

# September 2023

*A Year of Grace & Gratitude*

SEPTEMBER



Dear Friends,

In Unity we begin and end everything with prayer. I think of prayer as a practice that brings me closer to the truth of who I am in Spirit. As such, I feel freed through this practice. It is my greatest hope that each of you, my dear friends, have the same experience. Now, when I talk about prayer, let me qualify that by saying that the way I understand prayer, it includes meditation and contemplation.

For me, I love the words of prayer. Last month I referred to one of the beatitudes that encourages those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness.” I hunger and thirst for words that bring my soul to life. I savor them when I find them, looking at each word and phrase to find it’s deeper meaning in my life. I know that’s not true for everyone, but it’s true for me. I begin a prayer time with words, letting them flow over and through me, paying attention to the experience. Then I seek out the specific words that move me, the ones that light me up, and I repeat them over and over. I ask myself what they mean...and what they mean beyond that meaning. And then I ask God the same thing. That’s what I do on my own.

This month we look at the many ways to pray and connect with God, whether through the creation of beauty through music or another artistic expression; time spent in nature surrounded by the Great Out Doors; relationships that nurture love and compassion so strongly there’s no denying a Power Greater than us, and more.

Prayer nurtures and sustains us, individually and collectively. Thank you Holy Spirit!

Love & Laughter – Reverend Terry

## Sunday Celebration Services 10 a.m.

*Broadcasts & recordings  
are available on our website  
under the Media tab*

**Rev. Terry Murray, Minister**

### Board Members:

Greg Psaltis, Chair  
Addie Robinson, Vice-Chair  
Diana Ehri, Treasurer  
Susan McClure, Secretary  
Elmo Modes, Member

### Staff Team Members:

Janene Cummings, Music Director  
Indira Goins, Office Administrator  
Marlisa Hollinger, Bookkeeper  
Kyle Leapline, Minister's Assistant  
& Teen Youth Lead  
Lisa Petrich, Youth Director  
Karen Reddick, Social Media

**Unity of Olympia @TBH  
Office hours:**

By Appointment Only

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**Please note:** *As there are many in our community with chemical sensitivities, we ask you please leave your scented lotions, perfumes, and other fragrances at home. Thank you.*

## Sunday Services | 10:00am

The many volunteers at Unity of Olympia work diligently to bring the Sunday Service to FaceBook and YouTube through our website at [www.unityofolympia.org](http://www.unityofolympia.org) on Sunday mornings. It continues to be available for viewing on Facebook and YouTube following the service and on our website in the media - recorded services section. Our at home members are important to us and we bless you with patience as we continue to do the best we can.

Unity of Olympia is an engaging spiritual community dedicated to the fullest expression of the Divine in all.

**Our vision is** a world powerfully transformed through the growing movement of spiritual awakening.

**Our mission is** to celebrate, meditate, learn and serve - to affirm the Divine in all.

**Our welcoming community values** personal connection, celebrating diversity, authenticity, evolving spirituality, and service.

Hello Unity Family--

I'm not sure about you, but I'm holding my breath hoping summer lasts just a bit longer. As someone who often enjoys swimming in the lake, I know how cool that water will be in the fall and I'm already needing to build my courage. Lol

However, thinking of the color palette autumn has in store, it really brings a smile. I love this quote by Faith Baldwin:

"Autumn burned brightly, a running flame through the mountains, a torch flung to the trees."

Fall brings those flaming colors as well as fresh beginnings and I'm excited to see what the season has in store for our community.

I am getting such positive feedback regarding the Unity Choir and that sure does warm my heart-- we have so much fun performing for you all.

You know... Christmas is coming and if you enjoy singing caroles, consider joining us, even if it's just for the holidays!

On the 24th of this month, Mike and Caryn Mercker will be sharing their heart warming harmony-- come say hello. They provide the music ministry for our sister community in Centralia and their talent truly is a blessing.

The Audio/Visual Team has openings for volunteers in every position. See me or Kyle Leapline for more information about how to be of service with this team. It is so rewarding to be a part of the Sunday morning crew-- consider giving it a shot if it resonates with you.

May each of you find deep comfort in cool early mornings and colorful, dancing leaves-- autumn around here really puts on a show!

Much love,

Janene Cummings,

Music Minister



**September 2023**

*Youth and Family Ministry, Lisa Petrich - Director*



## Unity of Olympia's Backpack Blessing!

Sunday, September 3, 2023

Greetings from the Youth and Family Ministry!



**Check it out - Awakening to Spiritual Power - New Inclusive Curriculum starts September 17th!** I'm so

excited for our new adventures into the topics presented to Awaken to our Spiritual Powers. How can we recognize and apply our Spiritual Powers to enhance our lives by building our community and living our authentic lives.

Please plan to join us each week as we explore topics for every age. You may want to purchase the book, *The Untethered Soul*, by Michael Singer to follow along with the teens and adults.

**Welcome Kyle Leapline!** Kyle comes to us to support a teen program in our community - more information forthcoming. I'm excited to work with him and for us to bring our teens a meaningful and fun program!

**Unity Worldwide Regional Events!** Unity Northwest Region offers a wealth of opportunities throughout the year for kids, middle schoolers, and high schoolers!  
<https://www.unitynwregion.org/Youth-Events>





## Board Treasurer Report

by Diana Ehri

### Prosperity Corner

"I understand prosperity encompasses inspiration, guidance, loving relationships, healing, and all the immeasurable blessings that give warmth, depth, and color to life." *Unity daily word, August 8, 2023*

### Our New Online Giving Program

In August, we announced we're switching our online giving provider. Our mission is to better steward every gift contributed to our church, and that's why we're going to use Breeze, powered by Tithe.ly, as our new online and text-giving platform.

We truly appreciate that many of you took advantage of the Wild Apricot program, either through one-time or recurring gifts, and we're excited to transition over to Breeze for future online and text giving donations.

A lot of thought went into switching giving providers, and ultimately, because of all the benefits that come with using Breeze, we decided it was the right move for us. We were searching for a more comprehensive church management system that would better serve our needs, and Breeze came up #1 and checked the boxes we were looking for. Breeze is all-inclusive and has online and text giving built right in for no additional fees. So it will save us money while giving us better service. Plus, it helps us consolidate tools and manage all gifts in one secure system making daily admin tasks much easier (such as running year-end giving statements for our members). As you can see, we are pretty excited about it.

We will keep you posted as we get closer to going live. Busy working in the background, transitions can be bumpy, etc.

Now for the blah, blah, blah ..... Our income for the month of July was \$15,187.46. Expenses totaled \$15,946.03 with a negative ending balance of \$758.57. Checking/savings account balance as of July 31, 2023, is \$9,492.73. Don't be alarmed though, our expenses vary widely from month to month because of the inconsistent flow of expenses. As always, we greatly appreciate your continuous support through the automatic giving program.



## **Town Hall – September 10th in the Sanctuary immediately following Sunday Service.**

Find out what's been happening behind the scenes in our search for our next right and perfect home. Ask questions and share whatever's on your heart - with one another and the Board of Trustees.

We hope to see you there!



## **World Day of Prayer Is September 13–14**

Affirmative prayer can transform our lives. Every September, we celebrate this with friends from around the globe on World Day of Prayer. It is our privilege to invite you to join us at this year's event. Learn more and register at

<https://www.unity.org/article/world-day-prayer-2023?PromotionCode=EP610500>



### Dinner for Six

Spiritual Community is co-created through your participation. Join a group close to home and choose the dates and times that work best for you together. One meal a month, shared with members of your spiritual family, now through December.

The primary purpose of these groups is to facilitate personal connection over a meal. Groups will be encouraged to have enough food so that an extra person (or maybe 2) new to our spiritual community could be invited for a single evening to get acquainted with more people and to see if Unity is a fit for them.



We want to send a very special thank you out to Mary Ellen Psaltis for coming up with the idea and helping us implement our inaugural round that began back in April. All those that participated whole-heartedly agree that this was a fantastic program and we all enjoyed getting to know both long-time members and those new to Unity quite a bit better! Thank you, Mary Ellen, we are so grateful for your efforts!

Join us for an informational meeting on September 10th after Sunday service to learn more - and if you are ready to sign up now, we encourage you to do so on our website now!



## Unity of Olympia's Backpack Blessing!

Sunday, September 3, 2023



Have your child(ren) bring their backpacks to Sunday Service for a blessing from our congregation! School supplies can be donated to the YFM for the weeks leading up to the event! Please donate enough supplies for 15 or more students. See District websites for supplies for Elementary students or ask Lisa Petrich our Youth Director for suggestions. Hope to see you there!

## History & Vision of Unity of Olympia - Community Class

Facilitated by Rev. Terry Murray

Sunday September 10th from 1:00 - 2:30pm @TBH

History & Vision of Unity of Olympia is a required class for membership at Unity of Olympia. If you are interested in learning more about Unity of Olympia's History and our vision for the future, we encourage you to join us - regardless of your membership path!

You are welcome to register on our website or just show up! You are welcome here - please join us!

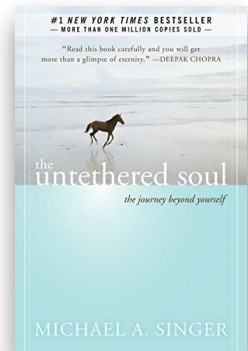


## Awakening to Spiritual Power with The Untethered Soul by Michael Singer

September 17th through October 29th 11:30 to 1:00 pm

Join Kyle Leapline for this interactive journey to your own inner mystic. "...you not only have the ability to find yourself, you have the ability to free yourself...upon completion of your journey...there will be no more confusion, no more lack of empowerment. And if you choose to devote yourself to the ongoing journey of self-realization, you will develop a tremendous sense of respect for who you really are...then you will come to appreciate the full depth of the meaning in the advice: "This above all: to thine own self be true."" Michael Singer

[Register Online!](#)



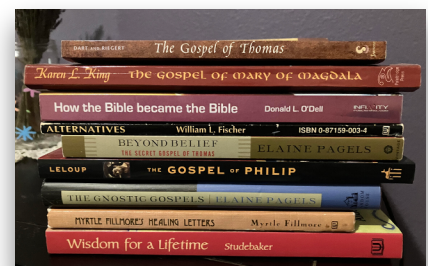
## New Thought Bible Study Book Group

9:30 to 10:45 on Zoom

*For the curious, the doubtful and the wishful thinkers. Drop-ins always welcome.*

Get ready in September for the book: *How the Bible Became the Bible* by Donald L. O'Dell.

This book is a call for honest spirituality rather than guilt-laced religiosity. This author tells the story of how the religious and the spiritual have been at odds throughout the history of the Bible as well as in the selection of materials to include and/or exclude in the Bible. Beginning September 2nd. [Register online.](#)





### Spiritual Explorers - Women's Book Study Group

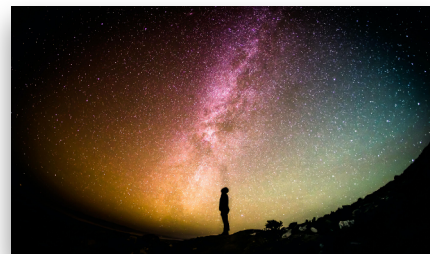
Thursdays from 11:00am - 12:15pm

Women Seeking Exceptional Spiritual Growth

The Spiritual Explorers book study group provides a safe place to explore spiritual beliefs, religious historical context, and evolutionary trends in a variety of traditions, providing an avenue for spiritual unfoldment. Members engage, learn, nurture, and inspire one another in pursuit and discovery of joyful, and loving lives. The group will be cooperatively led by the members.

We will begin Brene Brown's Atlas of the Heart on September 7.

The maximum capacity for the group is 12 members. Interested? [Register on our website!](#)



### SpiritGroups: Hats for the Houseless - Hugs for Hope

The third Tuesday of every month at 2:00pm

Calling all knitters and crocheters. Do you want to use up all that extra yarn you have been accumulating and put it to good use? We will make hats for the houseless and pocket hugs for Chemo Bags of Hope.

If you are interested in joining this 4H SpiritGroup, [please register online](#) to connect with Diana Ehri!



### SpiritGroups: Unity Hiking Group

Lead by Nancy Link & Geoffrey LaForce

Dates & Locations vary. [Register to stay informed](#)

Physical, Emotional, Social, and Spiritual

If you are looking for authentic and meaningful conversation while hiking- that's the goal. Every month the Unity Hiking group will plan a brisk less than 5-mile walking hike in the Puget Sound area that incorporates prayer, guided walking meditation, and other topics/ activities that help foster genuine connection and intellectual stimulation.

**September Hike:** September 13th, 2023 @5:30pm Tumwater Falls Park, 0.9 miles, est. 21m+  
110 Deshutes Pkwy SW, Tumwater, WA 98501





### **Weekly Meditation Sangha (Community)**

Wednesdays 6:00-7:30 pm

This is an open invitation to join in community to simply enjoy the moment of now, and sit together in meditation.

- 20 minutes of sitting
- Short walking meditation or mindful movement
- 10 minutes of sitting
- Dharma sharing, reading wisdom of Thich Nhat Hahn or his students.
- Mindful sharing about your practice

This event takes place at Temple Beth Hatfiloh and is facilitated by Nije' Pinder. Donations are accepted. Questions? Contact [office@unityofolympia.org](mailto:office@unityofolympia.org). Please note: if this is your first time attending, plan to arrive 10 minutes prior to 6:00pm. Thank you!

[Register Online!](#)



## Prayer Team

A transformational Tale of Angels and Prayer Boxes

By Linda Ihrig

You may not believe in angels, but bear with me. I am trusting that since you are a Unity truth student, you believe in the power of prayer.

This is the fourth principle of Unity. Now not all prayers are answered with visions. It may come in the form of a nudge to go in a different direction, a dream that grabs hold and won't let go, a synchronistic event, or a profound sense of release and peace. But in my story, an angel and prayer box, go hand in hand.

Over twenty-five years ago, I felt ousted by my church community. Of course, it wasn't everybody, and it is certainly not our present community. You could think of it as a hostile takeover by a group that wasn't very attached to our community, coupled with a flaw in the bylaws. A small group of individuals didn't approve of how I was appointed to the board, so they did a recall that sent me packing. I was hurt and defensive. I left the church community and nearly lost my faith for almost two years. Then an amazing thing happened.

During my absence, I became very conscious of thought patterns that were getting in the way of what I wanted in my life. I began letting go of my ego leading me into roles and situations that were not for my highest good. I learned to set personal boundaries, to say no a little more. I spent a lot of time studying Unity principles and practices, and the power of prayer became evident.

Unity's fourth principle states, "Through prayer and meditation we align our heart-mind with God. Denials and affirmations are tools we use." I cannot say I believed it immediately. Sometimes I am a slow learner or perhaps a devoted questioner. How did it work? What is the best way to pray? How do we find the Divine in horrific circumstances?

Prayer became the focus of my spiritual practice: breathing, releasing ego and emotions, affirmations, meditating in the stillness, realizing oneness with God, gratitude. Prayer in all circumstances, both joys and sorrows. As my dear friend said to me, "God is in the journey and God is in the destination." Though my practice was consistent and deepening, I still struggled with doubt.

Then came my turning point.

My sister and I went to a Unity women's weekend retreat, a place and time for some deep exploration and contemplation. In the corner of our meeting room there was an altar. Placing my prayer request into the box, I asked for wisdom on how to reclaim my faith and spiritual community. I left it there, not certain I was asking the right question or even anticipating a clear answer.

A year went by...

The next spring, I returned to another Unity women's retreat. Same place, same box. As we were getting set up, I headed to the prayer box to add my new request. When I opened the lid, a little piece of paper was stuck along one side of the box...It looked familiar. I pulled it out and realized it was the same request I had placed in the box a year earlier. Huh?! Did God even hear, or in this case, see my prayer? In hindsight it was clear, of course a divine intention was set into action.



I walked away puzzled and lay down on my yoga mat with the rest of the group to do a deep meditation. I drifted slowly into the Silence. Soon I became aware of what appeared to be a small angel figure, much like a figurine, standing at my shoulder. I was a little surprised. I was definitely in that liminal space of imagination and prayer, so I figured it was my imagination. Still, as I paid attention, the angel grew bigger until this being was standing beside me, nearly human sized, radiant. A very clear voice or Presence said, "It is time to go back and heal Unity of Olympia."

That is not a message I could ignore, received 25 years ago. I am still present in this blessed community.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to grow my faith in prayer. No, not all prayers are answered with a vision. It has been a rare event in my life. Usually, it is more of a push, or a dream, or something I read that says something profound. And it isn't always the answer I want. Yet with absolute confidence I know prayer is answered. Through this experience, prayer became the cornerstone of my spiritual practice and my purpose in life. I studied most of Myrtle and Charles Fillmore's books, other Unity writers, like Rev. Linda Martella-Whitsett. Becoming part of the prayer team, holding the sacredness of people's prayers, learning to be a spiritual director to help others find their path to the Divine within, all of these continue to lead me deeper into an experience of the Sacred Mystery.

Prayers are answered in the right time and the right form for our highest good. God is good, all the time.

"When I pray, I feel my heart go deeper into my God."

### Join the Unity Choir!

Enjoy singing? Come join the Unity choir! Janene Cummings is looking for people that love to sing, music reading not required. This choir is all about sharing heart and soul through song.

There will be scheduled rehearsals some Sundays after service and a monthly Sunday morning performance. Bring your amazing spirit and musical talent and let's make a joyful noise!

Email [music@unityofolympia.org](mailto:music@unityofolympia.org)





Throughout the weekend participants will get in touch with their sense of wonder and joy. We will celebrate the good within and around us while engaging in some quality spiritual play!

Retreat is for people who sincerely desire to learn more about Truth and are willing and able to contribute by actively participating in Retreat activities.

Financial assistance available.



Register via the QR code or on our website at <https://unitynwregion.org/event-5367820>



## Thurston County Food Project - Green bag pick-up date is Sunday, October 1st!

### Sharing Food. Building Community.

*You want to help. We make it easy!*

You are invited to join with us in partnering with the Thurston County Food Project to provide food for our community via donations for the Thurston County Food Bank. Unity of Olympia member, Karen Reddick and her three children have been involved in this project for several years in her own neighborhood and they are extending their reach even further by collecting bags of food from our Unity Community as well.

For the month of August we contributed to an overall, project-wide collection that resulted in a whopping 9,250 lbs of food donated plus \$2,980 in cash donations, resulting in a grand total value of \$19,815! That's worth 10,887 meals! Together we make a difference.

Our next Green Bag Day is Sunday, October 1st! Bring your bag full of non-perishable items to church that Sunday and see what we can do when we work together to help our community!

[Register Online!](#)



## Lunch Service for the Homeless Shelter

Interested in being of service to neighbors with limited access to food? Unity of Olympia has been supporting the homeless through the Interfaith Works Shelter Program, Unity Commons, for over 5 years! Several groups within Unity join together to provide lunch for the Day Shelter twice a month.

You can become a member of a serving group OR You can become a volunteer for an on-site service. Training is provide the 1st Saturday of each month at Sergio Day Center. Fall training begins Saturday, September 2, 10:00am-1:00pm. Registration is required. Can't make this date... never fear! EACH MONTH provides a new session.

Would you like to join us? Contact Cathy Evans for further information.

Go ahead and reach out to our neighbors! Our connection is truly a blessing.



<https://www.interfaith-works.org/get-involved.html>





*Social justice and peace  
through interfaith understanding  
and cooperation.*

## Interfaith Works in September

Cynthia and James Dallas as well as Sandy Crowell attended the annual Interfaith Works Garden Party on Saturday, August 12th at the Center for Spiritual Living. They found it inspiring as community members and groups were recognized that had gone above and beyond in their support of the Interfaith Works organization. Annual awards were given. The business award went to L&E Bottling, the Faith Community of the year award recognized the Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation, and the volunteer of the year is Khurshida Begum. Cynthia reports that they found the evening meaningful, delightful, and delicious! They were filled with gratitude knowing that Unity of Olympia contributes to this awesome community ministry. Sandy continues with her role as an Interfaith Works Board Member.

Here is a good opportunity to look more deeply at our earth's Climate Change. Larry Rasmussen, as you may know, is a superstar and much loved theologian in the world of eco-ethics and faith. On **Tuesday night, September 19, 6:30-8:00 pm**, The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd will be hosting an evening conversation with Larry Rasmussen and reflection about his most recent book, *The Planet You Inherit, Letters to My Grandchildren when Uncertainty's a Sure Thing*. Pastor Carol Tomer and her whole congregation warmly invite you to join them in conversation around climate change and the role faith can play in allying it.

This very same night the Interfaith Works Program Council will begin our regular meetings for the year. As much as we might want to be in two places at the same time, Ann will attend the Interfaith Works meeting that night. We will be receiving an update on the Fall Events Planning Committee which has been meeting this summer. They have been working on plans for Indigenous Peoples Day and the Resetting Our Sacred Table events. Stay tuned for details to follow next month.

[www.interfaith-works.org](http://www.interfaith-works.org) 360-357-7224

Submitted by Cynthia Dallas and Ann Chenhall