

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
2015

- ❖ *Inspiration*
- ❖ *Information*
- ❖ *Illumination*

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God Is the Answer
Dana Gatlin

Christmas

By James Dillet Freeman

I love Christmas. Many people rail at it as too commercial. Christmas is as worldly as it is holy; it mixes the secular and the religious so that we cannot ell them apart. But isn't that the way we would like things to be? Wouldn't it be a better world if things were like that all year long? If every day had something of religion in it, and religion had something of every day? If we took the gaily wrapped gifts, the cards, the decorations in the stores and streets, Christmas trees and Santa out of Christmas, as some people would like to do, it would no longer be Christmas. It might be wholly holy, but it would also be very dull.

There are even those who would even take the wonder out of the wonder-tale itself, if they could. They dissect the language of the Bible to show that the writers did not really mean to say that Mary was a virgin; she was merely a maiden. And every year a scientist or two proves that the Star was not an unexplainable glow in the sky, but a conjunction of planets, or a nova recorded by Chinese astronomers, or something equally dull and reasonable.

I say leave Christmas alone. Christmas is a wonder and a magic, meant to cheer the heart, not argue with the mind. And that is what it ought to be.

So you eat too much, drink too much, spend too much—and afterward wish you hadn't.

Perhaps on occasion the human spirit needs to burst beyond its decorous and sensible bounds, and what better moment can it pick than this, when winter days are at their shortest and grayest and the nights are chilly and long?



Christmas sends Santa—the glorious grandfather of us all—out across the empty skies to bring gifts to every child in the world. There has to be something more than self-concern in the human heart to make us dream up such a warm and selfless old fellow! There he stands before us—on street corners, in shopping centers, in stores—and we have at least to stop and consider, no matter how miserly we may be, the holy duty and the human joy of giving!

Christmas is a time of feasting, and if we can, we feast; but also Christmas makes us aware that there are hungry and shelter less and lonely people in the world. It prompts us to reach at least into our pockets, if not into our hearts, to share our feast with them...

--Continued on Page Six



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Join us on **December 20th** for our annual **Christmas Candle Lighting Service.** Following the Candle Lighting Service, stay for a **Pot Luck Dinner and Christmas Party.**

This month the **Ladies' Night Out Group** will be a Christmas Party on December 21 at Celie Tatom's house at 5:30. For more information call Mary Tumminello Home: 314-843-1807 Cell: 314-814-4530.



 **December 8: Boys in the Boat** by Daniel James Brown
January 12: The Children's Act by Ian Ewan

February 9: Myrtle Fillmore's Healing Letters compiled by Frances W. Foulks
(Anyone who wants to attend the meetings are welcome, male or female, whether they have read the book or not.)



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 14th.

Feed My People



In this Christmas season your donations to Feed My People are especially appreciated. You can be Santa to make Christmas a little happier for individuals and families this year.

www.feed-my-people.org

Our **Youth Education** department is growing. We sure could use extra hands and hugs. If you could help just one Sunday a month, it would make a big difference for our church and our children.



Stop by Our **Lending Library** and check out an inspirational title from among a wide selection of books written by some of Unity's greatest authors.



Route 66 Jazz Orchestra Holiday Concert and Chili Dinner December 2nd



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: \$15 adults \$7.50 Children. You won't want to miss it!

Dinner at 6:00
Concert at 7:30



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

We give thanks for the wonderful music that blesses our services



here at First Unity, and we look forward with



anticipation to the special joy our choirs and musicians always bring during the holiday.

Special Dates

- Second Sunday of Advent, *December 6*
- Third Sunday of Advent, *December 13*
- Fourth Sunday of Advent, *December 20*
- First Day of winter, *December 21*
- Christmas Eve, *December 24*
- Christmas Day, *December 25*
- New Year's Eve *December 31*

December Affirmations



Inner Peace: Peace within me; peace around me.

Guidance: The Christ Light illumines my way.

Healing: I place my faith in the healing power of God within.

Prosperity: I joyfully give, and I joyfully receive.

World Peace: I share my peace with the world.



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.

Our hearts' desire

As his parents labored on a foreign mission field, their young son attended school in America. When Christmas Day came, the school's headmaster tried to cheer up the boy. The headmaster asked what he most wanted for Christmas.

For the boy, the answer came easily. He pointed to a framed picture of his father and said, "I would like most of all for my father to step out of that frame."

The deepest meaning of Christmas is about God's stepping out of the "frame" of the universe, out of heaven, and revealing the greatest love ever seen among men.

John's account of this Good News sums it up: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, NRSV).

Family Photo

An 8-year-old girl was showing her 4-year-old sister some pictures from her Bible. The younger sister was fascinated by a picture of Mary and baby Jesus. After examining it intently, she asked, "But where's Joseph?"

The older sister thought for a

moment and replied, "He's taking the picture."

Evergreen tree

These trees, which keep their green leaves year-round, are symbolic of Christmas, eternal life and God's everlasting love. In the Bible, evergreen trees are called the "cedars of Lebanon," suggesting growth (Psalm 92:12), height (Amos 2:9), fragrance (Hosea 14:6) and steadfast faith.



God with Us

Faith isn't about knowing all of the right stuff or obeying a list of rules. It's something more, something more costly because it involves being present and making a sacrifice.

Perhaps that's why Jesus is sometimes called Immanuel — "God with us." I think that's what God had in mind, for Jesus to be present, to just be with us. It's also what he has in mind for us when it comes to other people. -Bob Goff, *Love Does*

Angels among Us

When God wants to speak and deal with us," said Martin Luther, "he does not avail himself of an angel but of parents, or the pastor, or of our neighbor." Never underestimate how powerfully God can use you in the life of a child, a church member, a friend or a stranger.

The Hebrew word for *angel* also means "messenger." *You* may be specially chosen to deliver to someone the message of God's love or guidance. Listen intently for what God would have you share with others, then do so faithfully and caringly.



"Quotable

Quotes"

Peace on earth will come to stay,
when we live Christmas every day.
-Helen Steiner Rice

At Bethlehem, God demonstrated
that to love is to give.

One can give without loving, but one
cannot love without giving.
-Amy Carmichael

Strive to be first: first to nod, first to
smile, first to compliment and first to
forgive.
-Anonymous

You can tell a lot about a person by
the way he or she handles these three
things: a rainy day, lost luggage and
tangled Christmas tree lights.
-Maya Angelou

"You are what you eat" applies not
only to the physical world but also to
the spiritual. There is no way to take
in junk without becoming junky.
-Anonymous

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

How many observe Christ's
birthday! How few, his precepts! O!
'tis easier to keep holidays than
commandments.
-Benjamin Franklin

Expectancy is the atmosphere for
miracles.
-Edwin Louis Cole

Christmas is not as much about
opening our presents as opening our
hearts.
-Janice Maeditere

When you are going through hell,
don't stop to take pictures. Keep
moving.
—Wally Amos

Spiritual Self-Counseling

By Randolph Schmelig

TRUE LEARNING IS not just a matter of input; it is also a matter of output. It is not a process of assimilating facts, but of realizing and expressing that which is already within us. The source of all that we seek is within each of us, ready to be expressed at any time and in any situation. But because we sometimes feel separated from this source of guidance and understanding, a practical approach to self-counseling is needed.

We can be our own teacher as we learn to rely upon the inner teacher that is always with us. Often when we have a problem or experience something that we can't seem to understand, we go to another person for help—we seek a counselor. But if we examine the method a successful counselor uses to bring us the guidance and understanding we need, we discover that it is a process of drawing out right understanding and creative attitudes from within ourself. The counselor does not tell us what we ought to do or believe; rather, he encourages us to find for ourself the right answers to our questions.

When confronted by apparent problems, we can mentally "step aside" and examine the situation from a new perspective. No matter what the situation or circumstance, it is within our power to control our thinking and direct it along constructive lines instead of allowing ourself to be overcome by what is happening around us. As we practice this mental stepping aside, thoughts of confusion, insecurity, and insufficiency begin to disappear from our thinking.

We should not be afraid to be alone with ourself—whether for five minutes or for hours if need be. We must recognize that the solutions we seek

come from within us, not from any outer source. Our answers emerge out of our own conception of things—our uplifted attitude, our clearer understanding, our peaceful decisions, our inspired commitment to meet life in a better way. The first step is to realize that we already have the physical, emotional, and especially the spiritual potential to be happy, and that we can be happy right now.

Throughout time, man has recognized that the spark of divinity is inherent in him. Consciously or unconsciously, each of us recognizes that we are more than we appear to be, that within us is an element that is changeless, eternal, divine. However unhappy or unwise we may seem to be at times, we perceive that God is still present within us, that He is the infinite source of all the wisdom, happiness, health, and love we seek to know and express in our life. By learning to contact this inner source, we can meet life creatively and successfully; we can become our own spiritual counselor.

The next step in spiritual self-counseling is to take a careful look at the problems that concern us. Too often instead of examining the situations that cause us distress, we simply react to them; instead of seeking a positive understanding of whatever is troubling us, we allow ourself to react negatively. Negation must be released if we are to have a positive and constructive outlook on life.

We must remember that the feelings or actions of others are not the source of our problems. Oppressive or fearful conditions are not the source of our problems. The source of any problem lies in the forgetting that through God, we have the ability to transcend and overcome, to transmute our life from sickness to health, from confusion to understanding, from anger to joy, from failure to victory. Problems

become opportunities when we acknowledge all of life as the chance to realize our own spiritual potential, to prove our own inner God nature, to make the activity of God manifest.

A good beginning is to establish a sense of confidence. We should cultivate the feeling that our problems are already in the process of being solved. We should recognize the problem for what it is and be honest with ourself about the "facts" that confront us, yet also be honest with ourself about the higher, greater "fact" of our own overcoming spiritual nature. We can consciously call out and depend upon our own divine answering, healing faculty. We affirm softly and surely: "The answer is here! God now reveals the right way; I confidently rely on His harmonizing influence to adjust rightly all that concerns me. I am at peace, confident that all is well." In this way, we emphasize and exercise that within us that knows the answer and is powerful to heal all difficulties.

With this confidence comes a growing attitude of courage, courage that we are ready and willing to accept positive change, both in circumstances and within our own thinking and feeling. We begin to know for ourself: "Through God within me, I am stronger than circumstances. Through God within me, I can do anything!" This mental attitude of freedom in action gives us a great sense of release and victory and an assurance that we are more than equal to any situation that might confront us. We give thanks that through God within us we have the courage and the power to meet any challenge successfully.

Our next step is to acknowledge that God is everywhere present, even in the problem situation itself, and to know that true spiritual healing in all things is an attainable goal. In order to realize the ideal of order in all things, we must learn to hold a

mental pattern of perfection. Through denial of negative appearances in our mind, body, and affairs, and by holding fast to the positive reality of God's harmonizing presence everywhere, this pattern of perfection becomes our basic attitude.

Whatever our circumstances, we should try earnestly to see good emerging. We must learn to use our imagination creatively and positively. Even though we may feel at times as though we are emotionally and mentally in some "barren desert place," we can use our imagination to "see" our way out of our difficulties. By dwelling on the positive, spiritual qualities that we know are within us, the tendency to look at the negative aspects of a situation begins to disappear. We begin to dwell only on the good; we think in terms of health, guidance, and harmony for all. The barren desert place is transformed into a fertile garden. As we relax and dwell on this mental garden, our thoughts are lifted and our attitude becomes one of expectation and readiness to express the beauty and goodness we are experiencing. When we begin actively to envision and look for the expression of the highest good in whatever situation is at hand, our entire state of mind is refreshed. This positive impression carries over into all our activities. Soon we begin to see that good is coming out of all this! Our thinking becomes a nurturing, encouraging, and blessing influence on all phases of life. It is as though we are watering the spiritual soil of our life with our loving, hopeful thoughts and welcoming the good we know is forthcoming.

We must recognize that right now, all good is everywhere present and available to us. Perfection in every sense is now ready to be made manifest in our life. Individuals in need of healing in any area of life need to think of this truth, to recognize that wholeness in every

sense is our natural state and our divine birthright.

Realizing the ideal of wholeness involves practice, concentrated effort, and self-discipline. Yet as we prepare ourself to receive healing, as we believe in the reality of healing and choose it for ourself and others in thought and word, the spiritual process of healing begins peacefully and easily in a quiet inner way. Beyond the mental discipline, even beyond the affirmation of truth, divine healing in mind, body, and affairs is expressed as the constant, innate tendency of all people and all things.

After focusing our attention on particular healing needs for a time, after struggling to deny negative thought patterns and working to affirm positive ideas, we reach a point of great release. Our mind will no longer hold completely to the problems that we have been working with; instead, we begin to center more and more on God. At first when we recognize the need for healing, we think of the need itself. Then we affirm that God now heals this need. We realize that wholeness is the divine reality, and our mind centers in the thought of perfection. When we reach this point in experience, we may think at first, "There is a need for wholeness"; then we affirm, "God is all-powerful to heal"; then we know that "In mind, body, and affairs, God is the one presence and power ... God is." The manifestation of healing is the natural out picturing of this realization.

Thus we experience the inclination to focus away from a particular finite need and are drawn more and more to thoughts of the Infinite. Our mind tends to begin with concentration on one particular area of life, then to gravitate toward the spiritual center of all life, God. When we feel this inner tendency, healing has truly begun. This is the transition from

imbalance to balance, from disorder to order, from need to wholeness. We have seen only a part of reality; more and more, now we perceive the whole.

We must ever be aware that there is no need that cannot be answered, no pain that cannot be healed, no emptiness or lack that cannot be filled. God is our infinite fulfillment, infinite joy and happiness, infinite abundance and good. As we open our mind and heart to the good that is prepared for us, we realize that truly, all things are possible through God, the good, omnipotent.

In this way, we can be our own spiritual counselor. We can follow our inner guidance to the realization that God is the one presence and power in and through the universe, and that this power is immediate, reachable, and knowable in our life right now. As we reach this realization, we rejoice, for we know firsthand true healing, true understanding, and true peace.



From Page One

The festival of wonder, Christmas above all celebrates imagination.

For this is the kingdom and the power and the glory of imagination. It does not depend on the things we have, costly and beautiful and various though these may be; the things we have depend on it.

And that is what I hope Christmas will always be, the celebration of imagination, with its power to warm our heart on a snowy day and sprinkle glitter on a dark one, to give us the goodwill to wish a merry Christmas though there is not much to feel merry about, to give us the faith to believe that life is not humdrum existence, but is capable of unbelievable wonder, and in the

stable that is the human heart, to know God Himself may make His appearance.

If Every Day Were Christmas

By James Dillet Freeman

If every day were Christmas, how different life would be, if not one day but all the year were ruled by charity. Had we the faith in miracles a child has Christmas morn, each day would be love's manger and Christ would be reborn in us again to change and heal our outworn wars and ways— had we a child's or shepherd's gift for wonderment and praise! Yet every day is Christmas when we learned to live by love's law, learned not how to get but only how to give; and like a child can wonder and like a child can pray, but have the grown-up wisdom to give ourselves away.

Welcome and Attached

According to research conducted by the Barna Group, the holidays are tough for people who aren't connected to faith communities or other civic groups. They feel isolated by experiences that bring others joy, such as giving gifts, singing carols and attending religious services and parties.

"In past decades," writes George Barna, "there was an assumption that the holidays were a time when outsiders might explore church life. These days, however, churches and other religious institutions are not seen as safe or value-adding places by most outsiders. They see little reason to attend seasonal events, especially since those events often highlight their outsider status."

This Christmas, how can you help someone feel welcome *and* "attached" at our church?

A Christmas Reminder

He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." This reminder is the finest Christmas blessing we can share with you.

Christ within you gives you the gift of newborn faith in His healing, harmonizing, prospering power. His peace permeates your mind; His love motivates the impulses of your heart; His life fills and energizes your body; His substance enriches your affairs. You are healthy, strong, and free; you are loving and generous, and you draw upon unlimited abundance for your supply.

We celebrate the birth of Jesus as God's messenger of love—the love which reveals the Christ that indwells all persons. Remember always that you have been given an inner power that can literally transform your life. Christ in you is mightier than any problem, any need, any difficulty, any fear, any change you have to meet. Christ in you, the true light which illumines every person born into the world, is your ever-present help and guide in all of life.

May the inspiration of this Holy Season be yours in a glorious way as you look to the Christ Spirit in you for direction, strength, and power to live fully and joyously, and you will be continually uplifted and blessed. As you pray, turn the light of His presence in you upon every need, every desire, every anxiety, every person you wish to help, and give thanks that your prayers are fulfilled now.

Christ in you quickens your awareness of your inherent power and stimulates your imagination, originality, and creativity as you

share the love in your heart this Christmas. Whatever you undertake to do for yourself or others is accomplished with facility and grace because you let the Christ Spirit work through you. As you proceed through the holiday season, you plan wisely and lovingly; you work in joy, giving liberally of your thought and substance, and you are relaxed and happy.

At all times and in all circumstances your faith enables you to rely wholly upon Christ in you, your inner power that is greater than anything in the world about you. If there are times when your faith is shaken, when you might lose confidence in yourself and your abilities, remember that nothing can defeat the Christ in you. Set new goals for yourself and reaffirm your belief in your Christ self, which is always one with God and eternally supported by His presence and power.

With love-filled hearts your friends at First Unity and at Silent Unity celebrate Christmas in prayer for you and for all people everywhere, anticipating the perfect fulfillment of our united prayers. When you pray for guidance, expect it. When you pray for healing, expect it. When you pray for prosperity, expect it. When you pray for others, expect God to bless them according to their soul's need. When you pray for anything, trust the wisdom and power of your indwelling Christ to illumine your way, strengthen your faith, and assure your good.

"He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." This reminder is our loving Christmas gift to you.

May the reborn Christ in you fill your days with health, peace, joy, and the riches of the kingdom of all-good.

Merry Christmas from your Unity friends!

December 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i> <i>AA Men's Group</i> <i>10 AM</i> <i>Route 66 Jazz</i> <i>Orchestra Holiday</i> <i>Concert & Chili</i> <i>Dinner, 6pm</i> <i>CA 7PM</i>	<i>3</i> <i>Ukulele Practice</i> <i>7PM</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i> <i>Choir Rehearsal</i> <i>9AM</i> <i>Bell Choir</i> <i>10:30AM</i> <i>Choir Christmas</i> <i>Potluck 10:30AM-</i> <i>1PM</i>
<i>6</i> <i>Sunday Services</i> <i>10:30 AM</i> <i>Youth Ed</i> <i>10:30 AM</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i> <i>Book Club</i> <i>Boys In The Boat</i> <i>by Daniel James</i> <i>Brown at Bread</i> <i>Co. at 2PM</i>	<i>9</i> <i>AA Men's Group</i> <i>10AM</i> <i>CA 7PM</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i> <i>Choir Rehearsal</i> <i>9AM</i> <i>Bell Choir</i> <i>10:30AM</i>
<i>13</i> <i>Sunday Services</i> <i>10:30 AM</i> <i>Youth Ed</i> <i>10:30 AM</i>	<i>14</i> <i>Prayer Chaplain</i> <i>Dedication 5PM</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i> <i>AA Men's Group</i> <i>10AM</i> <i>CA 7PM</i>	<i>17</i> <i>Ukulele Practice</i> <i>7PM</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i> <i>Choir Rehearsal</i> <i>9AM</i> <i>Bell Choir</i> <i>10:30AM</i>
<i>20</i> <i>Sunday Services</i> <i>10:30 AM</i> <i>Youth Ed</i> <i>10:30 AM</i> <i>Christmas Candle</i> <i>Lighting Service</i> <i>followed by Pot</i> <i>Luck and</i> <i>Christmas Party</i>	<i>21</i> <i>Ladies' Night</i> <i>Out/Christmas</i> <i>Party @ Celie</i> <i>Tatom's house at</i> <i>5:30 PM. Bring a</i> <i>good White</i> <i>Elephant Gift.</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> <i>AA Men's Group</i> <i>10AM</i> <i>CA 7PM</i>	<i>24</i> <i>Christmas Eve</i>	<i>25</i> <i>Christmas Day</i>	<i>26</i> <i>Choir Rehearsal</i> <i>9AM</i> <i>Bell Choir</i> <i>10:30AM</i>
<i>27</i> <i>Sunday Services</i> <i>10:30 AM</i> <i>Youth Ed</i> <i>10:30 AM</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i> <i>AA Men's Group</i> <i>10AM</i> <i>CA 7PM</i>	<i>31</i> <i>New Year's Eve</i>		

Wings

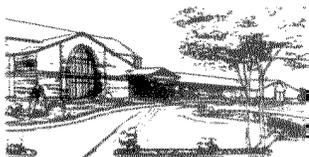
THE DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST UNITY CHURCH OF ST. LOUIS

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The light side -- A little holy humor

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?

It's Christmas, Eve!

What do you have in December that you don't have in any other month?

The letter "D".

What did one Angel say to the other?

Halo there!

What do snowmen wear on their heads?

Ice caps

What do snowmen eat for lunch?

Icebergers

Where do snowmen go to dance?

Snowballs

How do snowmen travel around?

By icicle

What do snowmen eat for breakfast?

Snowflakes.

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

Frostbite.

What was so good about the neurotic doll the girl was given for Christmas?

It was wound up already.

Why does Santa have 3 gardens?

So he can ho-ho-ho.

What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?

Claustrophobic.

Why does Santa Claus go down the chimney on Christmas Eve?

Because it "soots" him!

Why does Scrooge love Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer?

Because every buck is dear to him.

Why did Santa spell Christmas N-O-E?

Because the angel had said, "No

