

**Finding Yourself at Unity (Part 2 of 3, in Pathway to
Membership Series)
Full Day, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

Workshop Overview

- I. Welcome/Opening/Introductions/Overview (35 minutes to 9:35)
- II. Exploration of the Essential Religious Questions/Reflection (35 minutes to 10:10)
- III. BREAK (5 minutes to 10:15)
- IV. Unitarian Universalist History (70 minutes to 11:25)
- V. Tour of Building (50 minutes to 12:15 p.m.)
- VI. Lunch (45 minutes to 1:00 p.m.)
- VII. Conversation About Responsibilities of Membership (25 minutes to 1:25 p.m.)
- VIII. Children and Youth Religious Education at Unity Church (55 minutes to 2:20 p.m.)
- IX. Covenant Group Experience (50 minutes to 3:15)
- X. Community Outreach (15 minutes to 3:30)
- XI. Mission and Vision of the Church with Ministers (30 minutes to 4:00)
- XII. Closing and take aways (10 minutes to 4:10)
- XIII. Evaluation and Final Wrap Up

I. Opening and Welcome 9:00 - 9:10am -

- **Opening Reading: Opening Bow. By Jack Cornfield**
- This class is the follow up class to "Welcome to Unity," and is deeper step toward a more full involvement in the Church Community. The 3rd and final class in the Series is "Committing to Unity," offered _____.
- In our time today, let us listen respectfully to one another, and let us make space for each voice to be heard.

Introductions: 20 minutes 9:10 - 9:30

1) Name, 2) What are you involved in at Unity? 3) What are your hopes for this class?

Overview of the Day: 5 minutes 9:30 - 9:35

Flipchart:
Welcome!

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

- Help participants deepen their understanding of who we are by going deeper into Unitarian Universalist history as well as Unity Church's history.
- Give participants an opportunity to experience self-reflection.
- Provide an opportunity to learn more about our faith community, our values and mission, and explore ways to become more involved.
- To spend time with staff and ministers.
- To briefly discuss the privileges, responsibilities and commitments of membership. (If, at the end of this class, you're ready to become a member, you'll be invited to the final class in this series, called "Committing to Unity.")
- Review Agenda

Put up agenda on Flip Chart - Run through it, briefly

II. Exploring the Essential Religious/Human Questions

Small Groups 9:35-10:05

Unitarian Universalist Minister Forrest Church has suggested that religion is our "human response to the dual realities of being alive and knowing that we must Throughout the ages, human beings have wrestled with essential religious questions...and I want to give you a chance to wrestle with some of these questions that come out of our roots in the Judeo Christian tradition.

Hand out "7 Essential Religious Questions"

Invite participants to break into groups of 3 or 4 and discuss and finish these statements. You'll have 30 minutes.

- 1) Human beings are...
- 2) God is...
- 3) Conflict & war are.....
- 4) When people die they...
- 5) Love is...
- 6) Jesus is...
- 7) Prayer is...

10:05 - 10:10 Reflection: What are the similarities and variety of opinions in the group?

BREAK (5 minutes to 10:15)

As you know by now, we are non-creedal faith, whose roots are in the Jewish and Christian tradition.

We wrestle with these questions, but the answers we arrive at are different than many other faiths. This is a reminder that "what we believe" is less important than "how we are."

As Unitarian Universalists, we are more connected by a set of shared values than we are by a creed or single set of beliefs. The words of Francis David, a Unitarian who converted (the only Unitarian) King John Sigismund, 1561, ring true for us, "We don't have to think alike to love alike."

Hand out UU Pocket Guide.

IV. 10:15 - 10:25 Unitarian Universalist History (70 minutes to 11:25). Share key dates:

325: Council of Nicea - is where Trinity became "codified." Roman emperor, Constantine, needed some religious uniformity across empire. Shaped by St. Augustine and others, the Catholic Church and its Dogma began to emerge.

1517: Protestant Reformation.

1561: Unitarianism took institutional form in Romania - In 1561 **John Sigismund** (1540 - 1571) became King of Transylvania, the first and only Unitarian king in history. He passed Edict of Toleration. You could be Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran, or Unitarian.

1620: The Puritans and Pilgrims come to these shores - bringing their ideas of religious freedom.

They were Christian, but they formed "covenantal communities." (Elected their leaders - tied into early democracy!)

Unitarianism comes out of New England Congregationalism.

1770: John Murray arrives and preaches first Universalist Sermon (this is one of the stories we cover in Spirit Play.)

1800s: Unitarianism really emerges. Bound to the bible, but it's not our only text. Unitarian Universalism is, in many ways, a uniquely American Religion, and early adherents thought it was the perfect faith for the new country.

1819: William Ellery Channing. He sought a wide understanding of

Refer to
"Religious
Authority" sign

Hand out UU
Pocket Guide

Refer to Creed
Sign.

Have time line
up on wall.

Have
definitions of
Unitarian and
Universalism on
wall

what it meant to be Christian, based on one's character more than on assent to creeds. Argued for the Unity of God, the single nature of Christ (human - not divine and human), and argued for the use of reason in Religion.

(William Channing Gannett: 1840-1923: Born in Boston and christened by William Ellery Channing, William Channing Gannett spent four years helping semi-starved freed slaves in South Carolina before he was ordained and began to serve in the West. He later served at Unity Church in St. Paul, Minnesota.)

10:25-10:35 Video: "Our American Roots," *Unitarian Christianity* and show the first 3 minutes of *William Ellery Channing - The Bible Revealed*, from "Our American Roots."

10:35 - 10:45 Commentary. 1819 Sermon. (Unitarians didn't want to create a ruckus, but they were pushed by the orthodoxy).

Points to stress:

- Reason in religion: question leaders.
- Capacity of individual to make informed decisions - about govt, and own faith.
- Groups could take their own destiny in their hands.
- Opposed to predestination. A God like that was not worthy of worship.
- Believed in the capacity of human beings to live in the spirit of Jesus.
- Believed in the religion of Jesus, not religion about Jesus.
- Jesus was created in image of God - every human being created in image of God (not the same image.)
- People could make religious declarations. Up until his time, that was reserved only for the church.

10:45 - 11:00 *Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Transcendentalist* (if watch *Thoreau and Emerson: New Sources of Revelation* - end with "UU have always respected reason in religion.")

Points to Stress:

- ***Integrity*** supercedes even law.
- Emerson deeply shaped Unitarianism. His ideas inform the culture in terms of what it means to be religious.
- Religion offered promise for new nation. Looking for new

ways to think and shape the country. Christianity much to limiting for new nation! Had to go beyond the bible! Believed in an immediate, intuition kind of religion.

- Emerson was a minister and was shaped by Channing, who demanded reason in religion. Emerson give the Harvard Divinity School address in 1838.
- **1841: Theodore Parker:** "Transient and the Permanent in Christianity."
- Transient: Church doctrine, creed, tradition, heritage. Permanent - the oversoul. the goodness, the truth, the beauty. Teachings of Christianity don't have authority just because they're in the bible. Truth within teachings is authority enough. Saying of Jesus' don't rest on Jesus authority, just as reality of gravity doesn't rest on Newton's personal authority. This rocked the boat.
- Like Emerson, helped the faith move away from just a biblical faith.
- Famous quotes of Parker: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice" and "of all the people, by all the people, for all the people" (a concept that influenced Abraham Lincoln and were later used in the Gettysburg address). -

11:00-11:15 - Reflection Question: We emerge out of Judeo Christian heritage...What's your relationship with the bible? How do the teachings of the bible, unhooked from their literalism, inform your life?

11:15-11:25 Discuss Free Pulpit and Free Pew (if time)

- Rights and responsibilities of those in the pew.
- This freedom has helped us shape nation and offered new vision for world. Free pulpit needs free pew...they need each other.
- Preacher's life is passed through the fire of thought. They preach as called to preach. Not bound by lectionary or bishops.
- As parishioner, free to accept what told or not. Orthodox tradition, you must accept what taught.

V. 11:25 - 12:15 Tour

- Introduce Tour Guide - TOUR LIBRARY - mention check out!!

1) Entrance to the sanctuary

This building was built in 1905, but it was not the first Unity Church building.

Unity Church was formally organized in 1872, after about 20 years of less regular attempts to gather into a community. The community gathered in several different places during the early years, most often above Pollock and Donaldson's store in downtown St. Paul. In 1882, ten years after the community was formally organized, the first church building was built down near where the State capitol now is, on Wabasha street. William Channing Gannett was the minister at that time, and the building was designed in the manner of a large Queen-Anne style cottage.

By about 1900, the neighborhood where the church was located was deteriorating, and the congregation decided they wanted to move "up on the hill." Limited funds meant that, initially, only the sanctuary and this bell tower were built. This part of the building was completed in 1905. The minister was Richard Boynton. This plaque in the entrance to the sanctuary commemorates all of our ministers. As I said, at the time the church was built, the congregation could only afford the sanctuary and the bell tower. Let's take a look at the bell

tower.

2) Bell Tower.

Lead group into bell tower. Up stairs. Initially, the bell tower was not used very much, because the congregation could not afford a bell. In fact, there was no bell in the bell tower until 1979, when friends and family of James Klingel, a long time member, purchased a bell in his memory; and to honor the work of all whose lives and work contribute to the life of the church. The bell was cast by the McShane Bell Company of Baltimore, Maryland. It weighs 1500 pounds and is pitched at G natural.

Even before the Klingel bell became a part of the bell tower, the tower found a different role to play in the life of the church. In 1930, Frederick May Elliot, who was the minister here from 1917 to 1937, founded the Tower Club, a group for high school students. The Tower Club, named after this tower, met for a number of years up here to talk, dream, study and plan. Imagine! 1933, a group of high school students up here planning the Christmas pageant!

Lead group back down. Next, we will go into the sanctuary. The sanctuary, of course, has been part of this building from the start, but it hasn't always looked the way it looks now. Until

1925, there were no pews, just chairs. And, until 1963, the organ was in the front of the sanctuary, to the right hand side. The front of the sanctuary was dark, with quite a bit of dark, carved wood. We didn't have the balcony and choir loft.

The big change in the sanctuary came about because of a fire in 1963. The fire started with an electric heater near the organ at the front of the sanctuary. The organ was just here, on the right side and the fire did significant damage, especially in the front part of the sanctuary. The organ and all of the woodwork were completely destroyed, and the fire burned through the roof. The giant cedar beams in the sanctuary were charred, but still structurally sound. So, we moved out for a while, and had Sunday services in the Selby Community Center auditorium, which was across the street.

The restoration of the sanctuary gave us some beautiful gifts: the skylight, which we decided to install in the place where the roof had burned through; the Noack tracker organ and choir loft in the back of the sanctuary, and the reredos, our beautiful wood sculpture in the front of the sanctuary. Reredos is a term referring to a structure, traditional in English parish churches of the late Middle Ages, which filled the space between the bottom of the windows and the top of the altar table. In the Baroque era in France, Italy and Spain there was a great development of the reredos into a vast altar-piece with dramatic and theatrical details. Our reredos was designed by

Richard Hammel, whose architectural firm handled the renovation of the sanctuary. In 1964, the congregation returned to worship to a beautiful, bright sanctuary where the sun could stream in on a Sunday morning.

Ever since 1905, there are words that have been spoken again and again in this sanctuary - the Bond of Fellowship which is spoken as part of our ceremony welcoming new members. The Bond of Fellowship was written by William Channing Gannett when he joined Unity. A member of our Finding Yourself at Unity will speak those words to you now:

[BOND OF FELLOWSHIP]

3) Minister's Study

Next, we will go to the room that was the Minister's study in the original church building. Now this room is the Music Director's office. It is here that the ministers wait as they prepare to enter the sanctuary for services. It is also part of the backstage area for the Christmas pageant and the children's musical. This room was the Minister's study and office until the Eliot wing was added in 1957. Arthur Foote was the minister here from 1945-1970. He was deeply loved, both for his work as a minister and for his work in the community. He was a wonderful writer and orator as well as a comforting pastor. In addition, Arthur Foote believed strongly in the spiritual

imperative to act in the community. He was most noted for his work in improving the conditions of people hospitalized with mental illness. This work, which took place in the late 1940's and early 1950's, included a week long stint where Foote, along with another member of the church, worked incognito as attendants at a state hospital.

Standing here, we can imagine that we hear Arthur Foote's voice speaking words that he wrote.

[FYU person reads a selection from Taking Down the Defenses]

Lead group out door into hallway and into the Parish Hall.

4) Parish Hall

In 1920, the Congregation was ready and able to build the parish hall addition to the church. Sunday school rooms, a dining room and kitchen were built into the basement. The space above the parish hall was planned as a chapel, but was not completed initially because there was not enough money for the entire project. Three years later, though, at the time of the death of Charles Wilberforce Ames, his friends donated the funds necessary to finish the small upstairs chapel.

The cloister area connecting the bell tower and the parish hall

and creating the courtyard was not added until the time of the reconstruction after the 1963 fire. The parish hall initially had a stage in it, providing a performance space. The stage was removed as part of the 1963 work. Also part of the parish hall was the library,

located in the alcove where we now have our Sunday bookstall.

5) Ames Chapel

As I was explaining downstairs, Ames Chapel is named in memory of Charles Wilberforce Ames, a longtime, generous supporter of the church; and a prominent figure in the civic, social and business life of St. Paul. The stained glass window is of St. Martin, who was a hero of Charles Ames. Also part of the stained glass design are a tablet of the ten Commandments, representing Ames' profession, which was publishing of law books, and symbols of the French republic, because Ames had deeply admired that country's conduct during the first world war.

This chapel is used every week for children's worship services, for weddings and memorial services; and other special events. Many of the furnishings were gifts in honor of Charles Ames, or other beloved members of the church.

Ames chapel was completed during the time that Frederick

May Eliot was Unity Church's minister. Eliot, whose ministry lasted from 1917 to 1937, was inspirational and productive. Under his leadership, the church grew. He focused on the Sunday school and music programs, along with his own preaching and organizing of groups for young adults and others. We can imagine Eliot's voice in this chapel around the time that it was finished in 1923:

[reading from FM Eliot]

Lead group past parent's room, then down to basement.

6) Basement.

Lead group through old Sunday school room hallway under parish hall. As I mentioned upstairs, this section of classrooms is under the parish hall and originally included a kitchen and dining area. Now it houses classrooms for first through fourth graders.

Lead group through portion under the sanctuary. This set of classrooms was added in 1930 in response to Frederick May Eliot's success in nurturing a growing Sunday school. These classrooms are for fifth and sixth graders and the high school group.

Lead group to basement area under Eliot wing. Finally, this part of the basement was added under the Eliot wing. This

area houses nursery areas, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms, some 7th and 8th grade classroom space and the children's music room - called the Musicmaker's room.

7) Eliot Wing

Lead group upstairs to Holly Street entrance. This is the Eliot wing, begun during Arthur Foote's tenure, but named for Frederick May Eliot. The first part of the Eliot wing was added in 1957 and included the kitchen, center room and some office space. Then, in 1988, this wing was extended to the north, the second story was added, and the basement space was extended.

This part of the church is where much of the day to day business of the church happens. Volunteers staff the reception desk during much of the week. Janne's office is in the northeast corner with Justin Schroeder's next to hers on the north side. You'll hear more about all of these people next week.

Finally, we go upstairs again. Upstairs in the Eliot wing, we have various meeting rooms - the Foote room, the Robbins parlor and the Gannett room are all often-used meeting rooms. There are also several smaller rooms, along with adult and children's' libraries. The library is open on Sunday mornings, and by request.

VI. 12:15 - 1:00 Lunch

VII. 1:00 - 1:25 Brief conversation about Membership

- Review Responsibilities of Membership.
- Giving offering away.
- Liberal Faith - liberal pledge.
- Talk about Committing to Unity.

Responsibilities of Membership and Shared Ministry at Unity Church

Individual circumstances and inclination determine the degree to which each person participates in the life of Unity Church. The more one participates, the more one finds Unity Church-Unitarian to be one's lifelong spiritual home.

The following are guidelines to the expectations of membership:

1. Attend to your personal spiritual practice and spiritual/personal development
2. Develop small group intimacy skills (in covenant groups or elsewhere)
3. Provide leadership for positive change both within the church walls and wider community (share your gifts and talents)
4. Pledge responsibly to the financial well-being of the congregation

Handout on "Responsibilities of Membership," pledge form, gift and talents form, Committing to Unity.

Taken seriously, these guidelines and commitments help Unity members live lives that are filled with greater integrity, service and joy.

Unitarian Universalist Congregational Membership Is Important

It does not make you into a Unitarian Universalist by the mere fact of joining; you become one by the slow process of thought and life experience. But it does stand as a symbol of your commitment to a liberal, inclusive, reasoned and contemporary approach to life. It enables you to take part in the democratic ordering of the policies of our congregation. It strengthens our voice and our work in the world where illiberal forces are powerfully organized. And it brings you into full participation in the life of a fellowship we find richly rewarding.

--Phillip Hewett

...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

VIII. 1:25-2:20 Religious Education Presentation.

Kerri invites people to do joys and concerns from their own religious upbringing - uses blue and yellow beads (for joys and concerns) on scale.

She then explains RE program.

Hand out RE
Brochure

IX. 2:20 - 3:15 Covenant Group Experience.

TRANSFORMING JOURNEYS

Chalice lighting

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

- Albert Schweitzer

Reading:

Some journeys outward are also journeys inward, taking us both far away and towards the very heart of things. Some journeys forward are also journeys backward, plunging us simultaneously into uncertain futures and even deeper pasts. Some journeys have endings embedded in their beginnings and new beginnings in their endings. All such journeys defy normalcy. The ways they curve through time and space and spirit are neither linear nor plain. They bear tremendous power for transformation. These are journeys to the site of holy ground, the court of the Lord, and therefore called pilgrimage.

- Rev. Gretchen Thompson

Question, Round One: "Your Journey to Unity Church"

What has been your journey to Unity Church-Unitarian? Or...
What have been significant "benchmarks" on your journey to Unity?

Question, Round Two: "Longing for Justice"

What social justice do you long to see in the world? Or...
What stirs you to act for justice in the world? Or...
When have you felt like you were a force for justice in the world?

Check-out: Share one thing you've learned, something you appreciate, or something that's still stirring within you.

**Mention
Covenant Group
Form in their
packet**

Closing Reading:

What we call a beginning is often the end
and to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.

We shall not cease from exploration
and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time.
T.S. Eliot

BREAK: Then all return to large group.

X. 3:15 - 3:30 Community Outreach Ministry - Pat Haff
Pat explains

XI. 3:30 - 4:00 Rob and Janne - leading a congregation seeking
to live lives of integrity, service, joy.

XII. 4:00 - 4:10 Closing and take aways (10 minutes to
4:10): Take away from our time together today?

Closing Reading by Denise Levertov

But we have only begun
To love the earth.

We have only begun
To imagine the fullness of life.

How could we tire of hope?
-- so much is in bud.

How can desire fail?
-- we have only begun

to imagine justice and mercy,
only begun to envision

Reference
Pastoral Care
Information

how it might be
to live as siblings with beast and flower,
not as oppressors.

Surely our river
cannot already be hastening
into the sea of nonbeing?
Surely it cannot
drag, in the silt,
all that is innocent?

Not yet, not yet—
there is too much broken
that must be mended,

too much hurt we have done to each other
that cannot yet be forgiven.

We have only begun to know
the power that is in us if we would join
our solitudes in the communion of struggle.

So much is unfolding that must
complete its gesture,

so much is in bud.

XIII. Evaluation and Final Wrap Up

**Hand out
evaluation and
final handouts**