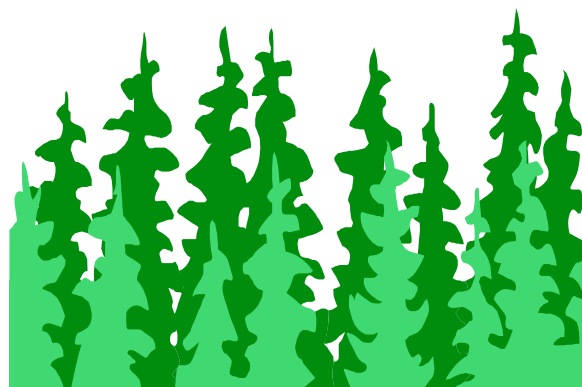


Good News

from the
Northwest Region
of the Association of Unity Churches



Spring 2006

This newsletter is published by Northwest Region of the Association of Unity Churches.

Postal contact :
Northwest Region
P.O. Box 6185
Lynnwood, WA 98036

Website contact:
www.unitynwregion.org

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a means of clear communication that helps unify the ministries of the Northwest Region.

Inside this issue:

<i>Licensed Teacher News</i>	3
<i>Regional Children's Consultant</i>	5
<i>Prosperity Task Team</i>	7
<i>2006 Regional Conference</i>	8
<i>Earth Care Ministry</i>	9
<i>Regional Representative</i>	10
<i>Regional Opportunities</i>	11

“Heart Notes”

From your Northwest Regional Chairperson
Barbara Wilson

Hello Friends!

Your regional board enjoyed the natural abundance of the universe at their face-to-face meeting in February. We were gifted with a lovely setting--a condominium on Discovery Bay off the Strait of Juan De Fuca in Washington. Since we were only a few minutes away, we enjoyed a tour of the facilities at Fort Worden where our summer retreat will be held this coming August. Fort Worden is situated atop a bluff overlooking Puget Sound. Such lovely vistas--and the food was really good, too!

I am thrilled to announce that we have filled the opening for retreat coordinator. The new retreat coordinator is Marilyn Muehlbach! What a joy it is to have Marilyn with us in this capacity! And through the search process we discovered another gem—Heidi Simon—who will work closely with Marilyn on registration. Welcome aboard Heidi!

Regretfully there has been another change, this time on the board itself. Our beloved chaplain, Lynne Steffen, has had to resign to devote more time to her health and family. We on the Board are sad but understand and fully support her decision. Roy Ayers, whose present term ends in May, has been appointed to fill the remainder of Lynne's term. Georgie Richardson is our new board chaplain and liaison to the retreat team.

Other significant actions taken by the board:

- We approved three requests for SEE scholarships for the coming year.
- We approved \$1000 to sponsor the Peacemaker Training in Kansas City in late August 2006. This entitles us to several tuition scholarships from our region. Our website will be updated with further information on how to apply.
- We approved Gary Simmons' request to present his Integral Leadership workshop for our 2006 fall training.

Our Regional Conference business meeting will be May 10 at Menucha in Corbett, Oregon. If at all possible please join us for the entire week. Our time together is of utmost importance to the future of Unity in the Northwest. It is out of the synergy of

(Continued on page 2)

www.unitynwregion.org

***Northwest Region of the
Association of Unity Churches
Regional Team Members***

Barbara Wilson, Chairperson

Unity in the Olympics, Port Angeles WA
360-457-3981
uito@olypen.com

Philip Zemke, Vice-Chairperson

Unity Church of Bozeman, Montana
406-254-9554
unity@tgrsolution.net

Roy Ayers, Treasurer

Unity Church of Today, Mount Vernon
WA
360-419-7409
UNITYOFTODAYMV@aol.com

Diedre Ashmore, Secretary

Unity Church of Truth, Spokane WA
509-838-6518
friends@unityspokane.org

Georgie Richardson, Chaplain

Unity of Salem, Salem OR
503-364-0156 church
blessyourheart44@aol.com

**Steve Towles,
Regional Representative**

Unity Church of Christianity,
Edgewood WA
253-446-1000
206-229-7496 cell
stephentowles@comcast.net

**Judy Willingham,
LUT Regional Representative**

425-837-5487
jwilling@nwinfo.net

(Continued from page 1)

spiritual community that the Light will break forth to reveal our greatest possibilities.

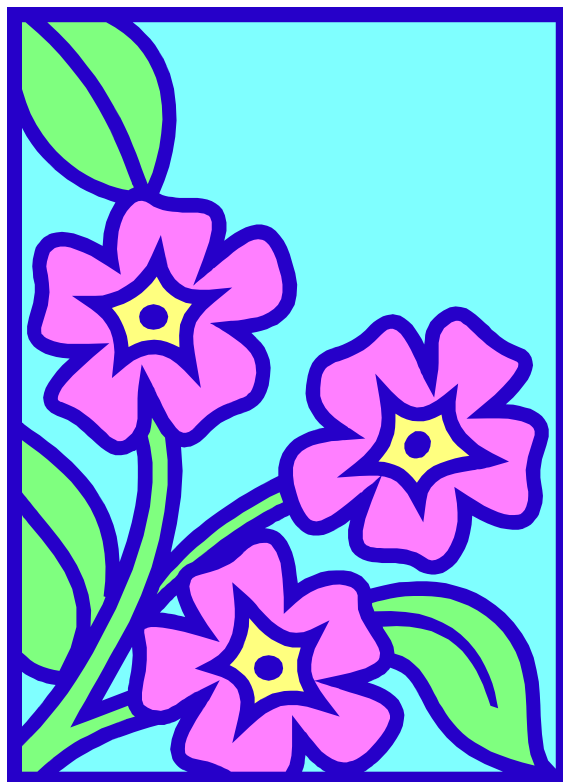
We will vote on two new members to the Regional Board. The nominating team of Philip Zemke, Dick Everts and Anna Joy Grace has found two great candidates: Jeni St. Clair of Billings, Montana and David Elliott of Tacoma, Washington.

Hopefully we will soon have some background information on our candidates up on our website along with many of the annual reports and the business meeting agenda. Please check regularly www.unitynwregion.org to stay abreast of regional news.

Teri Hawkins has informed the Board that this year's conference will be the last one coordinated by her. The region has been so wonderfully blessed by her talents in this area. Thank you, Teri, for an extraordinary job! If anyone would be interested in serving the region in this way, please contact a board member.

On a practical note, I know travel expenses can be a real stretch for many ministries. If that is a significant hindrance for you, know it need not be! Fortunately, there are conference scholarships available. Accept your good so that you may share your light!

Blessings,
Barbara Wilson



LICENSED UNITY TEACHER NEWS

By Judy Willingham, Licensed Unity Teacher Representative

Licensed Unity Teacher Candidates have stepped forward!

In the past issue the job description for LUT Regional Rep was presented. Following that issue, Andrew Ashmore brought us two LUT Representative Candidates to vote on at the annual Regional Conference at Menucha May 8 – 12th. I am grateful to Andrew for his nominating effort on behalf of all LUTs. I believe we have two wonderful candidates to continue the effort of personal service to us while coordinating and promoting the work of LUTs with the Unity Association and the entire Unity movement for our NW Region. Each of the candidates has written about themselves as an introduction to those of you who may not already be familiar with them. By way of a reminder, it is required that the candidates be at the Conference to be elected and all LUTs present may vote. It is my pleasure to present to you, in alphabetical order:

Janet Rhodes:

Janet has been a licensed Unity teacher for 23 years. Her church home is Unity Church of Olympia, in Olympia, Washington. She teaches classes, leads the Pastoral Care Team, and serves as backup for the minister. Also, she performs weddings and memorial services.

Janet has been active in the Northwest Region for the past four years. She joined the Earth Care Team when it formed. For two years she has headed the team, which is a wonderfully creative, supportive, and productive group of ministers and licensed teachers.

Last year, Janet presented a 3-hour workshop at Regional Conference called *Healthy Decision-making*. She conducted shorter versions of the workshop for the Northwest Region's Board and for Unity Church of Olympia's council. Recently, the Association of Unity Churches accepted her proposal to present the workshop at the 2007 People's Convention!

The *Healthy Decision-making* workshop grew out of her work experience at the environmental agency in Washington State. There, for over 17 years, she ensured that the department used an inclusive decision-making process for projects.

Her job was to make sure that there was a dialogue between the public and the department. In a sense, she advocated for the public within the agency.

Janet has helped Unity Church of Olympia use inclusive decision-making tools. She also provided guidance to the LUT Task Team headed by Clare Austen.

A certified senior mediator with the Thurston County Dispute Resolution Center, she has mediated a variety of disputes (as a volunteer). As a state employee, she mediated workplace disputes. She finds that she uses mediation tools and skills in all facets of her life.

In 2003, Janet retired after 30 years of state service. Being "retired," she is able to devote more time to church and to pastimes such as painting and writing. Janet says, "It has been a blessing to serve the Region these past four years. I look forward to serving and supporting the Region's licensed teachers."

Patty Williams:

Some time back I received a bookmark in the mail from Unity® with the affirmation "With faith in God, I embrace exciting new opportunities to serve." At the end of the sentence was a period, however when I read it I did not see the affirmation as stopping with the period. The word "Unity" called out with clarity at the close of the affirmation. It is very clear to me that I have received a calling to serve the Unity Movement in some capacity.

It seems important to me to share some of my history with you as you prayerfully consider the LUT Representative Candidate slate. I was licensed as a Unity Teacher on September 15, 1998, and serve in that capacity at Unity of Beaverton in Beaverton, Oregon, a ministry in transition. I work closely with our Transitional Minister, Rev. Marylou Palmer, teaching classes, assisting in the worship services and serving on several ministry teams.

I also speak frequently for Sunday Services and teach classes at Christ Light Unity in Fairview/Gresham, Oregon. Last year I attended Rev. Lei Lanni Burt's Chaplain Training Program, with the intention of starting a Prayer Chaplaincy program at Unity of Beaverton.

My history with Unity began as a Y.O.U.er at the Unity Village Chapel in the late 70's. As happened with many of our youth, I left Unity for several years after graduating from high school (which is why I am VERY excited about Next Generation Unity), and in the midst of crisis I found my way back to the Village. I became an active member of the Adults of Unity nationally and several other groups through the Unity Village Chapel, and found my way to my first CEP course—Lessons in Truth. From that point forward I engaged in as many classes as I could find time for, and eventually found myself working at the Association of Unity Churches.

In October of 1991 I came out to the Northwest to visit with Rev. Ed Townley, and see what he was up to with "Spirit Expressing." I was here for a week, and found that I was home. While on vacation I found a room to rent and lined up temporary work, and moved out here the next month. I served as a Steering Committee Member for this alternative Unity ministry, and even performed at the Crystal Mountain Retreat and other venues throughout the region. When this ministry was merged with the Unity church in Beaverton, I joined the board of the new church, until I was hired to work at the Ministry. Over the years I have served this ministry in many capacities, including the Bookstore Manager, UniTeen Sponsor, Newsletter Coordinator, Cable Access Television Show Producer, Team Ministry Coordinator and now as a LUT and Worship Assistant Team Coordinator.

I did take a sabbatical from the ministry for several years to go to college, and in 1999 I received my Associate of Arts from Portland Community College and in 2002 my Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from Reed College. I had several great opportunities while going to school, including serving on the Student Senate at both colleges and as the Student Body President at Portland Community College, where I was also given the honor of being asked to give the graduation speech. I was also appointed by Governor Kitzhaber to serve as a Commissioner on the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, where I was the first student ever elected to Chair the Commission.

I am currently employed as the Director of Marketing

and Special Events Coordinator at The Grotto, a 62 acre national Catholic shrine and botanical garden in Portland dedicated to offering a place of solitude, peace and prayer for all people. I also serve as the Chair of the Oregon Festivals and Events Association and on the board of my homeowners association.

I am excited by the work being done by our Unity movement, at the local, regional and national levels. I would find great joy in being involved with our movement as your LUT Representative, and believe that I bring skills to the role that can build upon the wonderful work that Judy has accomplished as our LUT Rep. It fills me with gratitude to think about how engaged she has been on our behalf. One activity has made a great impact on me personally as a LUT. I came back from the National Conference last year with a practical model for creating a Licensed Teacher/Minister Agreement. Rev. Marylou and I used this model to engage in a joyful, healthy, prayerful and powerful dialogue and implement a signed agreement that guides our work together. The clarity of this process has empowered me as a LUT and as an individual in Unity Leadership. It has challenged me to continually evolve my willingness, understanding and expression of the affirmation I began with, "With faith in God, I embrace exciting new opportunities to serve Unity."

I look forward to seeing you in Menucha. Namaste,
Patty

See the faith, talent and strength that are there to move us into the future of the Unity movement? I'm sure Janet and Patty are open to a conversation with you. Janet may be contacted at jjrhodes@thurston.com. Patty may be contacted at patty.williams@comcast.net. Both will be available during the Conference.

It has been a blessing to have served you all as your Representative. It will be my pleasure to hand over the reins to either one of these wonderful LUTs at Menucha. Since the highest number of votes becomes LUT Rep and the next highest number of votes becomes the Alternate Rep. we all win with this election.

With deepest faith in our future,
Judy

From PENNY GRUVER, Regional Consultant for Children

**Penny Gruver,
Consultant/Children**
2802 S Laurel
Port Angeles WA 98362
gruverfamily67@msn.com
(360) 452 7953

**Jackie Green,
Consultant/Teens**
11115 E 29th
Spokane WA 99206
jackienwyou@comcast.net
(509) 928 0896

**Chris Castaldi, Unitreat
Event Coordinator**
3114 Cottonwood CT West
Linn OR 97068
503 697 0762
castaldi11@comcast.net

**Nick Muncie-Jarvis, Next
Generation Unity
Consultant**
9914 SW Conestoga #224
Beaverton OR 97008
503 524 4030
ztx@juno.com

Hello friends!

It was another grand weekend at the 26th annual Youth Team Conference, held January 27,28 & 29th at Camp Huston Center, Goldbar, WA. We had attendees from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and British Columbia, Canada, for a total of 72 full time from 18 centers. The NW Regional Youth Services Team members met on Thursday January 26th for our annual planning session. Those present were Wally Vlasak, Tacoma, WA., Chris Castaldi, Lake Oswego, OR., Sharon Viehdorfer, Salem OR., Marelu Marson Greco, Seattle, WA., Rev. Jackie Green, UCT, Spokane, WA., Penny Gruver, LUT, Port Angeles, WA. with special guest, Rev. Victoria Etchemendy attending as well. The NW Regional Youth of Unity Officers, Krista Harper and Darrell Schubert came on Friday to finalize the selection process for Counselors for Kids Camp 2006...

Our theme this year was "**HOW DO I FIT IN? CONNECTING IN OUR UNITY COMMUNITY**". The NW Regional Youth Services Team created our format for exploring the theme in small circles groups, which we call "transformational circles". We met four times in these circles, with a different focus each time. The first circle gathering explored "*Connecting & Creating Community*", the second, "*Being in Community/Peacemaking*", the third focus was "*Living in Community*" and in the final gathering we discussed "*A Mindful View of Personal Place in Community*."

There was also time in the weekend for our special interest groups to meet (Youth Ed. Directors, YOU Sponsors, Uniteen Leaders and Teachers)

This year we were gifted with two outstanding presenters ..Rev. Victoria Etchemendy, from Unity World Healing Center in Lake Oswego, OR., did a workshop on *Intergenerational Celebrations and Rituals*, and Marilee Payne from Christ Light Unity in Fairview/Gresham, OR. presented one on "*Setting Kids UP For Success*", with a focus on children with ADD/ADHD. Music and a toning workshop was provided by Mark Stanton Welch who joined us for the 6th year from his home base in Cambria, California. Another weekend highlight was the two hours of Sufi and Sacred Circle dancing on Saturday evening following the rollicking communal Spirit Share time.

Our shared prayer for the weekend was the following by Paramahansa Yogananda:

"Every day and minute and hour is a window through which I see eternity.
Beginning with the early dawn , I will radiate joy to everyone I meet.
I will be mental sunshine for all who cross my path.
I consider no one a stranger. . . everyone is akin to me."

Other things coming up for our NW Region Unity Youth Supporters...

This year Kids Camp will begin for the Counselors and staff on Friday June, 23rd, with the Campers arriving on *Saturday the 24th through Tuesday the 27th, at Camp Waskowitz, North Bend, WA*. The theme will be decided by the counselors on Kids Camp Counselor Training weekend, to be held March 17-19th in Spokane, WA. Look for the flyer in your mailboxes shortly after that... This event (a three night and four day camp) is for youth from 7-11 years old and is facilitated by Rev. Jackie Green and Penny Gruver. This is the NW Region YOU service project.



Summer Unitreat is June 25th-30th, 2006 at Camp Cispus, Randle, WA. This is for active Uniteen's either 11 or having just completed 6th grade and no more than 14 years old, who have finished 6th, 7th and 8th grade (it is not for youth just out of 5th grade...) This camp is facilitated by Chris Castaldi, NW Region Uniteen Event Coordinator.

For those of you who like to plan ahead....on the far horizon there is:

YED Fall Leadership Weekend, held September 29th-Oct.1st @ Seabeck Conference Center, Seabeck, WA. We will be exploring PRAYER this year.

October is the month for our **YOU Fall Retreat @ Camp Waskowitz** (dates to be announced) and the **Fall Unitreat** will be November 10-12th at Cispus Learning Center, Randle, WA.

A grateful heart to all of you who hold the banner high for our young people...youth ministry is thriving here in the Northwest Region.

On a personal note, I will be completing my first year in the Field Licensing Program this March 16th which will result in my new status as a Licensed Unity Minister that day....again heartfelt thanks to all of you throughout our region!

Namaste, Penny Gruver, LUT

TREASURER'S REPORT

Rev. Roy Ayers

As we complete our fiscal year, I encourage you to pause and reflect on how you chose to contribute to the good work of this Region. You have expanded and deepened the services of Unity ministries, and you have impacted thousands of youth and their families and friends, through providing a Unity spiritual education.

Your gift is an investment in the future of humanity. It is a natural and critical choice to financially strengthen the Region.

From it's inception the Northwest Region has been supported by the gifts, and volunteer services of it's local Unity minister's, churches and friends. We have grown to where we are today because of the financial contributions of this generous Spirit.

Thank you for your support, and for directly sustaining and expanding the rich blessings of Unity in our Northwest Region.

In Gratitude and faith, Roy Ayers

PROSPERITY TASK TEAM

Rev. Georgie Richardson

At Unity of Salem we have a team called Unity Friends. We also have a fund called Unity Friends fund. As a church we tithe one percent of our monthly tithe into that fund, translated into dollars that is about \$100 to \$130 a month. During any given month we might disperse anywhere from \$100 to \$400 and yet the fund never dries up—the cup is always full. How can that be so? Well, from time to time, Spirit guides some dear soul to give a gift of \$500 (more or less) designated to Unity Friends, and with our one percent tithe the cup remains full.

This idea of the cup always being full even when we give out much more than we tithe to the fund, came to me a week or so ago when we wrote a check for \$205 to help someone (who had had heart surgery) with an overdue power bill. This came on the heels of writing a check for \$209 a week prior to help a family of four—mother, 2 sons and a 16 year old eight month pregnant girl, get into a motel—they had been living in their car.

That same evening, February 2, 2006, when I went home, still feeling so grateful for our “full cup,” I was watching the news. There was a short piece on Bono’s invitation to the President’s prayer breakfast. Bono was named Science of Mind’s Spiritual Hero of the Year. He is the lion-haired, sun-glassed front man of rock super-group U2. He is an Irish rocker who works relentlessly to help the poor particularly in Africa. As part of his message to the President and those in attendance at the prayer breakfast, he made an astonishing suggestion. This suggestion is in essence (in my mind) the macrocosm to the microcosm of our one percent tithe to our Unity Friends fund.

Here are a few of the quotes from his remarks to the National Prayer Breakfast (you can read the whole of his remarks at <http://www.data.org/archives/000774>):

He began by saying he felt rather uncomfortable at a Presidential Prayer breakfast. “I’m certainly not here as a man of the cloth, unless that cloth is leather,” he said. He continued by saying that while man makes laws in the great city of Washington, he wanted to talk about “higher laws,” and he began to talk about the poor in our world.

He said that it isn’t about charity. It’s about justice. “Let me repeat,” Bono said, “It’s not about charity, it’s about justice. . . . justice is a higher standard.” He

quoted facts about how many people are dying in Africa every day from preventable, treatable diseases, for lack of drugs we can buy at any drug store.

The point that he finally made, and the point of my sharing this with you, he admitted put him on “very thin ice.” He addressed Mr. President, Congress, people of faith, people of America:

Bono said: “I want to suggest to you today that you see the flow of effective foreign assistance as tithing. . . which, to be truly meaningful, will mean an additional one percent of the federal budget tithed to the poor.”

When I heard the suggestion of the “one percent” tithed to the poor, I remembered again our Unity Friends cup always being full. But you know, that isn’t totally accurate because a number of years ago our church stopped tithing that one percent to that fund and the fund gradually became depleted. It has ONLY been a “full cup” since we resumed tithing one percent to it. Through this one percent we have been able to help folks pay their rent, their power bills, put food on their table, have a meaningful holiday season, take a bus trip to California for a special medical procedure, get a tire for a car so this person could get to work, supply back packs and school supplies for homeless children, and on and on. All of those needs have been met through one percent.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if our country picked up on Bono’s challenge? Can you imagine how many lives would be saved, how many children would go to bed with a full tummy, how many people would be lifted up? As Bono reminds us:

Love is on the move, Mercy is on the move, and God is on the move.

Blessings, Georgie

LET’S HELP OUT:

Rev. Teri Hawkins, Regional Conference Director, has request that each of our churches contribute to a Scholarship Fund to assist ministers and LUTs living in Alaska, Montana and other far away places attend the Regional Conference in May at Menucha. Truly, through our collective generosity none of our ministers or LUTs should miss out on the experience of Regional Conference due to finances. Please take time to let Teri know that YOUR church will contribute to this fund.

God Belongs to All of Us!

. . . and so does the NW Region of Unity Churches. Once a year we come together and reconnect, rejuvenate, reconnoiter and re-play our relationships to our NW regional family and we miss you when you aren't there. We want to know what is happening in Alaska. We want to hear the stories of hilarity during the holidays or the struggles with weariness during changes. We want to dine with you and feed each other's souls. We want each of us to return to our centers feeling a deeper sense of support amongst our peers.

Each of us has a church that we individually lead. Too often the "I-ness" in ministry forgets the "We-ness". Your NW region is the "We" of your "I"; and the "We" wants You! We want to get to know one another better so that we may each expand our "We" in healthy vibrant ways. We want you to know that we feel you belong to our spiritual family. Please come join us this year. If you are in Alaska, call Rev. Teri Hawkins at 541.388.1569 and ask about the financial assistance we are offering to bring our Alaskan leaders to conference to join us.

So Please. . .

Consider this your own personal invitation:

You are enthusiastically invited to join us in all your wondrous self
At the NW Regional Conference—2006
Begins: May 8th, Monday at 6pm
Concludes: May 12th, Friday at noon
Menucha Retreat Center (25 minutes East of Portland Airport)

Joining us will be:

Cherie Larkin: **Growing Your Church**

Bringing Breath to Life: Margaret Townsend

Karl Anthony: Brings his music for the week!

Business Meeting: We will continue developing our new way of doing business.

A.U.C.: We have invited our New President to join us—looking good.

The Village: Tom Zender and company.

And of course, time to **play** and enjoy one another with outings, games and music.

If you did not receive the flyer in the mail with details, please call Jude at **541.388.1569** and she will take care of you.





Unity Earth Care Ministry NW

The Earth Care Team envisions all Unity ministries, collectively and individually, responsibly caring for God's Creation through cooperative prayer, thought, and action.

An Earth Care Prayer

This month's prayer is from the Chinook Psalter:

O Lord,

May we today be touched by grace,
fascinated and moved by this your creation,
energized by the power of new growth at work in
your world.

May we moved beyond viewing this life only
through a frame, but touch it and be touched by
it, know it and be known by it, love it and be
loved by it.

May our bodies, our minds, our spirits, learn
a new rhythm paced by the rhythmic pulse of the
whole created order.

May spring come to us, be in us, and
recreate life in us.

May we forge a new friendship with the
natural world and discover a new affinity with
beauty, with life, and with the Cosmic Christ in
whom all things were created in heaven and on
earth, visible or invisible, whether thrones or
dominions or principalities or authorities. . . for
all things were created through him and for him.

In his name. Amen.

Gathering of the Waters Ceremony at May Conference

Celebrate Mother Earth by attending the Gathering of Waters Ceremony the first evening of Conference at 6 p.m. Please bring a small container of water to join with waters from around the northwest region in a sacred ceremony of connection.

Practical Earth Care - Caring for the Earth Makes Sense

Kathy Long, Great Lakes Region (formerly of the Northwest Region), recently wrote an article for Barbara O'Hearne's Just-In-Time (Jan. 1, 2006; issue 180). In it, Kathy explains how Unity Church of Portland, OR, became one of the first Unity ministries to implement an earth care program. She reports that Rev. Dick Everts worked with a local organization called Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns (www.emoregon.org/INEC.htm) that assisted the church in conducting an energy audit and in participating in a Lighting Efficiency Retrofit Project. As a result, the church's annual electric bills decreased \$1000 the first year and \$1600/year over the next two years. They realized a 3-year return on their investment!

The Fruits of Our Work

We have developed a workshop to help congregations follow The Path to Earth Care. The workshop is intended to inspire, promote, and facilitate Earth Friendly activities for individuals and Unity ministries. Through meditations and affirmations, readings and discussion, participants explore the seven steps of the path for consciously caring for our Mother Earth. Music and prayers from around the world honor our many Earth cultural traditions. The workshop inspires and provides useful tools and resources.

The workshop is available in two formats:

- A 90-minute session to give a taste of the work (an overview) and inspire them to learn more; and
- A 4-hour format that includes time for a team or church community to interact and begin planning their program.

If you would like to host the Path Workshop, contact us by phone in care of Barbara Wilson, Unity of the Olympics, (360) 457-3981, or via e-mail at unityearthcare@yahoo.com.

The Flavor of the Month or the Butter Cream?

By: Rev. Stephen Towles,
Regional Representative

I've been in Unity long enough now to be suspicious or weary of something that claims to be new and better. Too often it is just a recycled old idea with a couple of twists. I am not saying new things are bad, but that they are often just clever expressions of the same ole, same ole. That too isn't necessarily a bad thing because sometimes clever expressions help us to see something in a deeper way. From Psycho-Cybernetics to I'm Ok You're Ok to The Erroneous Zones, Ramtha, Swami this and Swami that. From Yoga being in to being out to being back in again. From pure Yoga to Hot Yoga, to Transcendental Meditation to Vision Quests, to Quantum Physics and Spiral Dynamics. There are and have been lots of ideas, concepts, practices and spiritually based experiences to keep us ever busy on the spiritual path. I would be the last person to think that there has not been value for people involved in these experiences, and I also recognize that we travel an awful lot around the same loop with a different title. Such is the flavor of the month. My latest approach to this is simply to ask if this new thing is just a flavor or is it the Butter Cream out of which the Ice Cream is made.

If some new practice has at its foundation the expression of our Unity Principles, then I believe the new approach or process is something that deserves my attention. I am always looking for ways to take our Unity teachings out into the world and apply them in real life situations and experiences, especially when transformation is possible. The latest new thing going around Unity is the process called Appreciative Inquiry. "Appreciative Inquiry is the study and exploration of what gives life to human systems when they function at their best", says Diana Whitney in her book [The Power of Appreciative Inquiry](#). She goes on to say, "This approach to personal change and organizational change is based on the assumption that questions and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hopes, and dreams are themselves transformational." Over the past twenty years what Diana Whitney has found out is that we create more of whatever we give our attention. An example she uses is about an auto repair company that had a very high customer satisfaction rate based on customer surveys. But the company was not completely satisfied with an acceptable rate, they wanted an outstanding rate. So they decided to contact all of the people they could who had expressed dissatisfac-

tion to find out what was wrong and how they might correct it. Makes sense doesn't it? Identify the problem and solve it. That is what we are taught to do in problem solving. As they began to focus on their dissatisfied customers an interesting thing started to happen, they started getting more dissatisfied customers. We in Unity might smugly say, "Well, that is just the law of mind action, what do you expect". But what would we tell them to do to shift the energy? That is where the Appreciative Inquiry process enters the picture.

The company hired Diana Whitney and her company to come in and help them. They began an inquiry that contacted the "satisfied" customers to find out why they were satisfied. What was the organization doing that created satisfaction? Could you tell us a high point story about your experience with getting your car fixed by this repair shop. As people began to identify the strengths of the company they started focusing on and doing more of what they did well and interestingly enough their satisfaction rate went to an all time high. You create more of that on which you focus your attention. Unity principles in the work place, in organizational dynamics making a difference. If they work there then they must work in Unity, after all it is the foundation of who we are, it is the butter fat that gives the ice cream its substance.

Rev. Susan Burnett-Hampson who took the Appreciative Inquiry training with me in February put together eight principles of an Appreciative Inquiry. They are:

1. Words create worlds.
2. Inquiry creates change.
3. We can choose what we study.
4. Image inspires action.
5. Positive questions lead to positive change.
6. Wholeness brings out the best in people and organizations.
7. Acting "as if" is self-fulfilling.
8. Free choice liberates power.

You can do an Inquiry into your church centered around a single area that you wish to bring forth into expression. If you want more growth what might happen if you inquired into your congregation about what attracted them and kept them, having them tell the story of their discovery of Unity and this church? From this the Positive Core of the church can be discerned and the dream can be brought forth built upon the existing strengths of the ministry.

There is a powerful energy released into the ministry when its members resonate with what brought them there and transformed their lives. Out of this can be brought the manifestation of the vision. Consider the contrast in an Appreciative Approach versus Problem Solving.

1. An Appreciative approach asks “What Gives Life?”. Problem Solving identifies the problem.
2. An Appreciative approach says, “Imagine what might be”. Problem Solving conducts a root cause analysis.
3. An Appreciative approach says, “Discover and discern what Spirit wants us to create together”. Problem solving would brainstorm solutions and analyze them.
4. Appreciative Inquire would focus on bringing “Dreams and ideas into manifestation. Problem solving would develop strategic action plans (which are often left on the shelf as they have no life energy in them).

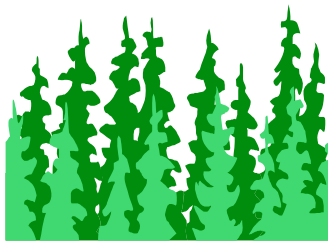
This process is being embraced at the highest levels of our Unity movement. Unity School of Christianity has been doing an Appreciative Inquiry with their employees regarding the qualities that must be present in their new CEO. The very willingness to ask and give people a place to tell their powerful stories has brought a breath of fresh air to unity. One clerk is quoted as saying, “I’m just a clerk and they care about what I think?”

I have the feeling this process is going to be around for a long time because it is what we teach, it is the butter cream not the “flavor of the month”. It has brought me back to my roots by grounding me in my powerful story. I am organizing an inquiry into my church and my board is very enthused about the process. After all who wouldn’t be excited about finding out what we do well and hearing people’s transformational stories. Please stay tuned for more information as we move through this process. Namaste’

Regional Opportunities Offered

Newsletter Editor and Web Site Development with Maintenance

The NW Region desires a talented and experienced person(s) who desires to serve the Region in these important media expressions of our Regional services and activities. NW Region’s Unity’s ability to stay in touch and share valuable information is critical to the expression and demonstration of the Region’s purpose and values. The Newsletter is issued quarterly. The web site is on going, organic and in need of expansion into greater service to the Region’s members and the public. . If you are interested in serving the NW Region in this critical area, please send a letter of your interest and qualifications to: contact@unitynwregion.org by May 1, 2006



**NORTHWEST REGION
of the ASSOCIATION
of UNITY CHURCHES**

**PO Box 6185
Lynnwood WA 98036**

**Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mount Lake Terrace, WA
Permit No. 132**

Sent with love and blessings to:

Northwest Region of Association of Unity Churches

Statement of Values

As members of the Northwest Region we commit to:

- Creating spiritual community through education and practice of the Unity teachings and principles
- Experiencing unity in diversity as God in expression
- Practicing innovation and creativity in all that we do
- Healing and transforming through the power of love, prayer and Spirit
- Supporting our children and youth on their spiritual journey.

Mission Statement

We love, respect and support each other as we grow and empower our ministries.

Vision Statement

We are a community of powerful, prosperous and successful people committed to Unity ministry.

As a region we pray together, reach out, and care for each other.

Through the sharing of resources and information, and the education and training of our leadership, we encourage ministries to thrive.

We utilize systems, processes, and technology to enhance our capacity to minister with ease and flexibility.

In God, we enthusiastically do together more than we can do alone.

We Offer You:

- Professional peacemaking training
- Our Spring Regional Conference
- Paid Youth Education Consultant who presents workshops/conferences and trainings within our region
- Paid Youth of Unity (YOU) Consultant who presents rallies, workshops/ conferences and trainings within our region
- Summer Camp for youth and teens
- A Regional Representative
- A Licensed Teacher Representative
- Two SEE scholarships towards becoming a Licensed Unity Teacher
- One regional MEP scholarship awarded to second-year Student
- Regional Trainings for church boards
- Yearly Family Summer Retreat at Crystal Mountain in August