

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

March 2017

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

Inside this issue:

News and events

Truth Thoughts

Quotable Quotes

Truth Articles

Calendar

Humor

Seasonal Appointments

By Bonita M. Gillespie

The weatherman had just predicted a killing spring frost. I looked with dismay at my newly bloomed jonquils and daffodils nodding bravely in the sun. They were just too numerous and scattered for me to try to cover them for protection. Sadly, I consigned them to their fate.

The next morning I looked out to discover that, as I had expected, my flowers were all drooping pitifully in the slight, but chilling, breeze. I went out into the yard and snapped from their cluster a few of the ones closest to my front door, leaving the others bent miserably on the ground.

In a few days, those I had picked in order to preserve their beauty for a short while began fading. I had, of course, looked daily at those I had left in their places, sure that they, too, would quickly be withering. They were not! They bobbed gently, bright and cheerful, in their appointed places.

Pondering this anomaly, I started considering how much these flowers paralleled the human element. Left in touch with their source, they suffered, it is true, but they survived hardship, and

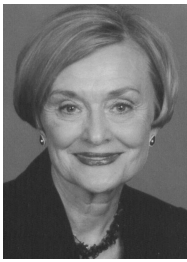
ultimately retained their natural balance. Those separated from their source lost their vitality, their current, and too soon dulled, faded, and withered away.

When we separate ourselves from God, our Source, our Truth, we lose the flexibility that enables us to survive the vagaries of our personal "weather changes."

Only by keeping our spirits attached and

attuned to the wisdom and light of God in our being can we be assured of our ultimate goal—the living and flowering and flowing of our lives' natural cycles. Like my unquestioning, trusting daffodils and jonquils, when we have completed this season's appointments, we shall withdraw into our souls to await a new season of growth, a new blooming and unfolding, a new cycle in our spiritual growth.





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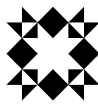
March, 2017
Page 2

First Unity Membership

For Unity membership, there are no requirements other than a desire to know God, to unfold spiritually, and to understand, love, and align with Spirit's Laws of Being. If you are feeling led in becoming a member of First Unity, just complete the "I Desire to Become a Member" form by the guest book in the vestibule.

Stay Connected

We will soon be implementing a texting program to keep you up to date on the activities and events of First Unity Church. If you are interested in being added to our text list, please call or email the office.



Third Thursday Quilters

For information contact Jane Vondruska (636 226-4562) or Sandy Etheridge (314 309-8136).

The Ladies' Night Out

Group will meet Monday, March 20, at 5:30 p.m. at O'Leary's at 3828 S. Lindbergh, 63127. For more information call Mary Tumminello Home: 314-843-1807 Cell: 314-814-4530.



March 14: Our Souls at Night by Kent Haruf
April 11: The Girls by Lori Lansen

May 9: Love Anthony by Lisa Genova

June 13: Have A Little Faith: A True Story by Mitch Albom

eScrip News – Remember to use your eScrip card at Schnuck's. Go to www.escrip.com, or look for the link on the First Unity website to earn money for First Unity as you shop. Thank you!



Youth Education

We welcome extra hands and hugs. If you could help just one Sunday a month, it would make a huge difference.

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.



Free Ukulele Lessons

Beginner's ukulele lessons will be offered beginning this month here at First Unity. Children's lessons will be on Tuesday night at 6:00 pm. Adult classes will be Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm. Everyone is welcome. Phone Joan Mueller at 314-849-7205 to reserve your spot.

Ukulele Concert-March 30

5:00 p.m. Doors Open

5:30 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m. Concert

\$15 for adults, \$7 for kids

Save the Date

Women's Tea & Vendor Show, May 6

11:00 a.m. Doors Open & Shopping Begins

11:30 a.m. Lunch

Shopping Continues Until 2:00 p.m.

Feed My People

Every year Feed My People gives out produce seeds and encourages their clients to grow some of their own food.



All types of produce seeds are appropriate, although tomato seeds are especially popular. Because everyone can use a little beauty in their lives, flower seeds are also welcome. Food is, of course, always useful and this month protein items will be much appreciated.

www.feed-my-people.org



March Affirmations

Inner Peace: I am present to this moment of peace and serenity.

Guidance: Divine light guides my decisions.

Healing: I am the breath of Spirit, the expression of perfect life.

Prosperity: God is my substance and sustenance.

World Peace: My thoughts and actions contribute to a peaceful world.



From Great to Good

Jim Collins' 2001 book *Good to Great* featured companies that had "made the leap" to greatness. Years later, many of them are no longer great; some aren't even around.

Should Christians seek greatness? After all, our attempts to be great — wealthy, powerful, successful, famous — often become the "enemies" of our doing the good God commands.

God's Word flips on its head the saying "good is the enemy of great." The meek, Jesus teaches, will inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5). "Whoever would be great among you," he says, "must be your servant" (Mark 10:43, ESV). One of Jesus' most famous parables is called the Good Samaritan, not the Great Samaritan. And goodness, not greatness, is a fruit of the Spirit.

Christians and churches are called not to greatness but to doing good for the sake of the world. Let's shift our focus "from great to good."

—Based on "From Great to Good," *Homiletics*,
January-February 2017



Messengers of God

In *Half Broke Horses*, Jeannette Walls tells how her grandmother Lily,

at age 10, and Lily's younger siblings were bringing cows in for milking when the animals suddenly ran for high ground. Lily realized a flash flood was coming.

She directed her brother and sister to climb a tree, where they clung all night as water and wind slammed against them. Lily helped her siblings stay awake and hopeful. As dawn broke, the water subsided and the children waded home. Their mother prayed gratefully, telling them to thank their guardian angel. Young Lily protested that *she* had saved them all. But her father answered wisely, "Maybe the angel was you."

The Hebrew word for *angel* literally means messenger. Through

words and deeds, we all can be God's angels for one another.

Shedding tears before God

When Philip Johnson, renowned architect and designer of the Crystal Cathedral in California, was just 13, his family took him to France. When they entered the cathedral at Chartres, Philip was so moved by the majesty and beauty of the building dedicated to God that he burst into tears.

I have also shed tears in a church. I wept when I felt the nudging presence of God pointing me toward the ministry. I wept when I was ordained. I wept when I retired after serving as a pastor for 38 years.

I have seen people weep at the altar rail. I have seen brides cry during the marriage ceremony. I have observed people weeping at funerals and sometimes at the baptism of a child. I recall a man saying to me, "I cried during the sermon. Do you know that what you preach can sometimes make a person cry?"

To weep before God is to be in good company. Job said, "My eye pours out tears to God" (Job 16:20, NRSV). A psalmist prayed, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; do not hold your peace at my tears" (Psalm 39:12, NRSV). Read Jeremiah 9 and you will understand why he is called "the weeping prophet."

Jesus wept over the wretched status of Jerusalem where he was spurned (Luke 19:41). He also wept when his friend Lazarus died (John 11:35). St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears" (2 Corinthians 2:4, NRSV).

The point is this: When you are moved to cry before God, cry. People with caring hearts do that. This is something to remember, especially during Lent.

—Charles Ferrell

"Quotable Quotes"

No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn.

—Hal Borland

Faith is permitting ourselves to be seized by the things we do not see.

—Martin Luther

Music comes from an icicle as it melts, to live again as spring water.

—Henry Williamson

Man cannot live by bread alone, yet still many try to satisfy the inner life with outer accoutrements. That is impossible.

—Anonymous

The average pencil is seven inches long, with just a half-inch eraser. Remember that, in case you thought optimism was dead.

—Robert Brault

What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the Master calls a butterfly.

—Richard Bach

There is no revenge so complete as forgiveness.

—Josh Billings

The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems.

—Mohandas Gandhi

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

—Leo Buscaglia

To handle yourself, use your head. To handle others, use your heart.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves.

—Helen Keller

The Teaching Jesus Wanted Us to Remember

By William Earle Cameron

Jesus had one central theme in everything He taught-the kingdom of God. Yet never once did He literally define this kingdom. All His explanations and discourses about the kingdom were figurative, poetic, illustrative, or visionary. This was because Jesus' kingdom is not of this literal or three-dimensional world. It is a spiritual kingdom. His mission was to reveal to humankind the marvelous realm of Spirit and its ways and qualities.

To plant the seed of a new concept, there are several general ways in which Jesus presented and emphasized His kingdom teaching. First, there are precepts-short, unadorned statements of Truth, special instructions for us, keys and clues to understanding and finding the kingdom. These often take the form of an invitation or promise. Jesus made wide use of precepts in presenting His Sermon on the Mount as a series of steps by which we approach the kingdom. These concise but rather vague statements by Jesus are found throughout the four Gospels. The important thing to remember about them is that they are all connected with Jesus' message of a spiritual kingdom.

Jesus also used the activities and events in His own life-at times His miracles-to present the kingdom to humankind. His entire life was a series of lessons to explain the spiritual kingdom to all people. Jesus also made extensive use of parables to teach and illustrate different aspects about the kingdom. Nearly all His parables begin, "The kingdom is like ...," and then He gives a comparative story to illustrate.

Let's explore a little of the historical background of the heritage we all share in our present

concepts about the kingdom. The concept of a kingdom of God was not new to the Jews, although the exact phrase that we translate as kingdom wasn't found before Jesus.

In ancient days, the importance of kings in people's lives had molded their religious attitudes toward the idea of kingship. They formed their ideas about God around the human kings who ruled them. Moreover, because they had been known as the chosen people, the Israelites had long dreamed that they were destined for dominion in this world. To them the reign of God had grown to mean an earthly empire under God, ushered in by a Jewish warrior or king type or messiah. This new world domain would be one in which the Jews ruled. They eventually looked back to the times of King David as the "golden age" and the pattern for the future kingdom.

In the meantime, there were some very serious national disasters that considerably influenced their beliefs. In a civil war, their nation was split in two, never to be united again; and then, after the Assyrian capture, ten of the twelve tribes of Israel were lost forever. Several hundred years later, the remaining two tribes were also captured by the Babylonians and were eventually subjected to the rule of the Persians, the Greeks, and then the Romans.

In spite of all this, they never lost their dream of the future kingdom they had come to believe in. But, because of the troubles they were having, they gradually developed a new concept of the age to come and of how the kingdom would finally come. They regarded whatever present age they were in as lost and bad. They came to believe that everything would have to get worse and worse until it couldn't get any worse, producing a period of woe. Then God would intervene and usher in the kingdom with vindication and glory for the

Jews, establishing Israel as the world center and Jerusalem as the capital.

This was the background into which Jesus came, announcing that "The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk. 1:15). We read in Luke 8:1 that "he went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God."

Jesus developed His teaching out of the Old Testament heritage, but He saw how misguided the expectations of His fellow Jews had become, and He arrived at a very different conclusion and brought forth an entirely new concept. He was not at all well understood by His contemporaries. Most of them listened to Him because they hoped and thought He was talking about the old kingdom they understood and expected. Therefore, He spent much time correcting the old beliefs prefaced by a statement like: "You have heard that it was said But I say to you" (Mt. 5:21-22). Apparently He was often asked (even by His own disciples) to be more literal and to pinpoint the kingdom. Usually He would reply to direct questions with an oblique answer saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like ... " (Mt. 13:31), and then He would only allude to or poetically illustrate some hint of truth about it.

Later the mention of both concepts concerning God's rule was translated into our English Bible according to our understanding of the word kingdom, connotating the rigid domain of a king and his subjects. This is unfortunate when associated with Jesus' idea of the kingdom of God and heaven, for this is only part of what He meant. The notion that the kingdom of heaven is a place up in the sky where you go if you're good and that hell is the alternate destination down below came to the fore during the Middle Ages as a means to frighten people into religion.

Jesus spoke of the kingdom 113 times, yet He never specifically located it. Perhaps the closest Jesus ever came to making specific statements about the kingdom made clear that heaven is neither a place nor something in the future. His announcement: "The kingdom of God is at hand," is recorded in three gospels. In Luke 17:20-21, He made it very clear: "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or, 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."

To the Jews and Christians, the kingdom was always "to come" or something in the future. But to Jesus, the kingdom is at hand, an ever-present dimension of Spirit and is literally within all people at all times. It was His recurring theme that the kingdom of God is within you here and now! This is the most revolutionary teaching ever presented-the secret of the ages-a fundamental truth of existence that can stir and completely change every human heart and every human life. However, few people through the ages have even grasped its full significance. We have long sought the secret of the ages-the key to the power that controls the universe and our lives and destinies along with it.

A famous legend puts it very well. It tells how the gods were discussing where to hide the most important secret to life so that humankind wouldn't discover it until they were mature enough not to misuse it. The gods thought of placing it on the highest mountain; then they thought of the bottom of the ocean or the furthestmost parts. Finally, they thought of the perfect place: they would hide it within each person, because that would be the last place humanity would look.

It is amazing how true this legend has been. We have searched the Earth high and low. We have

even reached out to the stars and outer space to unlock secrets. But it is time that our scientists begin a concerted search of inner space. The scientific process, which has unveiled to us many of the secrets of the world we are in, now needs to be directed to the much bigger world within us. Perhaps we have avoided or postponed this search because we are afraid to look deep within ourselves, afraid of what we will find because of the dim view we have been taught about ourselves.

It is our emotions that we seem to fear most. Our unmastered, uncontrolled feelings are what the bizarre imageries in books such as Revelation are really about. These feelings often play so much havoc in our lives, making our inner worlds seem more to us like habitats of dragons than a repository for the treasures of God's kingdom in us. Up to now, we would have preferred to blame it all on a devil rather than face ourselves. Many scientists now know that the new frontier is right within ourselves, dealing with the vast unexplored realms of human consciousness.

God has planted the seed of divine nature in each of us, the seed potential to express God's very attributes, qualities, and powers. The mystery of the ages is simply that the Christ spirit lives in each of us and is expressed through our minds, hearts, and lives-when we believe in Christ. Christ in you is your hope of glory. Heaven is simply living in the awareness of the God-Spirit in us and letting this Christ spirit rule. Heaven is really a state of consciousness. Most of us experience very little consciousness of heaven now because we believe in the wrong things. We are external-minded: we think small, we feel small, and we live small.

Jesus brought into the world a whole new idea, not only about God but about humanity. He

revealed to us the light of spiritual Truth about our own divine potential.

As I said, very few people in Jesus' day had any idea what He was talking about when He said: "The kingdom of God is in the midst of you." Most religions emphasize just the opposite the unworthiness, the insignificance, the fallibility, the flawed character of humanity, and the idea that heaven and the creative power of God are outside us.

This was not Jesus' good news message. The real work of religion should be to support people in learning to develop their divine dimensions-to work, and let the Christ within do the work. The kingdom of God is within you, and it is a wondrous world. It is the source of everything spiritual-divine intelligence, infinite power, all-supplying abundance, and universal love.

Heaven, which means "the expanse of space," is the bringing forth of the kingdom. It is a state of mind that unfolds your potential. The kingdom is, therefore, a higher, expanding expression that comes about from a changing, growing, expanding consciousness. Remember when Jesus once said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:3)? He was telling us that an open, receptive, teachable mind is the channel through which our spiritual potential manifests. If you can't believe or even grasp the glorious idea of the infinite potential available within you (perhaps because of the staggering implications), surely you can at least accept as true that there is a lot more in you and to you than anyone yet knows about or that you have ever used.

Heaven has always had some association with paradise or a state of bliss. To be in heaven can mean many things. But it will always involve experiencing and expressing some aspect or quality

of the goodness of God that is already a part of your essential being. Heaven is realizing that you are a child of God with wonderful spirit potential indwelling you; indeed you are a unique being with your own infinite talent. In fact, know as the Scripture says: "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be" (1 Jn. 3:2).

Heaven is a learning experience, an expanding consciousness of God's good. It is the increasing awareness of God's heavenly qualities of peace, truth, beauty, friendship, and love. Learning can be one of the greatest joys in life, and the kingdom of heaven comes through study, observation, and prayer.

Heaven is a feeling of joy or conscious bliss that comes from experiencing these wonderful qualities of the good life within ourselves. Heaven is freedom, the true freedom to rise above where you now are—your present fears, confusion, and feelings of inadequacy. It is the freedom to plan for a better life; to dream of better things; to think higher, more Christlike thoughts; to love with the love of God so that God's infinite intelligence, love, goodness, and spiritual power reign in the kingdom of your consciousness.

Like life itself, heaven is an unfolding process, ever-evolving upward and onward. Therefore, at our present level, none of us experience all these qualities at any one time. But each of us can experience some of heaven every day and keep it growing.

Literally, the kingdom of God is within you, a kingdom of spiritual possibilities that can and will fulfill the highest and best in your eternal life. The kingdom comes by the process of growth and unfoldment, which we accelerate as we establish the reign of God's truth in our minds and hearts, and let it rule. When we let God's indwelling spirit reign over all the

purposes and concerns of our lives, we abide in heaven.

"The Teaching Jesus Wanted Us to Remember" was originally titled "The Wondrous World Within" and was taken from William Earle Cameron's book *Great Dramas of the Bible*.

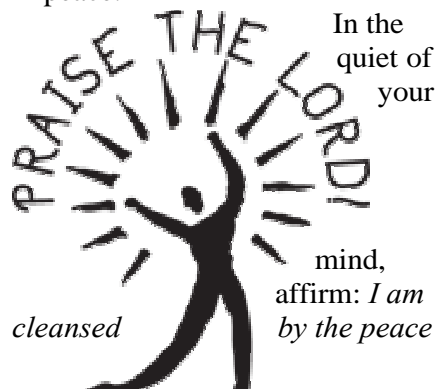
A Peaceful Solution

By J. Douglas Bottorff

Many have mistakenly believed that peace is conditional: as long as there is an absence of war and discord, there will be peace. Under such conditions, peace has been a rather rare commodity, for war and rumors of war are as familiar to us as daily newspaper headlines.

Jesus grew up in one of the most violent parts of the world. He is not known to have ever negotiated a peaceful settlement between any of the warring factions of His time. Yet, He is known as the Prince of Peace. The peace He spoke of did not depend upon conditions. He said that it was a peace which was not the same kind given by the world. It was a universal peace found by those who enter the spiritual dimension within themselves.

James gives us, in one simple verse, the peaceful solution to any of life's challenges. If we will take the time to "draw near to God," if we will still the warring factions of our own thoughts and feelings and dwell upon God's silent presence, we will find ourselves established in peace.



*of God. I am grounded in God's deep recesses of peace and perfect tranquility. Peace reigns in my mind and heart.
Thank You, God.*

Rising Up

By Carolyn W. Darlington

I am a seed that God has planted
In the space of universal time.
Growing, allowing the presence of
the Christ
To rise up in me,
I begin to flower right where I am,
Under the order and direction of
my creator.
The more I grow, the more I am,
The more I have to give.

Rise up in me, oh God,
Create more of you in me.

The hidden essence of God within
Reveals God's perfection in me.
As I am alive to this source,
The ever-renewing cosmic
energy of
My Christ spirit takes me higher
And higher. As I soar, I am more
Than ever before.

Rising up in me, oh God,
Creating more of you in me,

I am hidden no more, I am fully
Flowered, upward moving, sharing
The eternalness of my being in
Every way, every day.

Risen up in me, oh God,
Now all of you in me.

March 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 <i>A.A. Men's Group, 10 AM</i> <i>CA 7PM</i>	2 <i>Ukulele Practice, 7PM</i>	3	4 <i>Choir Practice, 9AM</i>
5 <i>Sunday Services, 10:30 A.M.</i> <i>Youth Ed, 10:30 A.M.</i>	6	7	8 <i>A.A. Men's Group, 10 AM</i> <i>CA 7PM</i>	9	10	11 <i>Choir Practice, 9AM</i>
12 <i>Sunday Services, 10:30 A.M.</i> <i>Youth Ed, 10:30 A.M.</i>	13	14 <i>Book Club Our Souls At Night by Kent Haruf at Bread Co. at 2PM</i>	15 <i>A.A. Men's Group, 10 AM</i> <i>CA 7PM</i>	16 <i>Third Thursday Quilters, 10AM</i> <i>Ukulele Practice, 7PM</i>	17	18 <i>Choir Practice, 9AM</i>
19 <i>Sunday Services, 10:30 A.M.</i> <i>Youth Ed, 10:30 A.M.</i>	20 <i>Ladies' Night Out, O'Leary's, 3828 S. Lindbergh, 63127 at 5:30 P.M.</i>	21	22 <i>A.A. Men's Group, 10 AM</i> <i>CA 7PM</i> <i>Planning Mtg, 6PM</i> <i>Board Mtg, 7PM</i>	23	24	25 <i>Choir Practice, 9AM</i>
26 <i>Sunday Services, 10:30 A.M.</i> <i>Youth Ed, 10:30 A.M.</i>	27	28	29 <i>A.A. Men's Group, 10 AM</i> <i>CA 7PM</i>	30 <i>Ukulele Concert & Dinner, 5:30 P.M.</i>	31	

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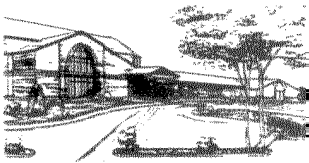
THE March 2017 NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST UNITY CHURCH OF ST. LOUIS

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The light side -- A little holy humor

Sunday school teacher: "How many of you children want to go to heaven?"

Everyone raised a hand except one little boy.

Teacher to the boy: "Johnny, don't you want to go to heaven?"

Johnny: "I can't. Mother told me to come home right after Sunday school."

There's the story of the minister who was making a wooden trellis to support a climbing vine.

As he was pounding away, he noticed that a little boy was watching him. The youngster didn't say a word, so the preacher kept on working, thinking the lad would

leave. But he didn't.

Pleased at the thought that his work was being admired, the pastor finally said, "Well, son, trying to pick up some pointers on gardening?"

"No," he replied. "I'm just waiting to hear what a preacher says when he hits his thumb with a hammer."

A boy was asked by his Sunday school teacher if he thought Noah did much fishing off the ark?

"How could he?" replied the lad. "He only had two worms and there were only two fish."

The little boy had not been to many worship services. He thought the offering plate was where one put money for admission to the church. When the collection plate was being passed along their pew, he whispered to his father, "Don't pay for me, Daddy. I'm only five."

A Sunday school teacher asked her class why a bear could not take off its warm overcoat in the summer. Silence. And then a boy said, "Maybe only God knows where the zipper is."
