

Unity Spiritual Center



A Message from Audrey

1st Quarter 2010

We are once again at the portal of another year. Perhaps nothing fills the screen of our human mind as much as the news of the state of our economy. If you are one of the millions of people who have been laid off during 2009, or have had hours and wages reduced, or are watching the days go by until your unemployment income runs out, you may be tempted to give in to fear. Your experience of lack may be flying in the face of the spiritual principles you've been endeavoring to practice in your life.

If you've ever run a marathon, swam laps, or done some other strenuous physical activity, you may have had the experience termed 'hitting a wall.' It is the place where physical strength alone isn't enough to continue. Every breath is labored, every motion a pain and weariness that saps the strength. Yet, if you keep on, there is a moment when, like stepping through a doorway into another room, you find yourself in a totally different experience. Suddenly, resistance is gone. Running is almost effortless, and each swim stroke is a joy of water and motion. There is a tireless sense that you could continue for hours.



When wanting to practice spiritual principles during times of great change or challenge, you may sometimes feel like you've hit an inner wall in the mind. It is where the beliefs that run this world and the Truth of your Reality meet. The ego thought system takes this opportunity to drag out every shred of evidence it can find to convince you that to believe that God is your Source is insanity.

Over and over again, the Gospels tell us of a generous and giving Creator. Ask and it will be given, seek and you shall find. Give and you will receive, tamped down, flowing over;

We have thought this meant earthly things. We have striven and prayed and pledged the sun and moon of our lives in order to get the things we think will finally satisfy us. Well, something is being offered to us, but it isn't what we think.

It seems paradoxical. *"It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"* (Lk. 12:32). Yet God doesn't offer us earthly things. God doesn't even know about 'things'. How can the Formless know form? How can the infinite be limited? How can the Changeless change? God is not a 'HE'. God isn't even an 'IT.' This God we speak of isn't known by any human standards. The intellect cannot grasp the abstract. So we do the best we can by saying that God is Spirit, Absolute

Good, Infinite, Limitless, Unconditionally Loving, Eternal, Change-less, Timeless, Perfect, Whole, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent.

The knowledge that God is our Source finally leads us to the discovery that a *consciousness of God* is our prosperity.

It is very much like hitting and moving beyond an inner wall. Focusing on a greater awareness of God within, we align ourselves with Spirit's Script for our lives. The result is a life where doors begin to open before us. Unexpected good comes our way. Where once only obstacles, brick walls and a sense of despair filled our experience, we now begin to open our mind to possibilities unthought of before.

With the Holy Spirit as our Guide, we seek, even in the face of enormous evidence of lack and limitation—to find reasons for gratitude. We begin to view giving—whether it be of ideas, service, love, light, prayer, or material goods—as a natural way of awakening to the reality of having.

We notice opportunities when they appear. We awaken to an emerging and growing sense of peace and well-being. The world continues doing what the world does, but our perception of it has shifted. We no longer see ourselves as powerless victims, but individuals with an

invisible means of support in seeing things and people differently.

"Ask, and it will be given you" (Matt 7:7). "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mk 11:24).

Spirit is saying, "Here I am, beloved, ask for ME, and I am yours. When you enter into this Mind that is in Jesus Christ, you are consciously with me, and you will want for nothing."

Let our new year's resolution be to ask Spirit for Help whenever we find ourselves fearful for any reason. Then, seek for reasons to be grateful, accepting the Love that is being offered.

Happy New Year, Happy New You!

Love,
Audrey



President's Message

by: Fran Polacco

As 2009 draws to a close and we look forward to 2010, I am reminded that most of us tend to make resolutions as we anticipate the New Year. We might vow to lose weight, save money, quit smoking, or get in shape, go back to school, you get the idea. All of these and any other resolution you might make are valid goals. All are worth pursuing and all if achieved can make positive inroads into our lives.

I ask you though, to look back honestly over the years. How many of us are still pursuing our resolutions with commitment and vigor by the end of January? Do you wonder why New Year's resolutions are made with such good intention and yet they are so soon forgotten?

My theory is this. As I consider resolutions they seem to be made with the idea that something is wrong in our lives that needs to be fixed. This is not a bad thing, but I do think it sets us up for failure. One of the lessons I have learned from Unity teachings is that anything derived from negative energy cannot ultimately be sustained. We are all made in the

image of God and therefore perfect as we are. As we go into 2010 maybe instead of making resolutions we should take stock. Let's try making a list of everything we like about ourselves. Let's make note of all the things that are working well in our lives. Let's bring in 2010 with a list of things we were grateful for in 2009.

If we come into 2010 with the energy and strength of positive energy and gratitude we can't help but be more successful in our goals then we have been when we go about it in the usual way. If we want to lose weight, great, go for it. All I ask is that we don't go into it thinking that we are imperfect; therefore we must lose weight to be worthy. Instead, let's go into it thinking we are worthy of good food and good health.

I ask you to join me in this new spin on an old New Year's tradition and let's make 2010 the best it can be for all.

Love to All,
Franny

Radical Forgiveness Making Room for the Miracle

by: Connie Wilson

Is there someone that you are unable to forgive, no matter how hard you try or how much you pray? Or, is it yourself that you're unable to "let off the hook," with frequent thoughts of self-recrimination and woulda, shoulda, couldas? Well, this book could change your life! It gives **real** tools that **actually work** and amazingly quickly.

How does radical forgiveness differ from traditional forgiveness?

In traditional forgiveness, we usually see ourselves as having been victimized by someone who did something bad to us, but we're choosing to forgive that person because we have been taught that it's the right thing to do - especially for someone on a spiritual path. This form of forgiveness is judgment-based, maintains our sense of separation, and often leaves us feeling victimized, conflicted inside, inauthentic - **and still hurting**. Radical forgiveness aims to teach what Jesus taught - that there are no victims. This unique approach, and the practical tools the book offers, helps us to see the **absolute perfection** in the situation from the **soul's** perspective, resulting in our experiencing a transformation in consciousness that truly frees us - and everyone else involved. Genuine forgiveness heals our pain and enables us to move on; it releases trapped energy and improves our health. And, it makes room for the miracle!

This book, by Colin C. Tipping, has been heartily endorsed by many authors with whom we at Unity are familiar, such as Caroline Myss, John Bradshaw, Catherine Ponder, Mark Victor Hanson, Alan Cohen and Neal Donald Walsch.

This will be a six week study group that will meet Thursday mornings from 10:30 to 11:55, beginning February 4 and concluding on March 11, 2010. It will be a **closed** group - which means that if you want to attend you **must** be present for the first meeting on February 4. If you would like to be part of this group, please sign up so that we have a sufficient number of books available for you in our bookstore. This study group will be facilitated by Connie Wilson, an Approved Radical Forgiveness Book Study Facilitator. For more info, call 908-735-6715.



Suggested love offering:
\$10 per week



2009 Reflection

by: Rebecca Stoker

As we prepare to bid farewell to 2009 and usher in a new year, we are given an opportunity to step back and reflect on what has happened over the past twelve months and to look forward and envision what we'd like to happen over the next twelve months and beyond.

Many significant things have happened this year.

At our January 2009 retreat, the Board of Trustees and Reverend Audrey completed a goal-setting exercise as a way of clarifying our vision and creating a sort of road map for the board's activities over the 2009 calendar year. The process we used is called "The Twelve Golden Goals," and the following are the 12 goals that we established:

1. To touch our members
2. To boost the effectiveness of the Unity office administration
3. To establish better communication
4. To participate in community outreach activities
5. To beautify the pavilion
6. To clarify our mission and purpose
7. To develop a structured education program
8. To address our heating and air conditioning concerns
9. To begin landscaping the Unity property
10. To pave the driveway and parking areas within 5 years
11. To see our weekly attendance double by February 1st, 2011
12. To participate in the region's first chaplaincy training program

All of these goals were set under the umbrella and with the intention of achieving our main, overarching goal, which is to offer spiritual nourishment to every person who walks through those doors into our Unity Center. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, as we became clear about what we wanted to accomplish this year, the people and the resources we needed began to show up and these tasks began to get taken care of, not only by board members, but also by enthusiastic members of the community who weren't even necessarily aware that

the board had established these goals. But the goal of feeding both the members and the guests in our community is not a goal that stops with the Board of Trustees. Think about this for a moment. What would our center look like and feel like if everybody in this community adopted the goal to spiritually nourish every person who walked through those doors? What if that became your intention each time you came to church on Sunday?

There are many ways we feed each other and there are many ways that you can participate in that very ambitious goal:

You can volunteer in the kitchen during fellowship to help provide a space where people can nourish their bodies with food and their souls with conversations among like-minded individuals.

You can offer to be an usher or a greeter and welcome our members and guests at the door with a smile and a warm hello.

You can feed the members of the congregation with the affirmations offered in our Daily Word readings.

You can participate in the beautification of our physical facility and help to create a beautiful, clean, sacred space for all of the activities that take place here.

You can work with our children and our teens and help to teach them the same important spiritual principles that we learn in the Sunday Service each and every Sunday. Or you can support our existing teachers by volunteering as an assistant or substitute teacher or by helping them with the administrative tasks that go in to making that program so good for our youth.

You can be a part of our caregiving ministry and support the members of our community who are struggling with illness or injuries or who are simply in need of assistance.

You can bring your marketing or business skills to the administrative end of the table and help us to touch as many lives

as we can through effective business practices.

You can lead a service activity and thereby help Unity to have a positive impact on our community and our world.

You can facilitate a class and share your spiritual wisdom and knowledge.

You can get involved with the music team and nourish people with song.

As you can see your gifts and skills are invaluable to this community and you can use those gifts to help further that overarching goal to nourish every person who walks through our doors. You can also imagine, I'm sure, what it would be like to walk into an organization where every other person's goal is to offer you spiritual nourishment. Can you envision the strength of a community which has made this kind of commitment to each other?

At a leadership training that was recently hosted by our Unity Center, we learned that one of our goals, as we endeavor to grow from a church that survives into a church that thrives, must be to move out of the pastor-flock model of leadership where one person, the minister, is the center of the universe and the primary caregiver within the community, and into a holarchical model in which we all minister to each other and we all take ownership of the task of fulfilling the center's vision and mission.

This December, as we acknowledge how far we've come, celebrate where we are, and envision the future of Unity Spiritual Center, I invite you to consider your role here. Where do you fit into the big picture? What gifts will you share to further Unity's vision and mission? Are you ready to take the next step in your spiritual growth? In 2010, how will you make a difference?

Namaste.

Rebecca Stoker
Unity Board Trustee

Super SEE (Spiritual Enrichment Education)

Saturdays Beginning in February 2010

During the past year, there have been several people from our ministry who've expressed an interest in amassing Unity class credits. Some are definitely on the Licensed Unity Teacher (LUT) path, others, aren't sure that's where they may end up, but still want Unity Credit Classes for their personal spiritual development.

Debrah Palmer is currently finishing up the final requirements for Licensing. Once that happens, she'll be able to help teach ongoing Credit Classes here at Unity Spiritual Center (and in her home in Edison).

As you know, Connie Wilson has been coordinating our Mind, Body, Spirit Program for the past year. Noting the growing desire for Credit Classes, and the expense and time required to fly out to Unity Village, MO for them, she suggested we find a way for people to amass 40 credits in just five Saturdays, right here at Unity Spiritual Center.



We've partnered with Rev. Joy Wyler from Unity of Lehigh Valley in Emmaus, PA; Rev. Judi Venturini from Unity Center for Spiritual Living in Bethlehem, PA; LUT, Wilma Alvarez (from ULV) to offer four classes totaling 10 hours each, spread out over five Saturdays.

If you are interested in being a part of this Super Saturday SEE program, mark your calendar for Feb. 27th, & Mar 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th. Should inclement weather be a problem, we will simply add an extra Saturday as a snow date.

Call the office if you plan to attend, as each instructor needs to order materials. 908-730-8792.

Cost: \$36 registration fee for each credit class (this is mailed out to Unity Village). A free-will donation will also be received at each class so we can give each of the instructors 50%.

THE GAME—January 17th

Every year around this time we usually have a social event (we call them Round Robins) during which time we play "THE GAME." However, this year, it seems our calendar is already very full in November & December, so we have moved our plans into the new year.

Sunday, **January 17th**, please plan to bring a covered dish with you. After the Service, we will enjoy a luncheon together, and play **THE GAME**.

The fact that we're doing it *after* Christmas may very well be a boon.

For those not familiar with THE GAME, this is how it works:

1. Look through the things you have at home (Christmas gifts??) and find one that, in your estimation is either odd, doesn't match your decor, or so unusual or hideous that you'd be happy to unload it.
2. Wrap it in pretty paper (with a bow if you'd like).
3. Bring it with you to Unity on Jan. 17th.

After we eat, we'll play THE GAME. We'll explain the rules when it's time to play, but needless to say, it's a riot to play and you get to unload the thing.



Unity Spiritual Center

453 Bellwood Avenue
Ashbury, NJ 08802

Office Telephone
908-730-8792 or 908-730-8642

Office Fax - 908-730-8546

Visit us at www.unityspiritualcenter.org



UNITY SPIRITUAL CENTER LEADERSHIP

Our Officers are:

President: Fran Polacco
Vice President: Deb Coscia
Secretary: Millie Pasoreck
Treasurer: Pat Frain
Trustee: Rebecca Stoker
Trustee: Sarah Doyle
Trustee: Doug Murray
Minister: Audrey P. Bickford

MISSION STATEMENT:

"Unity Spiritual Center is a loving community dedicated to the teaching and practicing of Unity principles. Through fellowship, education, and service we contribute to our own spiritual awakening and to the awakening of all humanity."

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Please consider volunteering your time and talent to help our spiritual home.

If you are interested in volunteering to help out at Unity, please send an email to volunteer@unityspiritualcenter.org.

All sorts of things to do... whether you have an hour or more!

SILENT MEDITATION

Thursdays
12:00-12:20 and 12:30-12:50.

Join us for one or both of these time periods, as we meditate for a higher awareness of the Presence of God. If you cannot physically join us, join us from wherever you are.



Science and Spirituality 4 Thursdays starting in January

Thursdays from 7-8:30pm, 4 weeks
January 7, 14, 21, and 28

Can science prove the existence of God? What are the similarities between science and spirituality? And can religion withstand technology? Come join the discussion, as we take an in depth look at these and other similar questions. We will watch interviews of experts in the fields of science, theology, and philosophy - and a group discussion will follow.



This class will be facilitated by Carl Pasoreck, whose mission for this class is that it move us closer to the ultimate establishment of oneness between science and spirituality, and, thereby, the oneness of humanity.

Suggested love offering: \$10 per week.

