

From: Charles Courneyea
Subject: Blessing of the Palm

Hi From Unity of Bakersfield,

I was just browsing through your web pages and thought I would send you some information on what I have done here to help make being a member of Unity Church of Bakersfield more meaningful. Prior to coming here in October 1993, the church had just split and being a member here had no meaning, which was part of the problem. Anyone could sign a piece a paper and they were a member. No classes, no instruction, no ceremony, no meaning.

Now, once a year, we designate a Sunday as Membership Sunday, usually around the last Sunday in November. We welcome new members into our faith community after they have filled out a membership application, received approval from the board, and have attended a 4 hour class on Unity history, and what it means to be a committed and responsible voting member.

All new members received into membership receive a spiritual baptism (for many this is the first time they have ever been baptized) and a silk rose bud to keep as a reminder of the divine potential that is ready to blossom from within them.

Then they line up to receive the “Blessing of the Palms” as an outward symbol of the work they have committed to do. Each person comes forward and opens their palms to be anointed with a scented oil. The left palm for the spiritual work and the right palm for the physical work that is to be done by them as new members of the faith community.

Then the old members are asked to come forward to re—dedicate themselves and have their palms anointed.

This has been a very powerful ceremony for us here in Bakersfield. After having their palms anointed, people have had various emotional healings and blessings.

If you believe this would be of help to others in the field, please feel free to share it. If anyone wants to talk about this ceremony I can be reached at Unity Church of Bakersfield.

Blessings to all,
Chuck

Another sample of a New Member Service

NEW MEMBER SERVICE

Twice a year we receive new members formally into our congregation. No one is ever asked to officially join this congregation. It is not a requirement for attendance here, whether it be a worship service or one of the many functions that occur here. All are welcome.

Many people who walk through the doors of Unity centers throughout the world, have done so in search of something that has been missing in their spiritual lives. Some folks get what they immediately need and move on, others stay arid study, reflect, work with the principles we teach arid at some point and time decide for themselves that their seeking is over - that they have been led by the Spirit of Truth within them to make Unity their home, to commit their time, effort, and energies in this one approach to life.

We in Unity make no claim that this is the only path to follow, instead we pray and know that the living spirit of Truth guides each person to his/her rightful place of worship.

Unity membership is unique. The most important requirement for membership in Unity is the desire to know God and the desire to understand, love, and follow His laws of being. Each member is wholly free to live his/her life according to the inspiration of the spirit of Truth within.

Rather than being a system of worship - Unity is a way of life. Members are asked to do their best to live the Truth teachings on a daily basis. The objective of Unity affiliation is to help people live more effective, spirit—centered lives.

Unity people unite in order that they might minister more effectively to each other and to others. By our commitment in the sharing of consciousness in membership, we become the channel by which others, too, are blessed in their lives.

Will those seeking membership please come forward.

The most exciting part of your affiliation with a Unity ministry is what happens to

you as a part of your understanding of the Unity teachings. Unity is a religious philosophy designed to improve the quality of your life on a daily basis. The application of Unity teachings will make you a happier, healthier, and more productive person.

Jesus Christ plays an important role in the Unity lifestyle. We recognize Jesus Christ as the ultimate way—shower to the truly spiritual life. Through His teachings and the example of His life he has provided us with the insights necessary for an understanding of our own spiritual selves. Through this understanding, life is enhanced, enriched, and expanded.

Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” To all of us here today, and particularly to those of you who have made the decision to formally join this congregation — let these words of Jesus Christ- let this promise of the master be accepted and acknowledged the supreme significance of the decision that you have made - the commitment to His teachings which your membership implies.

Jesus Christ is the head of this church and your membership is a declaration that you willingly follow Him. With this thought in mind, let us pray:

Heavenly Father-Mother ~ in whom we live and move and have our being, bless those who have taken another step forward in their commitment to thy will and to thy work. In the name of Jesus Christ we give thanks for the opportunity to serve - to be a part of the cherished ministry which Jesus inaugurated in thy behalf. We are yours, Lord, let thy will be done in and through us, today, tomorrow, and forever. Amen.

We as individual students of Truth unite in spirit, drawn into cooperation and friendship through invisible bonds of love and mutual interest in the gospel of Truth that Jesus taught, lived and proved, we strengthen one another and work together in His name.

Walk worthily in the calling wherein ye were called, forbearing one another in love: give diligence to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and be renewed in the Spirit of your mind.

May Christ . . . dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the

breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

As the minister of this church, it is my privilege, on behalf of its membership to receive you into the full and active membership of this congregation - extending to you the right hand of fellowship.

May, "The Lord bless you and keep you:

The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.