

Committing to Unity (Part 3 of 3, in the Pathway to Membership Series)
9:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

Workshop Overview

- I. Welcome/Overview/Introductions (15 minutes to 9:45)
- II. Mission/Values/Ends (30 minutes to 10:15)
- III. Gifts/Talents/Values and House Exercise (40 minutes to 10:50)
- IV. Pledging (20 minutes to 11:10)
- V. Reflecting on Joining (15 minutes to 11:25)
- VI. Signing Book/Joining (10 minutes to 11:35)
- VII. Wrap Up (5 minutes to 11:40)

I. Welcome/Overview/Introductions (to 9:45)

- Light the chalice and “Our Deepest Fears” reading from Marianne Williamsion.
- Thank you all for coming to Committing to Unity. I’m Justin Schroeder. I’d also like to introduce Teresa Thomas-Carroll, a member of our church, who will be helping to lead this workshop today.
- You’re here this morning because you’ve taken *Welcome to Unity* and *Finding Yourself at Unity*, and are ready to become a member of Unity! This is a significant moment in your spiritual journey!
- This is your chance to shape your future with this community in a way that shares your time, talents and resources, including money, and in return, brings you the opportunity to act on your deepest values, to experience spiritual transformation, to experience joy.
- We’ll start with the big picture vision of our mission, values and ends, the statements that guide all that we do here at the church. Then, we’ll consider how you fit into that big picture. We’ll start with your time and talents and how you’d like to share those with the church community.
- Then we’ll consider pledging and what you’d like to reflect in your financial support of our community. (If not here with partner, talk about dynamics of pledging when partner not involved in the church.) We’ll end by giving you a chance to share what it means to you to be joining this church, and then

Flipchart: Welcome!

Candle, Candleholder, Matches, Nametags, Pens, Sign-In Sheet, Reading

Up On Wall: Posters of “Responsibilities of Membership” and “Giving Away the Offering”

On Flipchart - agenda for day.

you'll be invited to sign our membership book.

- Before we get to all that though, I'd like to take a moment for us to introduce ourselves to each other. So, please tell us your name, and what brought you here this morning. I'll start. I'm here because I care deeply about our faith tradition and I have a deep desire to help you all intentionally craft a membership commitment that is meaningful to you.

II. Mission, Values, Ends (30 minutes 10:15)

- Let's turn now to the session material and our mission, values and ends. This is what guides all that we do here at the church. Take a minute to read through them now and then circle three items that really speak to you. You can circle three words, three sentences, you can even write three summary words or sentences, as long as they focus on what speaks to you from our mission, values and ends statements.
- What were some of the items that spoke to you?
- Coming out of this conversation – lead into generosity. For example, “some of you mentioned that integrity, service or joy spoke to you. I want to talk a little more about what I see as the umbrella that brings many of these things together: generosity. If we're living lives of integrity (life and values in alignment=bring left and right hand together), service (giving back to the world), and joy (living with gratitude, sense of possibility), then generosity is sure to follow.
- This spirit of generosity is a critical part of our faith and we'd like to give you a chance to reflect on it. In small groups: *"How does generosity create meaning in your life?" ("When has someone been particularly generous with you?")*
- We are a liberal, generous faith. Our church is supported by generous members who give their time, energy, resources, and money, to support the vision and dreams of the church.
- Our hope and our expectation is that you will be

Flipchart: What to Say in Introduction

Handout: Mission, Values, Ends

generous both with your time and your resources, that you will share your gifts and talents with this community and give 5% of your household income as a financial pledge to support the church.

- Let's first take a look at your time and talents and how you can fit your gifts and passions into the mission, values, and ends of the church in a way that brings you joy and transformation.
- Now we're going to turn to how you want to fit into the big picture of our mission, values and ends, particularly the three items that spoke to you most clearly. To take us through the exercise that will turn those initial reactions into actions, I'll turn it over to Teresa.

III. Gifts/Talents/Values and House Exercise (40 mins to 10:55)

- Figure out gifts and talents: think about times in your life where you felt you were at your best, truly engaged in and inspired by what you were doing. Doesn't matter if those times were at work, doing volunteer work, at home, whatever. Write down a short list of those times. Write down the gifts and talents those times let you use. (Give an example from your own life.)
- Figure out values: Looking back at the list of times you were at your best, what underlying values do you see? What values did those times give you a chance to deepen? Add a third column to worksheet and write them down. (Give examples).
- Figure out path of opportunities: We now want to give you a chance to bring together your gifts and talents and values through the work that you do for and at Unity Church Unitarian. Have these gifts, talents and values in the back of your mind while you look over the opportunities available to you here. As you look them over, ask me questions to help you understand the groups better. Mark the opportunities that appeal to you, in which you might want to participate. Choose 5 or 6 to focus on. Write these in the attic of

Handout:
Gifts/Talents/Values

Handout: Houses

**Flipchart: Exercise
Instructions with
Reveal**

each house. In the main part of each house, write the gifts and talents this opportunity would allow you to use. In the foundation of each house, write the values this opportunity would give you a chance to express and deepen. Now consider the path you might take between these houses. Just as one house may be the perfect fit for you now, but later you'll need to move to find a better fit, consider how you might move between these houses. Where might be a good place to start? Which house allows you to use talents and express values that speak to you right now? Which house could you see yourself moving to later on as your life changes? Pick your starting house, number the houses in the order you'd like to live in them, and draw your path between the houses.

- Share your paths with a partner.
- How can I, as the Director of Congregational Development, help? You now have a path of involvement you'd like to explore here at Unity Church Unitarian. I'm here to help you on that path.
- I can introduce you to the leaders of the teams you're interested in working with. I can pass your name onto team leaders and ask them to contact you.
- I can help you figure out what you might need to do to be ready for a particular opportunity. I can help you start new groups that feed your passions and your interests. Whatever you need, I'm a good first stop. Is there anything you'd like to ask me right now about your paths?

BREAK

IV. Pledging (20 mins to 11:15)

- As we said in the opening, membership is about sharing your time, talents and resources with our community. Now that we've considered time and talents, let's turn to one very important resource that makes all these opportunities possible: money.
- A pledge is a very personal decision. Only you can decide what contribution best reflects your

connection to this community and your hopes for its future.

- And no matter what your income or financial circumstances are, there's a place for you at Unity! We trust that each person who joins Unity is as generous as their circumstances allow; and that everyone gives generously.
- We talk about money in Committing to Unity because of course it lets us keep the lights on, and the building running, but most importantly, it enables our collective dreams to come true. We work to do wonderful things with money, to make our community and our world a better place to be.
- Many people say they need a little guidance for how to translate those possibilities into a concrete number. Here are some things to consider:
 - First, we have a fair-share giving guide.
 - Some churches seem to offer a sort of afterlife insurance policy - you give 10% of your income to the church and God will take care of you - ticket to heaven! Pledging means something a little different.
 - You'll notice that we encourage people to give 5% of their household income. We find that that this is a pledge to enable dreams, not just keep the lights on, not just pay salaries, but allow the church to make a deep and meaningful difference in the world.
 - First and foremost, making a meaningful pledge means that the church is a real priority in your life - that this place matters to you, that it's a top priority.
 - Your pledge helps Unity create a budget that helps create meaning worship for over 600 people every Sunday, allows us to offer an innovative Religious Education program to over 400 children and youth, and allows us to provide staff support to our dozen Community Outreach Ministry Teams.
 - In order to meet this budget and for Unity to fulfill its vision and dreams, the average pledge needs to be between \$1500 and \$2000 dollars.

Handout: Fair-Share Giving Guide - Talk through it

Handout: Budget

- This does not mean that every member or family is pledging \$2000. Depending on income and where people are at in their lives, pledges range from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars or more. Obviously, you need to take into consideration your own circumstances, and if you're with a partner, to have a meaningful conversation about pledging.
- It's taken my wife and I several years to get to the 5% pledge level.
- We did it for the first time this year and it feels really good. It feel really good knowing we're helping to support this institution – this place that welcomes all people, that provides meaningful religious education for children, and such moving worship services. (Music, 3rd service, food ministry, etc.)
- You'll also want to consider the less-tangible advantages to becoming a member. As a pledging member, you can vote in our congregational meetings. You must be a member to serve on key ministry teams, including the Board of Trustees, the anti-racism team, the Pastoral Care team, and the Worship Associates team.
- Voting members receive reduced rates for children's RE classes and for other classes and building rentals when we charge a fee.
- Finally - we're a church that is committed to talking about money in a holistic way and we're committed to giving you financial tools and resources. To that end, we offer classes and workshops to help you deal with finances - spending, saving, and giving - so that your financial life can reflect your deepest values, dreams, and hopes.
- What questions can I answer about pledging?

V. Filling out forms/Reflecting (15 mins to 11:30)

- We'd like to give you time now to fill out your Pledge Form, if you haven't already made a pledge. We'd also like you to write a sentence or two about what it means to you to be taking this step of officially joining this church. The Center Room is open and

- we'll give you about 10 minutes.
- We'll gather again and you'll be invited to share your statement before you sign our membership book.

VI. Signing the Book and Celebrating (10 mins to 11:40)

- I'd like to re-introduce you to Rob and Janne. They're here because this is a significant moment in your life and in the life of our church.
- Joining is a profound statement, a bold declaration! It is you proclaiming, "I freely choose this faith community. I believe in the vision, mission, and values of this church and will share my gifts and treasures to serve that vision. I am willing to let this faith and these people challenge, change, and shape me – as I them, as together, we move closer to living lives of integrity, service, and joy."
- We invite you now to share your statement and sign the membership book. After everyone has signed the book, we'll read the "Bond of Fellowship" together.
- Share upcoming "new member recognition" dates in the service.

VII. Wrap Up/Closing Reading

- In joining this church you give added strength and energy to it and to all of us who have joined before you. We need you. We need your moral and spiritual support and your financial support as well. We need your thoughts. We need your dreams. This church is no greater than the vitality brought to it by its members. --Forrest Church
- Here the act of joining rarely signifies an arrival to one's religious destination. Much more often it signifies a new departure. It may mean a new departure down your old path. It may mean the charting of a path unknown to you before. In either case, in joining with us a large part of what you are doing is renewing your

commitment to yourself, to your own spiritual
development...

