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Unity Northwest Church

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MINISTER'S LETTER



FREE YOUR MIND

Do headlines and current events undermine your quality of life and affect your peace of mind? As long as the outer world can dictate your experience, your happiness will teeter precariously upon the shifting sands of circumstance.

When I was in my teens, I learned this lesson when family members joined political organizations with extreme views that did not reflect my values. To find some peace of mind, I began to practice meditation each day and spent regular time in nature. Even though I had to walk out of step with what was around me, I was able to follow the measure of what Thoreau called "a different drum." This liberated and prepared me for a life of my own direction. Since then inner practices and outer communities have helped me to create a mindset that is somewhat independent of the headlines of the day.

The way to move from an outer-determined life to an inner-directed one is by turning off outer stimulus and taking the time to find your own center of peace. As you double down on your inner spiritual practices, you generate a protective bubble of self-identity and establish healthy boundaries of thoughts and feelings.

Shel Silverstein wrote:

There is a voice inside of you that whispers all day long, 'I feel that this is right for me, I know that this is wrong.' No teacher, preacher, parent, friend or wise man can decide what's right for you — just listen to the voice that speaks inside.

Self-determination is both an internal and an external process. Recovery groups, therapy, men-

We are souls in evolution

toring, coaching, and the support of healthy friends can help initiate this kind of shift. Walks in nature, silent times of devotional prayer, reading, meditation and quietly unplugging from the outer world can also sustain your mental and spiritual health.

When Emerson wrote "Nothing external to you has any power over you," he was talking about establishing healthy self-differentiation and boundaries. Your opportunities for growth will often come disguised as difficult environments that do not at first appear to support that kind of mental health but ultimately will become your proving ground of spiritual freedom.

Greg Barrette

TALK TITLES for July

- July 2 Being Your Miracle
It's all up to you, and it's all in your attitude!
- July 9 Prayer Is The Key
Prayer is not a method. Prayer is an action of your heart.
- July 16 From Problems to Possibilities
Your problems are your greatest teachers, and solving them can be your greatest source of growth.
- July 23 Creativity--It's Not What You Think
You have a point of creative power within you, and it's REALLY not what you think!
- July 30 Press the Reset Button
Release the past, create the future, and live fully in the now.

PLEASE NOTE: On Tuesday, July 4, there will be no meditation service, and the church office will be closed.

Stay up-to-date with
 Unity Northwest Church
 Visit our website at
www.unitynorthwest.org
 AND
 Watch past Sunday talks at
<http://vimeo.com/unitynorthwest>
 or at
<https://www.youtube.com/user/unitynorthwestchurch>

COMING UP IN JULY ...

How to Pray
 Tuesday, July 11, 7:00 pm
 Facilitated by Greg Barrette

What are the simple methods of prayer that will bring powerful results in our lives, and how can we use them to effect changes in us? Prayer does not change God. Prayer changes us. These proven and practical techniques will turn around any stuck situation, because they will turn us around.

Enneagram and Spirit
 Thursday, July 13, 7:00 pm
 Facilitated by Jim Ware

From one point of view, the Enneagram can be seen as a set of nine distinct personality types, with each number on the Enneagram denoting one type. It is common to find a little of yourself in all nine of the types, although one of them

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Our Mission Statement

We inspire and embrace the soul evolution of everyone in our church community.

What Is Unity?

Unity is an interdenominational Christian church based on the practical teachings of Jesus Christ, 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.

**Silent Unity Prayer Line:
1-800-NOW-PRAY**

Unity's Five Basic Principles

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

Unity Northwest News

Ruth Trailer Editor

**July 2017
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**Weekly
Silent Meditation Service**

Ongoing—Tuesdays, 6:00–6:45 pm

Facilitated by Greg Barrette

Being supported by a group makes meditation much easier. Numerous studies by research labs at major universities have confirmed the effectiveness of meditation to heal and reduce stress. We have witnessed healings of mind, body and circumstances that can be attributed to this group practice.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES LETTER

Greetings from your Board!

Summer is here and living is easy.

Thank you to everyone who made our annual circulation day a success. Many hands, many donations, many wishes fulfilled the day.

Next up for your calendar is our annual picnic to be held on August 20th. Always great to share in fellowship together.

We also so blessed to have a great educational basis here with A.R.E. lectures, classes taught by Greg and congregants and a famous author

Love, Communicate, Respond

like Uma Girish. Check them out as they can help propel your spiritual growth.

We are doing well fiscally as we continue to see an increase in tithes and offerings over last year. We have no major expenses as everything is being maintained well. The Universe says, "You got this." Let's continue at our simple church that is enriching in so many ways.

Thank YOU!

Sheila Budd
President, Board of Trustees

COMING UP IN JULY ...

(Continued from page 1)

should stand out as being closest to yourself. This is your basic personality type.

The class will open with a short review of the Enneagram. Then, we'll use the Enneagram in class to discover how to best stay "above the 5" on the Spiritual Thermometer. Those of you who are new to the Enneagram can go online for free and take a short assessment to see what your type may be at the website: www.eclecticenergies.com.

Spiritual Intelligence: the 21 Skills for SQ
Thursday, July 20, 7:00 pm
Facilitated by Jim Ware

Based on the book *Spiritual Intelligence* by Cindy Wigglesworth, this class defines spirituality as "the innate human need to connect with something larger than ourselves." The class opens with an exercise in which all participants will address these two questions:

1. Who are the spiritual leaders/teachers you have admired in your life?
2. What are the character traits that caused you to admire these people?

The consistency of the responses from this exercise suggests that we already have a general perception of what makes someone "spiritually intelligent." What we do not yet have is a way of

describing Spiritual Intelligence that is faith-neutral and specifically focused on the skills and abilities we are trying to attain when we seek spiritual growth.

We define Spiritual Intelligence as "the ability to behave with Compassion and Wisdom while maintaining inner and outer peace (equanimity) regardless of the circumstances." Compassion and Wisdom together form the manifestation of Love. "Behave" is important because it focuses on how well we maintain our center, stay calm, and actually treat others with compassion and wisdom. The statement of "regardless of the circumstances" shows that we can maintain our peaceful center and loving behaviors even under great stress. This is what we admire in our spiritual leaders.

The class will include a handout showing the 21 skills and describing the path for growth. Length 90 minutes. We can have follow up classes if the attendees wish.

How to Meditate
Tuesday, July 25, 7:00 pm
Facilitated by Greg Barrette

This workshop will focus on the practices and methods of meditation that will move you deeper into the presence of your innermost Being." How can you make this contact with the divine? Where is 'the secret place of the most high' and how can you experience it in your times of meditation?

The **Simple, Reverent Prayer Circle** gives participants an opportunity to spontaneously speak aloud heartfelt prayers for others.

Sundays at 10:20 a.m.

As we support each other in prayer, we experience the power of healing that Jesus said happens when 'two or three are gathered.'

A free will offering will be accepted at most classes or workshops.
For more information call 847-297-0997, or visit www.unitynorthwest.org.

The Interfaith Counseling Center (ICC)

offers counseling to individuals, couples and families on a love offering basis for up to three visits. By the third visit, you may choose to end counseling, continue onsite, or be referred to a therapist or other community service agency that will best serve your needs.

ICC is available to people of all religious, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and provides support for a wide array of issues: spiritual, personal, relationship, parenting, stress release, depression and anxiety.

Call today for an appointment: 847-297-0997.

YOUTH EDUCATION MINISTRY

So far, for our curriculum: *Navigating My World: Developing Social & Emotional Skills*, we have explored *Self Awareness, Being Resilient, Emotional Awareness, Exploring Feelings and Managing Our Emotions*.

In July we will begin an exploration of what it takes to have healthy friendships and how to use our fertile minds.

Our topics Include:

- **Belonging**
How do we gain a sense of belonging in the classroom, family and community?
- **Attachment**
Exploring what it means to be a friend and how to develop healthy friendships.

We are the world. We are the children.

- **Analyzing Situations Correctly**

Being able to analyze a situation perceptively and identifying problems is a life skill that is necessary for all to possess.

- **Decision Making**

This week, we will explore how to exercise social decision making and how to use our problem solving skills.

With Love,

Rev. Diane Venzera

Director, Youth Education



SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY

LOOK WHO'S TALKING NOW

At any given moment, there is a voice talking to you in your head. Maybe it's a positive voice. Maybe it's a negative voice. Maybe it's a neutral narrator commenting on your every move. Do you notice it? It's processing as you read this, maybe throwing in an opinion or two. What do you find it is saying to you right now? That voice can be likened to the weather in the Midwest: If you don't like it, wait five minutes, and it will change.

To understand why this is so, let's define a couple things. Your **brain** is the organ of mechanism for many physical functions, thinking being only one of them. Your **mind** is how your consciousness moves energy through the brain in order to function in your life.

Your brain stores every experience you have ever had along with the thoughts, decisions, attitudes, emotions, and opinions surrounding those experiences *at the time that you made them*. Some of those are well outdated; yet there they are in the storehouse of your brain's memory.

Your mind, in its automatic, semi-conscious state, pulls up those memories, thoughts, decisions, attitudes, emotions, and opinions as it sees fit. In neutral times, those thoughts, etc., might be simply random. Other times, the mind is quite certain that the thought, emotion, opinion, etc., that it is pulling up is quite fitting for the situation at hand, even if it might not be helpful.

For example, think about what you think about while driving. Maybe you're singing along with a song (lyrics pulled up from your brain's memory). Maybe you are worrying about what just happened at work or with that family member; in which case, all past experiences, opinions, emotions having to do with that person, or someone very similar from your history, come up and invade your thoughts about the current situation. This adds confusion to the current situation. Are you really upset at the thing that just happened? Or is that thing not so bad but is reminding you of that other thing that happened so the negative thoughts and strong emotion are actually coming from some previous experience being dumped onto the current one? Probably both, but the current situation is getting the brunt of the past unresolved emotion.

That little example holds about five topics of discussion; but for this article, let's simply understand that the mind has a mind of its own, and a lot more is going on than you are often aware of. In fact, there

What does my soul want me to do?

are many voices in your head, and often they have competing opinions and perspectives! You've probably heard someone say, "The committee in my head is arguing about this."

What can you do about that mind that can be so unruly?

Notice it, step back from it, wait a few minutes and it will change.

- Notice it. You can't be in charge of that unruly inner voice unless you are aware of what it's doing in there. Take a few breaks during the day to check in and listen to what it's saying to you. Is it positive? Critical? Sad? Afraid? Numb?
- Step back from it. Listen with compassion and non-judgment; be the observer of it. Cup both hands together and hold them in front of you. Pretend that the thoughts and feelings going through your mind are in your cupped hands. Since they are now outside of your head, watch them like a scientist watches her experiment with curiosity, not knowing what exactly is going to happen. What do you see happening with those thoughts and feelings?
- Wait a few minutes and it will change. As you observe the contents of your mind, they will inevitably shift and change. See how long you can hold them before they morph into something else. How long does it take? Five minutes? Twenty? Three? One? This is a great practice in not taking your thoughts too seriously. Just because it is wafting through your mind doesn't make it true.

This simple process is helpful especially when big emotions are on the surface. As you observe and wait patiently and compassionately through the wave of emotional dialogue and felt sensations, you will feel yourself rise above it into a clearer thinking space. As you practice with this, your conscious self moves into more of a leadership role in the mind/brain process. You can be more in charge of who's talking to you, who gets the promotion, and which voice gets phased out.

Who's talking within you?

Lynn Barrette, LUT, LCSW

FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Encourage, lift and strengthen one another.

We all have self-doubt. You don't deny it, but you also don't capitulate to it. You embrace it.
Kobe Bryant

What is the cure for self-doubt? If we mean by the word "cure" that we want to be totally free of the affliction, saying "I'm cured—no more self-doubt," then we're in for a rude awakening. We all make mistakes, which for many of us implies that we are not perfect. And if this self-implication is reinforced by the comments of a judgmental friend or relative or by someone we esteem, then we could be in for big self-trouble.

Not being comfortable with the self-trouble of self-doubt, we may strive for perfection by eliminating mistakes and thereby avoiding judgmental comments by ourselves or others. But then we're in for bigger self-trouble, aren't we, when the next mistake comes along. So we may then decide not to put ourselves into scary or unknown situations and stick with what does not challenge us. But guess what? We can still make mistakes or experience accidents. What's a wanna-be-perfect-person to do?

I remember when my son Brandon was a little guy about 11 months old. He would pull himself up and move around the furniture to explore a room or drop down to crawl when the furniture ended. But he didn't seem to make much headway while attempting to walk. Then I happened to notice that when he was standing up, his toes were curled under. And since he was usually wearing socks or soft moccasins on his feet, he could easily do the toe curl thing. So I bought him little guy tennis shoes, which kept his toes straight, and he started walking in no time, even barefoot once he got the idea.

Walking and exploring are natural for little ones. When they fall down, they may cry, but they get up soon enough because *little ones gotta move!* And so do we big ones. But what will aid us—like little guy tennis shoes—to keep our toes pointed toward our goals? We can set an intention as a guide, and, when we fall short, forgive ourselves for our seeming imperfection and get going again, while remembering that to God we are already first-rate movers and explorers.

Ruth Trailer

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



Let the past go.
 Forgive yourself, and
 allow peace to enter in.

Life is a process of learning,
 and we are all works in
 progress.

Eileen Anglin



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



Sunday Services: **9:00 and 11:00 am**
 Youth Education: **Sundays at 11:00 am**