

February 2024

2024 THEME: LED BY A VISION FEBRUARY'S THEME: LOVE

www.unitydesplaines.org

Sunday Service at 10:30 a.m.

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Unity Des Plaines Church

Member: Unity Worldwide Ministries
 Affiliation: Unity School of Christianity
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 Email: unitydp@yahoo.com

Board of Trustees

Leslie Johns	President
Carol Stanley	Vice President
Chris Schaefer	Secretary
Marne Chilstrom	Treasurer
Mark Boston	Member
Gail O'Neil	Member

Church Staff

Guest Speakers	Minister
Kate Kapolnek	Admin. Asst.
	Music Director
Tatiana Naumova	Pianist
Carolyn Dunoon, CSE	Director Youth Education / Family Ministry
Meghan Butler	Social Media Mgr.

* * *

Stay up-to-date with Unity Des Plaines Church

visit our website at <https://www.unitydesplaines.org> and <https://www.youtube.com/user/unitynorthwestchurch>
 Watch past Sunday talks at <https://www.youtube.com/user/unitynorthwestchurch>

VISION

Empower an evolving consciousness that spiritually transforms the world through an awakening oneness.

MISSION

Welcome diverse communities and embody spiritual principles through prayer, learning, social action and outreach.

UPCOMING IN FEBRUARY

Please join us on Sunday mornings, in the sanctuary at 10:15 a.m. before the church service for a prayer circle led by one of our Prayer Chaplains. **ALL ARE WELCOME!**

Minister Search Update

The Unity Des Plaines Minister Search Packet on the Unity Worldwide Ministries website is accessed via the link below at the "Open Ministries" section at the bottom of the web page. <https://www.unityworldwideministries.org/openings>

Never Stop Learning!

We are actively looking for topics and facilitators for new classes! There are Class Topic Request slips in the lobby on the small shelves by the entrance. Please complete the slip and leave it in the mail bin on the Minister's door so we know your preferences.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

A Course in Miracles

Sunday mornings, 9:00 a.m. Join us in Fellowship Hall for reading and discussion of this life-changing book as facilitated by Leslie Johns. **All are welcome!**

Sunday School

Our Youth and Ministry team led by Carolyn Dunoon, CSE, welcomes teens and children at church at 10:30 a.m. every Sunday.

Families Anonymous

This Twelve-Step Group is holding meetings every Sunday at 7:00 p.m. **All are welcome.**

Monday Morning Metaphysics

Mondays, 10:30 a.m.—12:00 noon on Zoom Facilitated by Rev. Dr. Mary Beth Speer, CSL Our current book for study is *THE FIVE PRINCIPLES—A Guide to Practical Spirituality* by Ellen Debenport.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85251930920>

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Unleash Your Peace: A Look into *The Untethered Soul* by Michael Singer

Two additional class sessions! Mondays, February 5th & 19th, at 7p.m. Facilitated by Chris Selvik

The Untethered Soul invites us to explore the depths of our consciousness and break free from the limitations that bind us.

Having the book is helpful but not necessary. **All are welcome!**

In the Flow of Life by Eric Butterworth
An Introduction and Discussion

Wednesdays, Feb. 7th & Feb. 14th, at 7 p.m. Facilitated by Peggy Dhont

In the Flow of Life calls you to live from the exhilarating and empowering realization that you are the expression of God flowing forward into life.

Having the book is helpful but not necessary. **All are welcome!**

Chaplain Orientation

February 24th at 10:00 a.m.—noon Facilitated by Betsy Nickerson

All those interested in knowing more about being a chaplain meet here in Fellowship Hall. See Betsy for more information, or call the church office and leave a message for her.

May 17-19, 2024 ✨

MINDFUL SPRING WOMEN'S RETREAT

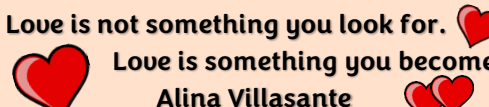
Mark your calendars and stay tuned for details! ✨

Co-creating our health & prosperity.



Love is not something you look for. Love is something you become.

Alina Villasante



Unity Des Plaines Mission Statement

Empower an evolving consciousness that spiritually transforms the world through an awakening oneness.

What Is Unity?

Unity is an interdenominational Christian church based on the practical teachings of Jesus Christ, which are often referred to as "Positive, Practical Christianity." Our main focus is not on "original sin" but on the "original blessing" of being children of God. We are created in the image and likeness of God, here to live life and live it more abundantly.

Unity's Five Basic Principles

- **God Is**
There is only one Presence and one Power active in the universe and in my life, God the Good.
- **I Am**
Our essence is of God; therefore, we are inherently good. This God essence, called the Christ, was fully expressed in Jesus.
- **I Think**
We are co-creators with God, creating reality through thoughts held in mind.
- **I Pray**
Through prayer and meditation, we align our heart-mind with God. Denials and affirmations are tools we use.
- **I Live**
Through thoughts, words and actions we live the Truth we know.

Unity Des Plaines Newsletter

Ruth Trailer Editor

February 2023 Contributing Writers

Leslie Johns Lynn Barrette
Carolyn Dunoon Ruth Trailer

Website

Leslie Johns Webmaster

Prayer Support

Here are ways we may pray with you.

- Call the office at 847-297-0997 Mon-Thurs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Submit a prayer request on our website:
<https://www.unitydesplaines.org/submit-a-prayer-request>
- And **Silent Unity** is available 24/7 to pray with you: 1-800-NOW-PRAY or <https://www.unity.org/prayer>.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES LETTER

If you can learn to love yourself and all the flaws, you can love other people so much better. And that makes you so happy.
—Kristin Chenoweth

We continue to work toward becoming the best version of our church and community. Here are the latest events:

- The February speakers are as follows:
Sun. 01/07 10:30am Rev. Dr. Mary Beth Speer
Sun. 01/14 10:30am Bobbi Wilsyn
Sun. 01/21 10:30am Rev. Bruce Moore
Sun. 01/28 10:30am Rev. Carla McClellan
- We were recently engaged in Board of Trustees training with Rev. Carla in order

to further the growth and evolution of our church.

- **State of the Church Meeting 2024**
in January we held our welcoming, informative and insightful town hall session. More to come regarding that meeting.
- Remember the Mindful Spring Women's Retreat May 17-19. Stay tuned for details.

With love and appreciation,

Your Board of Trustees.

Leslie Carol Chris Marne Mark Gail

FEBRUARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Continued from page 1)

Call in:
+13126266799,,85251930920# US Chicago
+13017158592,,85251930920# US Wash DC
All are welcome!

Tuesday Evening Meditation

Tuesdays, 6:00—6:45 p.m.
Facilitated by Sheila Joy Wilkins, PHD
Meditation is a core Unity practice that furthers awareness and opens mental and spiritual space for new energy. Please come join us in the powerful experience of "going within" in the quiet, sacred space of our sanctuary.
All are welcome!

Unity Des Plaines Weekly EBlast

If you haven't already signed up, you can do so on our website, www.unitydesplaines.org, or email the church at unitydp@yahoo.com, leave a message that you want to receive the Weekly EBlast and include your name and your email address.

Help with Food

Our Food Drive continues. Hunger is year round, and we need your help. A list of items needed is posted in Fellowship Hall. Thank you for your support.

Donate to Unity Des Plaines Church

<https://app.easytithe.com/App/Giving/unw>

THE FACES OF UNITY DES PLAINES



Sharon Vacek

My first introduction to Unity was in the 1990's when a friend invited me to Unity in Chicago, then located on Thome Avenue near Misericordia. The church and the service by Rev. Mike Matoin were unlike anything I had experienced before. The message was uplifting and inspirational without being peppered with fear or guilt. I enjoyed the experience and was hungry for more. However, the church was more than 25 miles away from my home in Western Springs so I attended only sporadically. Around that same time, I also discovered *The Daily Word* (a Unity publication) and subscribed. Shortly thereafter, I found and started attending Unity in Countryside, which was closer to home. After a few years, my life and weekends became busy, and I gradually moved away from the church but continued growing spiritually through messages of faith and inspiration in written form.

As time passed, I became a caregiver for my mom, and I found myself longing again for the church experience. However, I was unable to attend in person because of my responsibilities at home. To nourish myself spiritually, I began tuning into services available by TV and online. This was gratifying but I still missed worshipping with a congregation—the powerful experience of coming together in meditation and song.

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A free will offering will be accepted at most classes and workshops.

For more information call 847-297-0997, or visit www.unitydesplaines.org.



Visit our Facebook page at

https://www.facebook.com/unitydesplaineschurch/?ref=br_rs

YOUTH EDUCATION MINISTRY



Greetings dear Unity Des Plaines community.

And welcome to February, which has an extra day this year. What do you want extra of this month? Faith, Love, Wisdom? Affirm it positively and frequently, giving thanks, and LEAP to it!!!! (Example: "Thank you, Spirit for the abundant Love in my life." Many people like to put their hand over their heart space also. February's power is Love, as defined by Unity co-founder, Charles Fillmore. The color is red and the disciple is John.

There is a wealth of lessons to share with our children this month about John, Jesus's commandment, love of others, self and nature. We will have much to talk about, using lessons from Rev. Diane Venzera and Spiritual

Playdate. We will celebrate the power of Love with the congregation with a Valentine's party on February 11 for all in the Community Room starting after the service. We invite everyone to join us in refreshments, crafts, and bingo. The more Love you share, the more Love grows inside you. We will also debut a class for our older children in attendance this month and are looking for someone willing to help out in our classes. Training is available. Please see Miss Carolyn for more information on this opportunity.

The importance of incorporating previous lessons to fix them in our learning is important so I will want to remind the children about January's lesson of Faith. These two powers work together as we use our Faith to see the results of our Love. On the 28th we put parts of sweet potatoes in water to use our Faith to see a plant grow. Some studies have shown that sharing love with our plants is

helpful so let's demonstrate that, too.

Finally, I am so grateful to all who are on the Youth and Family Ministry team: Julie, Gemma, Max, Stefan, as well as the parents and grandparents who bring their children and teens. I especially thank those parents like Jean, Michelle, and Sima who actively help in class.

Blessings to our Board and the congregation who support Spiritual Education. This is our way to improve the world one child at a time.

Peace and Love,
Miss Carolyn Dunoon, CSE
Director, Youth and Family Ministry



We are the children.

SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY

A February Full of Forgiveness!

Ahhh, February, our societal month of love! One of the biggest (and least desirable to talk about!) ways to expand our capacity for experiencing love is through forgiveness. Forgiveness can sometimes be a heavy topic so this is going to be a several part series to help us break down this concept and make it palatable and accessible because if we can't forgive, we get stuck, and we don't want to do that, right? So we're going to take some time on this one.

Anytime I bring up forgiveness with clients or in workshops or classes, I always like to clarify what forgiveness means because there are so many ideas and misconceptions about what it is. When I help someone define forgiveness, I start with what it is *not*. And that is what this month is about: What forgiveness is *not*.

First, forgiveness does *not* mean "forgive and forget." Our brains aren't made up to forget things unless we get a severe head injury or some other brain trauma, like a stroke. We are simply not biologically wired to forget things. We have beautiful memories, and whether you are more spiritually-minded or more scientific, we are created like this for a reason: those memories are there to ensure that we learn from our experiences and evolve as a species and in consciousness. So how can we be expected to forgive and forget when we're not wired to do so? What we CAN do, is release the energy that binds the memory and experience to us, weighing us down and interfering with new opportunities to love.

Forgiveness does NOT mean "forgive and forget!" It means that we learn and grow.

Another misconception that comes up is that forgiveness means everyone gets a fresh start, even the person who did wrong, and we pretend like nothing happened. That's not it either. If we are learning from our experiences, we take our new understanding with us every moment, and apply that new understanding moving forward. If someone hurts me, I have learned something: Sometimes this person is hurtful, and she certainly has been hurtful to me in this situation, so I need to adjust my mental, emotional, and sometimes physical behavior so that I can either deal with being around her, or make sure I am not around her anymore!

Forgiveness does not mean to pretend like nothing happened. It means to adjust your internal and external behavior to support yourself, your safety.

A final myth I often hear about forgiveness is that if we forgive, we'll be letting the other person get away with something. That's not it either. Once we have taken care of our part of an interaction with someone—either by confronting them, adjusting ourselves internally and externally, or staying the heck away from them—our part is done. There is a law that is scientific both in our physical and spiritual realm that states that whatever energy we put out comes back to us. And that is true at the physical, emotional and mental levels of our existence. This doesn't mean we turn that into some kind of superstitious curse on another person, as we often hear that "Karma will get them!" If we are saying that about someone, our forgiveness is not done! When we forgive, we are releasing ourselves from having to be a part of this person learning what they need to be learning. We don't have to be responsible for seeing that "they get theirs;" we are only

THE FACES OF UNITY DES PLAINES

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Then my life changed when my sweet mom passed away in 2021. We sold the family home, and I began a new life on my own by deciding to move to Des Plaines to be closer to my sister in Park Ridge. Once I was settled in, I looked for churches in the area and discovered Unity of Des Plaines. From the time I walked in and was warmly greeted, things came together so nicely that I just knew I had found my spiritual home. I was uplifted by each service, so much so that I would sometimes listen to them a second time online on Facebook. The music in church was also wonderful, and I loved the opportunity to sing along. Although never pressured, I was eager to volunteer and became an usher after attending for only a short time. As a bonus, I met many terrific people and was able to get to know them in Fellowship Hall at the church. I truly believe that Unity attracts exceptional people, and it is a joy to be part of this growing and loving community.

Sharon Vacek

responsible for our own behavior, and what we are putting out at those physical, mental and emotional levels. That's a big job in itself, isn't it?

Forgiveness doesn't mean that anyone gets by with anything; but it does mean we don't have to worry about it.

So if all that is what forgiveness is NOT, what is forgiveness? We will explore that next month, so hold tight, it's coming! In the meantime, expand your experience of love this month through forgiveness!

Lynn Barrette, LCSW, LUT

IT'S AN INSIDE JOB

Rejoice, ye pure in heart. Rejoice, give thanks and sing. Original Trinity Hymnal, #502

Once upon a time I went to a Bonnie Rait concert with her smooth bluesy, country voice. I remember her chatting with the audience between songs. She talked about her new love relationship and said, "Keep your heart pure, and love will come to you." Oh, is that all it takes?

So what's this pure heart, and what's love anyway? Well I suspect they're the same thing. Of course, Bonnie Rait meant romantic love, but isn't our primary relationship with ourself—our Higher Self? It seems to me that a pure heart is one that's open to the good that is always flowing in us, through and as us. It means alignment with love, not fear—the fear that we're not good enough, smart enough, strong enough or good-looking enough and, therefore, not worthy of Divine love or any other love. But that's a way of thinking that we may accept or reject. If we were raised to believe it, we may replace it by seeing ourselves as perfect, whole and free. How?

We're all vessels of the Christ Light and automatically worthy of Divine love. When Jesus told his disciples at the Last Supper to remember him in the eating and the drinking, he was saying that everything we ingest—all we take in and let out—represents our participation in Divine Spirit. The Christ is always with us because it's within us flowing through us.

So how do we purify our hearts? We let the Christ so fill them that there's no room for impurity, no matter what we've ever thought or done. Anyway, impurity is the fear that we're unworthy, and fear is a phantom, not reality. As *A Course in Miracles* states: "The opposite of love is fear, but what is all-encompassing can have no opposite." Love is all there is. There is nothing more.

A pure heart is an open heart, a compassionate heart, a peaceful heart. It's a heart receptive to Divine will and intention abiding in us, through us, as us. So let's release that fear and embrace love!

Ruth Trailer

Thoughts become things... choose the good ones! ® © www.tut.com ®

Be God's Love in Action. VOLUNTEER! Call the church office at 847-297-0997.

We were born to love, and we were born to have the courage for it. So be brave. The rest is easy.

Senator John McCain



259 East Central Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016

Sunday services live and in person at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School at 10:30 a.m.

www.unitydesplaines.org

