

## The Power to Transform

*Rev. Darlene Strickland*



The Christmas season is my favorite time of year. As a kid, my little sister and I danced with excitement on the day after Thanksgiving when

our parents climbed into the attic and began the long-awaited ritual of bringing down the treasure of holiday decorations. We dusted and placed our favorite album, Snoopy's Red Barron Christmas, onto the record player, and we danced around and around the growing pile of boxes in our living room. These boxes were old, worn and familiar; yet, they were imbued with an extraordinary power. They held the power to transform the ordinary and mundane into something very special and sacred. These boxes were full of evidence and promise. Without a doubt, Christmas was here again.

When the holiday passed, the boxes reappeared. Like saying goodbye to a dear friend, the boxes now prompted the dismantling and disappearance of our best ever holiday

display. One by one, the boxes would carry away the artifacts of Christmas and life would quickly return to its more ordinary tempo and routine. Ah... the power of Christmas.

I've always been in touch with the power that Christmas has to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. When I was a young child, I watched, waited and had unwavering belief in Santa. As I grew a bit older, I looked deeper into the eyes of Santa and wondered, "Are you real"? And finally, it happened. I actually became Santa. The mystery circle of Christmas was complete in me.

The power of Christmas lies in the capacity to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary and vice-verse. The Christmas story is a depiction of this. The Christ Presence, our innate divinity, is already born and always present within us...it is us. What can be born, however, is our awareness and expression of our true Christ nature. As we grow in awareness and expression of our Christ nature, the line of demarcation between ordinary

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## MINISTER'S MESSAGE...

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and extraordinary begins to disappear. We come to understand that we are the ones who have the power to make something sacred... or not. This includes our individual life, which is like the ordinary box that holds the power and promise of self-transformation.

As the centerpiece of Christmas, the transformative life of Jesus unveiled a spark of new awareness and new possibility. Like Jesus, when we actualize our divine potential, we become a light that shines through the darkness of human confusion and illuminates the spiritual truth of who we are. This doesn't happen once at Christmas. Rather, it occurs throughout the course of our life as we commit ourselves to nurturing our light, believing in its presence, and sending it forth into every "ordinary" thought, relationship, or circumstance. As we learn to live this way, we imbue the sacred into every aspect of our life experience. We become the Christ that we already are.

Now is a good the time to pull out your favorite Christmas tune and dance around the living room. Look silly and remember to nurture your light; believe in its presence, and send it forth in every thing you do!

Seasons blessings.

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### *New Class Offered in January*

## **Do Greater Things Based on the Book by Felicia Blanco Searcy**

Robin O'Day, LUT, and Gisele Fernandez, LUT candidate, team up to facilitate this class beginning January 12 6:30-8:30 for 5 weeks. We will explore who exactly Jesus was and what it means to follow his example. In addition, we will delve into the nine spiritual practices that the author offers so we can awaken our own divine potential and live more closely from our Christ Consciousness every day. What a perfect way to start the new year! Love offering basis. Sign up at bookstore. This class can be taken for SEE elective credit.

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# UNITY HOLIDAY EVENTS...AND MORE!

## *Holiday Concert with Narayan and Janet*

Saturday, December 18

Contact the church office for time, price and ticket purchase.

## *Christmas Eve Candlelight Services*

December 22, 7 pm

Mid-week Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 6 pm

Christmas Eve Service



## COMING IN JANUARY...

### *January 3*

“One God, Many Paths”

First class in 12-part series (See page 6 for more information)

### *January 6*

New To Unity Session

Small group gathering for those new to Unity

6:30 – 8 pm

### *January 12*

“Do Greater Things”

Five-week Spiritual Education and Enrichment (SEE) Class Series

Gisele Fernandez and Robin O’Day (see page 2 for more information)

6:30 – 8:30 pm

### *January 21 – 23*

Concert, workshop and special events with Lei’ohu Ryder and Maydeen Iao from Maui, Hawaii (see page 6 for more information)

## LOOKING AHEAD...

February Class Series

The Five Principles based on the book by Reverend Ellen Debenport

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# UNITY PRAYER MINISTRY

## LET US PRAY WITH YOU!

Unity's Prayer Ministry supports you 24 hours a day! When you ask for prayer support, we pray with you and for you. We also send your prayer request to Silent Unity at Unity Village, MO, where it is held in prayer for 30 days.

To request a prayer for yourself or a loved one:

- Contact Rev. Darlene, Rev. Sherry or a Chaplain following the Sunday Service or call (253) 446-1000.
- Place your request in the Prayer Box in the sanctuary.
- Call our Prayer Line to hear an inspirational message and leave a prayer request. Edgewood/Pierce County residents call (253) 460-5244.
- E-mail prayer request: [praywithme@earthlink.net](mailto:praywithme@earthlink.net)
- Silent Unity, Unity Village, Missouri: (816) 969-2000. If you have no means of paying for the call, dial (800) 669-7729. All prayer requests are confidential.

## CHAPLAINS AT YOUR SERVICE

Our Mission...

By creating a sacred space we promote peace and harmony through a prayerful ministry, expressing God's light, love and word."

If you have a prayer need, our own Chaplains are available on Sundays following the service to pray with you. Or, you may leave a prayer request on our prayer line or even e-mail a prayer request to a Chaplain (see above).

*In this sacred season, I remember the Light of God is always present within me. The light of God is the source and substance of my life. I nourish my light by recognizing and reflecting peace and love in all my thoughts, relationships and encounters. With light in my heart, I look forward to the most meaningful Christmas season I have yet experienced.*

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## FROM THE ASSOCIATE MINISTER

# The Time of the Great Turning

by Rev. Sherry Schultz



A few weeks back, I attended an event at St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle with notable environmentalists, artists, prophets, visionaries. It was an evening of ritual, music, readings and a broad range of spiritual traditions, using the Tree of Life as a symbol of our interconnectedness. The Great Turning, as I understood it, was about the spirals of life, the movement that never ceases but that takes us through powerful experiences of heart and mind, growing at each curve. Some of us call that movement "God." I want to share with you a significant moment for me during that evening.

After readings and songs about the first turn of the spiral, Gratitude, the second turn was "Honoring Our Pain for the World." Joanna Macy shared a powerful message, followed by several dancers who engaged in a ritual of mourning, dancing around the symbolic tree of life on the platform, crying aloud. I could barely stand it. I wanted it to be over, or perhaps it was time for me to leave. It was too much, overdone, etc. "Let's get on with the

show," my impatient mind complained. And then the vocalist began singing "Lay back in the arm of love," and the spiral turned to "Seeing With New Eyes" and finally "Going Forth." The mourning they expressed was about great divides - how we have treated the earth and the water, the Gulf spill... how we have di-

vided ourselves over political positions, war. These are real experiences, and being impatient with them or ignoring them is counterproductive if we are interested in healing them. We are once again reminded that "the only way out is through." The road to healing begins with our willingness to feel what is happening for us and watch it change, shift, transform. The wailing dancers were on the platform to remind us of the importance and value of our own wailing, our own grieving and finally, our liberation, the Great Turning.

You may remember the scripture from Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3, where we are reminded that there is a season for everything. Every season is sacred. Every turn of the spiral is significant.

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND UNITY?

# The Presence and Teaching of Aloha

January 21-23, 2011

*Join us for a weekend filled with Hawaiian teachings, music, hula, enriching experiences and more*



Le'i'ohu Ryder is a spiritual leader, visionary, healer, singer/songwriter, and educator on Maui. She is an emissary of aloha and an advocate for the indigenous soul in all people, blind to the labels (race, creed, nationality, ideology, etc.) that can separate us from experiencing the true nature of our selves and others. Le'i'ohu's talents and work have been recognized by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Peace Corps,

Sierra Club and the United Nations. Le'i'ohu was awarded the Gandhi-King Peace Hero Award in 2002. She has shared her gifts all around the world including Japan, Israel, India, and most of Europe.

Maydeen Iao is a Native Hawaiian born and raised in Palolo Valley on the island of O'ahu. She is a teacher, healer, singer/musician who uses the breath of aloha as the compass that helps her build the rainbow bridge of peace in service to all life. As an ambassador of aloha, Maydeen travels the world planting the seeds of aloha in song, dance, fellowship and spirit.



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# WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND UNITY?

**Thanksgiving Gratitude Meditation.** Take some time for yourself Become centered and grounded for the holiday. Please join Gisele Fernandez, Interfaith Minister and LUT candidate, at 7 pm, Wednesday, November 24, for a 30-minute gratitude meditation service. Refreshments afterwards.

**Circle of Friends.** Ladies, it's holiday party time! Please circle Monday, December 6, on your calendars right now and plan to participate in this year's Circle of Friends Christmas celebration. We will meet at the church, a littler earlier than for our regular monthly meetings. Come anytime from 6:00 on and bring your favorite Christmas hors d'oeuvres, dish, salad, or dessert. Bring, too, your spirit of Christmas and a little something (\$5.00 limit) to throw into the "white elephant" gift exchange. Following our gift exchange, we will move into the Sanctuary, gather round our gorgeous piano (sending a prayer now that we will have a pianist in our midst), and sing some of our favorite noels.

In January, at our meeting on the 10th, Joanna White-Wolff Dibble will start our New Year off with a breath of fresh air, sharing with us her Breath Works expertise. Bring a yoga mat if you have one or a nice fat towel and maybe a pillow and light blanket for this delightful exercise which will follow our 7:00 potluck supper. Supper will be preceded by prayer at 6:30 in the chapel, for all who wish to participate, whether or not you plan to attend the COF dinner and meeting.

And it's definitely not too early to mark Saturday, February 26, on your calendars and begin planning to attend our "Second Ever Spiritual Spa Day." More information will be coming soon. For now please plan to attend and help spread the word; and if you have some idea or service you would like to offer for this February event, please tell Ginger, Julie, or Paula. Thanks!

**Lights, camera, action!** Movie nights are resuming this winter! Stay tuned for more information soon. See Gisele or David Fernandez if you have comments or questions.



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# ABOUT UNITY CHURCH OF EDGEWOOD

Unity Church of Edgewood provides a philosophy that is spiritual, not religious; and love-based, not fear-based.

Unity is a way of Being.

We believe and teach that every individual is created in the likeness and image of our Creator... God. All of life is sacred and our only need is to recognize, accept and live our true potential and highest calling.

We believe the final spiritual authority for each individual is their indwelling Spirit... the “Christ” presence as God within.

We honor all paths to God.

We believe in being a positive difference in the world!

## *Consider this...*

### **GOD Is**

There is One presence... One power... One spirit that forms and flows through all of life—God. God is love.

### **I AM**

I am/we are created in the like-ness and image of God— born in original wholeness and virtue.

I am love.

### **THINK It**

Our mind is the connecting link to Universal Mind... or God. Therefore, our thoughts give shape to our reality.

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# ABOUT UNITY CHURCH OF EDGEWOOD

## **PRAY It**

Prayer and Meditation are conscious conditioners... Attuning and aligning us to our highest potential.

## **LIVE It**

Spiritual knowing comes through personal experience.

Live your highest understanding of Truth and you will continually grow and evolve.

## *Join us...*

### **Sunday Service at 10:30 a.m.**

Our Sunday morning service is time of inspiration and celebration. Enjoy excellent music from local and global artists, inspiring and thought-provoking messages, meditation, laughter and a welcoming spirit of community!

Nursery & children's/youth programs provided.

### **New to Unity**

If you are new to Unity, check our calendar for the next "New to Unity" class. This is a small group gathering where those new to Unity meet with our Senior Minister to connect, share, ask questions, and learning more about the possibilities of Unity.

### **Events & Opportunities**

We help people discover and live their spiritual purpose and potential. We offer classes, workshops, events and opportunities for spiritual growth and sacred service.

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## ASSOCIATE MINISTER...

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Every player, every exchange informs who we are becoming.

And so the Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas seasons are upon us - a great time for reflection, for turning inward, for creating. This year has been one of challenge for many of us and for our spiritual and global tribe. It has given us much for which to be grateful and awareness of what calls to be healed. As you go about your rituals for the holiday season, remember now and then that you are engaging in a time of the Great Turning. Your behavior and words, your thoughts and energy, your laughter and shouts are all a part of the turning that lifts and changes each of us.

Let this be a season like no other you have known. Let this be a season that not only reminds us of the words of Ecclesiastes, but for words that no one else has yet spoken. This is a season for you to celebrate in a new way, with greater intention and a lighter heart. Who knows? We do know that we are turning. An old chant goes, "We are the changers. Everything we touch is changing. Everything lost is found again, in a new place, in a new day. Everything hurt is healed again, in a new time, in a new way."

Christmas can bring forth a great turning in you. From an old place to a new one. From despair to hope. From fear to trust. From dark to light. Turn, turn, turn.

Wishing you a great turning.

### **“One God, Many Paths”**

***2011 Spiritual Education Study Series - Comparative Religions and Faith Traditions by Patty Becker, an Ordained Interfaith Minister and Licensed Unity Teacher***

12 Classes - 1st Monday of each month  
6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Fee is \$12 per class.

First Class is Monday, January 3, 2011  
“Pre-Historic, Native & Aboriginal Religions”



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# **SUNDAY CELEBRATION SERVICES FOR DECEMBER & JANUARY**

10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. • (Childcare available)

Children's Ministry, Uniteens and Y.O.U. also at 10:30 a.m.

**Sunday, December 5, 2010**

**The Joseph Principle and Peace**

**Sunday, December 12, 2010**

**The Star of Joy and a Children's Presentation & Hand Bell  
Choir**

**Sunday, December 19, 2010**

**Love and The Message of Angels**

**Sunday, December 26, 2010**

**Kwanzaa and The Day After Christmas**

**Sunday, January 2, 2011**

**New Year's Burning Bowl Ceremony & Message**

**Sunday, January 9, 2011**

**Do Greater Things**

**Sunday, January 16, 2011**

**What's Ho'oponopono Got to Do With It?**

**Sunday, January 23, 2011**

**Special Guests from Maui – Hawaiian Message and Music**

**Sunday, January 30, 2011 • My Sacred Contract**

*To view previous Sunday messages, visit our website at  
[www.unityedgewood.org](http://www.unityedgewood.org) and click "Sunday Lessons."*



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