportion to your co-operation. "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine." Potentially, in Spirit and in Truth, yes! But I definitely have my own part to perform!

Intelligence increases with application and use. Athletes develop their muscles by exercise. It is by practice that any artist or artisan becomes perfect. It is by discovering and exercising his God-given courage, be the first-found germ of it ever so weazened and small, that the coward finds himself increasing in fearlessness. By practice the baby learns to walk, and it is by practice that spiritual infants (often grown to full man and woman size) develop their long-hidden and often unsuspected powers. One thing is sure. You'll never get any reward from God, any increase of good, for a talent that He has given you but that you have *buried*.

Every time you say, "I am sick," what are you doing? When you complain, "I am tired," you are denying and burying the elixir of life and joy that is your free gift from the Creator. When you say, "I'm afraid" or "I can't," you are burying deeper the vital germ of your fearlessness, vour "several ability." On the other hand, every time you say, "I am not going to be sick" or "Spirit doesn't have to be sick" or "I am going to get well" or "Praise God, I'm healed with the wholeness of God!" right then you have dug out and brought forth one of your most precious hidden gifts, and nothing is surer than that you will get your "increase." For nothing is surer than the action of God, who in the very life currents of your body, bestows the reward.

A grievously sick woman for a long time had heard used in her family the phrase "since Mary lost her health." She began studying Truth, and one day this phrase struck her ears sharply and something within her cried. "No, you've found your health!" From that day her talent for health grew. Another woman, the victim of many distressing circumstances, in her heart kept deploring the fact that she was unable to "get back to work." One day she too had a sudden revelation. "No!" something in her protested. "You're going forward to work!" And in her case that is what happened. In response to her new vision of ever-widening

opportunities work opened before her, stimulating and satisfying.

A man "down on his luck" was tempted desperately to an act compromising his personal integrity. For years he hadn't even thought of God, but he spent anguished hours on his knees praying for strength greater than his own. Not only did strength come to him, saving him from a perilous situation, but his whole nature and purpose in life was changed. Incidentally he entered upon a period of greater prosperity, happiness, security, and wellbeing than he had ever previously experienced. It was his Lord saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

What talent are you carrying hidden, unused? Is it a talent for vitality, for energy? A talent for love, for patience, for trust, for gratitude? A talent for industry, for diligence, for co-operation? For happiness? Are you strong enough in your innate happiness to give expression to this talent even when outer things go against you, or when others tell you their woes? How great is your talent for resolution and staying power?

No thrill is comparable to your realization of increased strength through the inner workings of the Father's law, the realization that in yourself you have proved it! Unforgettable to me is the moment when I first learned I could forgive! Humanly this often seems difficult, impossible, but it can be done! Another great moment was when I learned I could bless—not merely with the phrased words, the desire, but with the spontaneous, glad conviction of God omnipresence—I had the power to bless! Incidentally this realization came after I had discovered the power to forgive, and after I had discovered the power to trust and to love. I honestly believe that if we spent more time endeavoring to comprehend God's integral idea of love, sincerely trying to develop this idea in our own heart and using it in our daily practices, we should find most of our

"problems" automatically solving themselves.

I have the power to believe in God, to believe in good! I have a "talent" for courage, for strength, for steadfastness, for renewal, for health. I have a "talent" for forgiveness, for faith, for confidence, for cooperation, for harmony, for love. I have a "talent" for peace, for tolerance, for poise. I have a "talent" for willingness, for service, for enthusiasm, for zest. I have a "talent" for industry, for thoroughness, for excellence, for fidelity, for success.

I have the power to see beauty; to be true to my vision, to my faith; to believe that I am guided, protected, insured, that I possess a strength greater than any I have previously shown. I have the power to express this in myself, relying ever upon my Creator. As Jesus called to the latent God life in His dead friend Lazarus. "Come forth," even so I can call to the buried God ideas in me, "Come forth!" And as these God elements within me are quickened and grow, I can give of my new-found reliance, love, and courage to strengthen and encourage others. I have the power to overcome—all my previous resistances, frictions, angers, hesitations, doubts, dreads, all my shirkings and temptations and shortcomings and imperfections and weaknesses. This was Jesus' greatest message to mankind. Jesus never made any promise of a reward to come through death; all His promises are to the living over-comer! And the accolade that accompanies each realization of new conviction, new purpose, new confidence, new strength is God's saying, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

In Ellen Glasgow's novel "Vein of Iron" a point is made of the human tendency to do any job only for the material reward, or to do it indifferently or just well enough to "get by," without any zest for sheer excellence of performance or for doing it as well as it can be done. The sum of Jesus' teaching and of His record is a passion for human

excellence in order that man may thus glorify the Father: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine." Jesus gave assurance that our loving Father has illimitably provided for us and never withholds the lawful "increase." Protection, security, guidance, happiness, health, supply, success—the living germ of every "good gift and every perfect gift" He has put in each soul's trust. Jesus explained the undeviating laws by which God works in us as we work with Him. In every detail that pertained to daily living Jesus was about His "Father's business." Life, every aspect of it, is the "Father's business"; but it is according to our own dutiful "busyness" that we receive, develop, and grow. Life in essence is divine activity. Inactivity is stagnation, stupor, withering, even death. From him that hath not even that which he hath shall be taken away.

"I came that they may have life, and may have *it* abundantly," said Jesus; but He definitely declared that we must use our good gifts. By His own life He exampled such use: Jesus believed, He knew, He served, He loved, He worked, He expected, He enjoyed, He prospered—Jesus *lived* His sublime doctrine to glorify the Father.

"It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

"Father, I am here before Thee, ready to do Thy will. Fill me, use me, guide me, work through me in Thine own way, to Thy glory."

"I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."

"God is working in me mightily to will and to do that which He would have me do. 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work.""

"Thou art my beloved Son: in thee I am well pleased."



# From Page One:

First I took the rhymes from it. I felt it would be more universally received if it was not a rhyme. Then I changed Christ to God. It had been Christ because it was a Christmas prayer, but I felt if we were going to send it around the world, God might be more acceptable to more people. So the little prayer became: "The light of God surrounds me, The love of God enfolds me, The power of God protects me, The presence of God watches over me."

That is the way we first printed it. Then a line came to me that I felt would make the prayer even more powerful. The line was:

"Wherever I am, God is."

I added it as the fifth line. The "Prayer for Protection" first appeared as a four-lined prayer in 1941, but when we reprinted it in 1943, it appeared in the form it has had ever since.

"The light of God surrounds me; The love of God enfolds me; The power of God protects me; The presence of God watches over me. Wherever I am, God is!"

The "Prayer for Protection" came through change after change, not at all like "I Am There," when I felt that God spoke those words to me. But what is the word of God? It is possible that no prayer Unity has ever printed has reached so many people as the "Prayer for Protection," for not only has Unity printed it over and over, but almost every Unity church uses it to conclude its services. Like "I Am There," it was carried to the moon. On the very first flight to the moon, on Apollo 11, astronaut Col. James Aldrin carried Unity's "Prayer for Protection" with him. He did not know me or Unity.

It has appeared in hundreds of different publications that have no connection with Unity, and millions of people have carried it around on cards that fit into their pocketbooks, pockets, and billfolds. It has been translated into many languages. Sometimes it appears with me as the author. Often no author is given. Sometimes other people are named as the author.

It has been changed and changed again before it reached the form that it now has that best meets people's needs. This prayer is the product of much thought and concentration and of a mind that was willing to stay open to receive divine inspiration.

I think Unity's "Prayer for Protection" is as much God's word as "I Am There" is. Sometimes God speaks to us when we don't even know it is God. I think God has many ways of speaking to us and not only in words that we hear with our ears. I think God speaks to our hearts and minds, and sometimes God's message has nothing to do with words. God is love and intelligence and life. More than anything we say God is, or even imagine God is, God is the one universal Presence and Power and is seeking to express Truth and beauty and good through all of us and for all of us.



James Dillet Freeman (1912-2003) was an internationally acclaimed poet, author, and lecturer. A Unity minister, he served as director of Unity's ministerial program—today's Unity Institute and Seminary, as well as director of Silent Unity.

The "Prayer for Protection" is one of two Freeman poems carried to the moon by Apollo astronauts. In 1969, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin carried a copy with him on the first manned moon landing. In 1971, a microfilm copy of Freeman's poem, "I Am There," was left on the moon by Apollo XV astronaut James B. Irwin.

# **Christmas Prayer**

Loving Father, help us to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift, and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen!

-Robert Louis Stevenson

# The blessedness of receiving

St. Paul reminded some visiting friends from Ephesus that Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35, NRSV). Apparently, Jesus did not say that receiving was not blessed. He just said the greater blessing comes from giving. Jesus was one who both gave and received.

Jesus was often the recipient of gifts, invitations and acts of kindness. He enjoyed attending weddings, being an overnight guest in someone's home or being a guest for a meal. He allowed Mary to anoint his feet with costly perfume, and did not object when she wiped his feet with her hair (John 12:2-3, NRSV). He even asked for and received a drink of water from the Samaritan woman, although Jews and Samaritans usually had nothing to do with one another (John 4:7, NRSV).

The bottom line is this: Be a giver, but also be a grateful and happy receiver. Giving and receiving both bring blessings. We have a good example of both in the One whom we follow and serve.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	I Feed My People Food Drive Continuing This Month	2	3 AA Men's Group 10AM CA 7PM	4 Yoga Class 4-5 PM	5	<b>6</b> Choir Rehearsal 9AM Bell Choir 10:30AM
7 Sunday Services 10:30 AM Youth Ed 10:30 AM	8	9 Book Club Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker by Jennifer Chiavarini at Bread Company 2-4 PM	10 AA Men's Group 10AM Rt. 66 Jazz Holiday Concert 7:30PM Tickets adults \$10 & children \$5 CA 7PM	11 Yoga Class 4-5 PM	12	13 Choir Rehearsal 9AM Bell Choir 10:30AM
I 4 Sunday Services 10:30 AM Youth Ed 10:30 AM	Ladies Night Out At Mary Tumminello's home at 5111 Kennerly Pine Ct Bring white elephant gift to exchange and a side dish.	16	17 AA Men's Group 10AM  CA 7PM	18 Yoga Class 4-5 PM	19	20 Choir Rehearsal 9AM Bell Choir 10:30AM
21 Candlelighting Service 10:30 AM Youth Ed 10:30 AM Potluck Party after service	22	23	24 AA Men's Group 10AM  CA 7PM	25	26	27
28 Sunday Services 10:30 AM Youth Ed 10:30 AM	29	30	3 I AA Men's Group 10AM  CA 7PM			

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# The light side — A little holy humor

# Getting the Name Right

A Sunday school teacher was talking about some of God's creatures. She described a furry little animal who climbed trees, built nests in them, loved nuts and buried acorns. "What animal am I talking about?" she asked.

One little boy, very mindful of where he was, spoke up and said, "It sounds like a squirrel, but I know the right answer is Jesus."

Although very young, the boy had already figured out that "Jesus" is the right answer to many questions.

## **Someone Took Jesus**

A couple of days after Christmas, the Nativity scene was still up in the chancel of a San Francisco church. Walking by it, the pastor noticed that the baby Jesus was missing from the manger.

Shortly afterward, as the pastor walked outside the church, he saw a small boy pulling a new wagon. In the wagon bed was a doll that looked

very much like the missing baby Jesus.

The pastor greeted the boy and asked him about the doll.

"I got it in the church," the boy replied.

"Why did you take it from the church?"

"Well," the boy answered. "I prayed for a new wagon and told the Lord Jesus that if I got one, I would give him a ride. I got the wagon, took him for a ride and now I'm bringing him back to the church."

# The Same Old Song

Meeting a parishioner on the street, a pastor asked why he had not seen the fellow at worship very often. "Well," the man complained, "it seems like every time I go to church you sing the same old hymns."

"Oh," replied the preacher. "What hymns are those?"

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" and "O Little Town of Bethlehem."