



Positive, Practical Spirituality

Annual Report

February 2022



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Board of Trustees Report

From Board President Dr. Serenee Smith

Here at Unity, our resilience prevailed as 2021 rolled in with high hopes and great expectations. Despite the ongoing threats of the Covid 19 pandemic, we continued providing as many resources as possible through our weekly Zoom classes along with the beautiful Sunday Services.

All of us working in this ministry became proficient at navigating Zoom meetings, and our Board of Trustees met monthly to review and oversee all of the important business, financial and individual needs of our ministry. Sadly, Unity of the Valley remained closed to in-person gatherings the first half of the year due to the pandemic. During this time the Board of Trustees, Ministerial Team, and our Shared Leadership Team spent much time and energy planning how we could carefully and safely reopen our beautiful facility after being closed since March 13, 2020. While reading over the pages of CDC and Lane Health Authority data isn't fun, many of us excitedly scanned this information daily looking for that window of opportunity when we could open our doors. It sometimes felt like we were riding a roller coaster that just kept throwing new twists and turns at us. We all took very seriously our role in addressing the details that needed to be worked out before we could reopen.

Please know that through it all we deeply felt and constantly took into consideration the concerns of the congregation and the hardship it was causing many not to be able to attend in-person services on Sunday. We continually kept reassessing the facts regarding the dangers of the virus, how it was affecting our health services here in Lane County and how quickly it was spreading through our community. One of the questions we asked ourselves was: How would we feel if just one congregant became critically ill? How would we do contact tracing among our congregation, and how would we be able to support or assist anyone in our spiritual community who came down with the virus? These questions were discussed and considered at every single Board of Trustee meeting. There were no easy answers, and we were always weighing the benefits of the greater good against those who would temporarily lose companionship and fellowship with friends. None of us wanted to close Unity of the Valley, but our difficult decisions were made out of our loving consideration for each and every one of you.

Perhaps the most difficult challenge our board faced last year was developing our reopening policy. We asked, "What would be the best and safest approach to reopening our doors and inviting our congregation back for in-person services?" After much discussion and thought, we came up with the following policy:

"With deep respect for all viewpoints in our community, Unity of the Valley will re-open for in-person Sunday Services on July 25, initially for those who have verified that they are fully vaccinated. Families with children too young to be vaccinated may attend services on a reservation basis. This reopening policy is being reviewed on a regular basis."

And then after the extensive cleaning of our facility, a joyful remodel of our foyer, checking all of our technical equipment, calling back our faithful flock of volunteers and so much more, we finally flung open the doors on July 25, and with a grateful heart welcomed back our beloved congregation! What a joyous day that was! Thank you all for your cooperation with this process and your loving patience.

While Covid 19 managed to grab most of the Board of Trustee's attention last year, we did manage to accomplish a few other things in collaboration with the Ministerial Team:

- We were able to provide financial support to a number of congregants in need through Our Spiritual Community Support Fund, as well as financial assistance for our wonderful outreach program to the youth at Looking Glass.
- We began working on updating our Mission Statement; we'll keep you posted as we progress on this project.
- We were blessed to receive another Payroll Protection Loan from the State of Oregon. Due to the diligent work of Jon West, this loan was converted to a grant that we don't need to pay back. These funds, along with your generous donations, allowed us to remain financially stable throughout the year. We are deeply grateful for your kind and loving support of Unity.

At the end of 2021, we regrettably said goodbye to one of our wonderful board trustees, Heather Breckenridge, who moved to the Washington D.C. area. Another trustee, Alice Burch, is stepping off the board after serving her three-year term. We are so grateful for their service and time with us, and we will honor both of them during our annual meeting.

Just in the last month, due to the surge of the Omicron variant, we had to once again stop holding in-person gatherings in the interest of community safety. We are watching the data closely and will update you on the exact time of our reopening which we anticipate will be soon. **Please note:** Part of the Covid 19 policy adopted by the Board of Trustees states that everyone attending in-person Sunday Services must be "fully" vaccinated. To that end, we will be requiring that all attendees have received a booster shot. We ask that you send in this additional proof to Gena at unityval@riousa.com as soon as possible to minimize the document checking on Sunday mornings.

This Board of Trustees report would not be complete without expressing gratitude to the many who keep our ministry alive and thriving. These include:

- The Ministerial Team for your loving guidance and support;
- The Shared Leadership Team for showing up weekly with your warm hearts and bright minds to assist in running our organization;

- Our Administrator Gena Duel, who makes us all look good and keeps the wheels of this ministry turning with loving efficiency;
- The wonderful volunteers and staff who work so lovingly to make Unity a center of peace and beauty;
- And finally, each and every person who is connected in heart and mind to Unity of the Valley. You are all part of the beautiful mandala that encompasses our spiritual community and makes us what we are. We love you all, thank you all so much!



Ministerial Team Report

From Revs. Sherry Lady, Inge Tarantola and Jon West

Although the three of us carry the title of Ministerial Team, it is the *collective ministry* of this spiritual community that is our real strength. Over the past twelve months, our little team has been honored and humbled to stand at the intersection of the many teams and community members who have demonstrated the true essence of ministry. We know this has been a difficult time for many; so often we wish we could do more to help. Through it all we have felt supported and inspired by the divine qualities expressed by you, our Unity family—in particular, your *dedication, patience* and *love*.

Last year at this time, our facility was closed to all activities except our online services and weekly administrative functions. Yet each time we held a service in our nearly empty sanctuary, we felt your loving presence. We knew you were out there cheering us on with hearts and smiles on Facebook, silently sending blessings to the Sunday team and our larger community, and helping keep Unity's financial ship afloat however you could.

Of course, our online-only services couldn't have happened without our incredibly dedicated music team led by Laura DuBois and the audio-visual expertise of Ryan Zimmer. And this slimmed-down crew was supported by additional volunteers helping us keep up with safety protocols like wiping down microphones, monitoring mask usage, beautifying our altar with flower arrangements, and serving as guest speakers. Meanwhile, volunteers who had assisted with our online presence for years continued their individual efforts: webmastering, updating our Facebook page, and providing graphic design skills. And serving at the center of all these strands of support, our amazing administrator Géna Duel. Unity truly takes a village!

After resuming in-person services last July, we witnessed the dedicated efforts of our early morning Openers, front door Greeters, Ushers in the sanctuary, Kitchen Angels

working before and after the services, PowerPoint Team shining their powerful light, a new Youth and Family Ministry offering gatherings for teens, Chaplains providing prayer support, Book Store volunteers, and Closers ensuring our building is secure after all has been said and sung. Our warmest thanks to the leaders and members of these teams and everyone who jumped in to help when needed—on Christmas Eve for instance!

As Serenee described so well in the Board Report, leadership at Unity has required a lot of swimming in the murky waters of pandemic-related planning and policy creation. Through it all, our Board has provided wise and compassionate guidance, while our Shared Leadership Team (SLT) met with us weekly to manage issues large and small. Working with both of these groups has been a joy in these challenging years.

With so many distractions to deal with, we are deeply grateful for those individuals who expanded Unity's ministry by providing online classes, discussion sessions, support groups, phone outreach, and all those wonderful Connecting from the Heart videos from our Music Ministry. There were also countless incidents of loving kindness behind the scenes. These include both the organized efforts of our Angel Network and the many one-to-one acts of caring for those who have suffered illness and loss. We also want to recognize the steady outreach to the kids in the Looking Glass Counseling Program led by our Youth and Family Ministry team. While we can't list every giver and gift of service in our community, please know your names and faces are written in our hearts.

In our communications and occasional spiritual counseling sessions, we have learned of the hardship many have faced in missing fellowship at Unity. Just when Unity seemed to be nearing normal, we closed our doors again due to the Omicron variant! Despite these unpleasant upheavals, we've sensed a deep well of patience from this community as we've tried to put everyone's safety first, especially our most vulnerable. Your understanding about this is deeply appreciated.

In Unity, we often reflect upon the interconnections we share as spiritual beings. One example occurred on the day before last Thanksgiving. That was when our Shared Leadership Team gathered to provide Thanksgiving meals with all the traditional fixin's to anyone in our community who requested one. The love that was given, received, then given back through the shining eyes and warm thanks of each recipient was an unforgettable gift to us all.

These are not normal times and we have all been stretched in ways we probably never expected. Yet through your divine powers of *dedication*, *patience* and *love*—along with your innate wisdom and capacity to grow through life's challenges—each of you is helping to keep the ministry of Unity shining brightly. Thank you for being the blessing you are!



Treasurer's Report

From Board Treasurer Vicky Hills

Another year of challenges and blessings! The blessings far outweighed the challenges with regard to Unity of the Valley's finances! Thank YOU! for continuing to support our spiritual community financially and in many other ways. I've included the last three years' financial numbers to help us all compare a typical year (2019) with the last two during the pandemic.

YEAR END FINANCIAL RESULTS:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Total Income:	\$181,241	\$165,419	\$213,018
*PPP Grant Income:	\$ 45,431		
Total Expenses:	\$172,616	\$153,643	\$205,127
Net Income:	\$ 54,056	\$ 11,776	\$ 7,891

***PPP Grant Income** - *We were granted two Payroll Protection Program Loans from the Federal Government, the first was \$22,677 and the second was \$22,754. Although our reduced income in 2020 required reduced staff hours, the PPP loans allowed us to bring all staff back to full wages by the end of that year. By meeting all government requirements, our loans were officially "forgiven," and we don't have to pay them back. Special thanks to Jon West for slogging through the forms to allow us to receive these loans and convert them to grants.

2021 YEAR-END CHECKING ACCOUNT BANK BALANCE:

We started the year with \$75,132 in our regular everyday checking account and ended with \$90,183. Included in this balance is the \$45,431 PPP income.

2021 YEAR-END BALANCES IN OUR OTHER BANK ACCOUNTS:

MONEY MARKET (Rainy Day Fund): \$120,848 (+1,200 for Legacy of Love Savings)

CAPITAL RESERVE (Major Expenditures):

\$25,301 (\$23,184 + Piano Purchase Fund of \$2,117)

BOOKSTORE: \$6,640

YFM: \$3,417

Because of your support, we continued our tradition of giving year-end bonuses and gifts to employees, contract musicians, and others who helped us throughout the year. We were also able to contribute financially to our Regional Association of Unity Churches and to Unity Worldwide Headquarters.

PIANO PURCHASE FUND: We are well into the second year of our 5-year loan to purchase our beautiful grand piano. As of December 31, we had received a total of \$11,117 in donations specified for the piano and made total payments of \$500 per month totaling \$9,000, leaving a balance of \$2,117 in our piano fund, with \$15,000 owed. Additionally, this year, we received our first distribution of \$3,125 from the anonymous Music Fund Endowment established through Oregon Community Foundation for any music needs.

OSCSF PROGRAM: We have continued Our Spiritual Community Support Fund to help those in need during the pandemic. Over the past two years, we received \$7,395 in donations and have been able to help those with requests in the amount of \$7,075. At the end of 2021, we had a balance of \$320 available for future requests. Please let Géna know if you wish to contribute to this fund as there are still people in need within our spiritual community.

CAPITAL EXPENSES

As will be explained in our facility report, we invested \$4,000 in new lighting.

We have spent \$1,200 so far on repairing our water drainage system. The good news is this will not cost the \$40,000 we were initially anticipating but most likely will stay under \$10,000.

We are still planning on purchasing cameras and other needed equipment that Ryan Zimmer, our Audio-Video expert, has been graciously loaning to us.

We purchased a new computer and software for Jon West for a little over \$4,000.

FINAL NOTES

Our Simple Giving automatic monthly donations remain close to \$9,000 a month, with people adjusting their donations higher or lower, as needed. Thank you to ALL who have signed up for this program. If you aren't a Simple Giving member, please consider joining, no matter the size of your contribution. It makes a difference in planning our monthly income come budgeting time. Contact our Administrator, Géna, for information.

Finally, a BIG THANK YOU to all our congregants and friends from afar who continue to support our community. We appreciate you ALL and look forward to a rewarding and prosperous year ahead!

For questions or comments on this report, please email me at mauivicky@gmail.com.



Prayer Ministry Report

From Rev. Inge Tarantola

Prayer is the fastest wireless connection. ~ Anonymous

As I write this, the pandemic has brought us back to livestream services only. Hopefully we will be back to in-person soon. In the meantime, the members of the prayer ministry are delighted to be with you in prayer and to be of service, and we appreciate the many ways you have let us know your prayer needs. There are a number of ways to access the different aspects of the ministry:

- Once a week we collect all the requests. The prayer teams will hold your requests in prayer for two weeks. Then they are sent to Unity Village to be prayed with for another month.
- The prayer chain is a way to receive immediate prayer. Give me a call, and I will pray with you and send the prayer around the chain. If I don't answer, please leave a message, and I will return your call.
- Prayer shawls are available upon request. You can come to the church by appointment to select one, or send me a request, and I will get it to you.
- Every week a different prayer team member records an inspirational message on the pre-recorded prayer line. Call Unity of the Valley at 541-345-9913, and the menu will direct you to the prayer line.
- The Power of 8 prayer team meets on Sundays via zoom after the service for intensive prayer with individuals. If you would like to schedule a session with the team, please let me know.
- Since we are not meeting at the church, the chaplains do not have the opportunity to pray with you in person, but know that they are joining us in prayer.
- You can call Silent Unity anytime for prayer support 800-669-7729. You can also go to their website to see what other services they offer at unity.org.

Love and light,

Rev Inge Tarantola

541-948-5540

ingetar@pacinfo.com



Youth & Family Ministry Report

From Uniteen Leaders Doris Hicks and Alice Sparks

Unity's Youth & Family Ministry (YFM) offers youth spiritual education for ages 5 years to High School. YFM had been closed during the COVID pandemic. Some groups in YFM began meeting in person again in September 2021.

Doris Hicks and Alice Sparks lead the Uniteens (Middle School age group, 6th, 7th and 8th). The activities they do each Sunday highlight the theme featured in church each month and on each Sunday service. Many of the activities consisted of picture taking demonstrating where we see God and God's work, making paper mâché from paper flour and water representing the Burning Bowl and White Stone ceremonies. The kids acted in a play demonstrating kindness and love, and they did presentations regarding how they relate to the theme and much more.

Doris and Alice recently attended the Uniteen Conference for Unity's Northwest Region. They found that only a few of the ministries are currently active. It seems those that are active only have a very few in attendance as we do. The entire approach to Youth and Family Ministry is being transformed, and we are in process of doing that now. It is moving away from an instructional program to programs where the youth take an active leadership role.

We are looking forward to our youth acting as mentors to the younger youth. We are planning to have our youth engaged in service activities, more acting, planting flowers and trees, and serving young kids eating lunch in the park during the summer, as well as doing social get togethers and field trips.

We are very excited about our transformation!



Shared Leadership Team Report

Submitted by Géna Duel, Unity Administrator

Unity's Shared Leadership Team is made up of representatives from the Ministerial Team, the Board of Trustees, staff members, and volunteers. We meet weekly on Zoom to discuss, hold the vision, and deal with the day-to-day needs of our spiritual center. Each meeting is opened with a centering prayer and/or meditation and a personal check-in with each other. Our connecting in this deeper way each week allows us to move into the heart

space which then allows discussions of the needs of our congregants and our Unity community, and the day-to-day runnings of Unity to be guided by spirit as well as wisdom, and action. Each meeting is then closed with prayer.

Although the COVID Pandemic still continues, in August 2021, we were able to reopen to in-person Sunday services to fully vaccinated persons for the remainder of the year. We spent a great deal of focus and prayer at our weekly Zoom meetings on how to safely open, secure the man/woman power needed, etc. to hold in-person services on Sundays as well as hold Christmas Eve Candle Lighting services.

We were unable to hold our annual Thanksgiving Day potluck again due to the Pandemic, but we were able to put together almost 40 meals for pickup or delivery. We have continued to keep in touch with the various ministries – most of whom continue to meet via Zoom – and support their efforts to support each other. Currently serving on the Shared Leadership Team are Laura DuBois, Géna Duel, Vicky Hills, Rev. Sherry Lady, Geneva Miller, Sunny Schneider, Serenee Smith, Rev. Inge Tarantola, Jon West, and Gary Wymore.



Facilities Report

From Facilities Coordinator Gary Wymore and Jon West

A small group of us are involved in helping keep our facility and grounds in good order throughout the year. As we look forward to gathering again in the sacred space of our spiritual home, it's an ideal time to consider its blessings and responsibilities.

It's easy to come to Unity and get so absorbed in the moment that we hardly think about the many physical elements supporting our experience, such as a sanctuary that's clean, heated (or well-ventilated), with all the lighting and amplification needed. As we move through and make use of our Fellowship Hall, kitchen, prayer chapel, offices, classrooms and bathrooms, it's natural to focus on our own needs and purposes rather than what those specific rooms need to function well. Of course, if those places are functioning and orderly, it's because of the care and attention that one or more people have given it.

We are fortunate to have a very reliable person providing our weekly custodial work. But in a building this large, once or twice a year we need to do a deeper clean with a team of volunteers. The situation is similar with our outer grounds. Although we contract for basic upkeep, several times a year we need extra help for a thorough weeding and any planting led by our Master Garden Angel Inge. Please consider pitching in when we put out the call for help with deep cleaning or gardening. Many hands make lighter work, and joining together to beautify our space is a win-win experience.

We are fortunate that that our building and grounds belong fully to us, this spiritual community—all debts have been paid off. Yet investing our time and treasure for maintenance, repair and occasional improvements remains ours to do. Over the last few years, our old sump pumps have increasingly failed to keep water from pooling under our sanctuary floor. In 2021, we received bids up to \$40,000 for an upgraded foundation. Thankfully, Unity members Sunny and Vicky Hills sought advice from construction consultant Steve Gunn, a longtime friend of Unity himself. With Steve's guidance, we settled on a far more cost-effective solution. This involves fixing our outside drainage and replacing our two small sump pumps with larger, heavier duty ones. This work has been started, although the specific sump pumps we ordered have been delayed by a supply chain shortage. The expected cost is well under \$5,000.

In 2021 we updated our stage lighting system. Our eight stagelights were so worn out, bulbs would often burn out as soon as we replaced them. After considerable research, we purchased energy-efficient LED lights. Since they weigh about five more pounds apiece than our previous lights, we hired a professional to add extra braces to the lighting support bars on the ceiling, ensuring they can easily carry the extra weight.

Here are some of the facility projects we see in our future:

- A recent ceiling leak in the Fellowship Hall indicates some roof resealing to do.
- Clogged rain gutters have caused flooding under one of our exit doors and adds to the water getting under our foundation. So it's likely time to consider some kind of rain gutter guards to stop blockages from leaves and fir tree droppings.
- When we get to drier weather, it will be time to have our parking lot resealed with tar. This is a recommended followup step after a parking lot has been repaved, as ours was in 2019. With inflation, we anticipate this expense to be about \$5,000.
- Most of our ceiling lighting consists of fluorescent bulbs which have been phased out, so we will need to get our fixtures retrofitted. Estimated cost is around \$2,000.
- In a year or two, it may be time to
 - replace the roof over the Fillmore Wing.
- Our Fellowship Hall and foyer shows signs of sinkage—something to watch out for.
- Oh, and we can't forget that Ryan Zimmer has been lugging in his own video cameras to produce our online services. So we hope to be able to purchase and install a permanent set of cameras in the near future—a \$10,000 or more investment.

With your ongoing support, we have been able to save up for expenses like these. And if you happen to be someone with building repair skills (electrical, plumbing, construction, etc.) and are willing to help out on occasion, please let us know and we will add you to our facility team list. As with any well-used building, minor issues can arise at any time. The loving care we invest in our spiritual home is energy well spent.



Music Ministry Team Report

From Laura DuBois, Music Director

Through the roller coaster of 2021, our music team has been there for us, with open hearts and endless dedication. As director of this beautiful and amazing team, my heart is filled with gratitude, respect, and love for each and every member. I am especially grateful to our audio/video angel, Ryan Zimmer, who makes our work possible.

We are still waiting for the day that our choir can meet again. We miss you! Here is what we have been able to do in this last year:

Connecting from the Heart

During 2021, we made six “Connecting from the Heart” videos, one for each month from February to July. As Unity of the Valley returned to in-person services, we brought our series to a loving conclusion. You can still watch any of the 28 “Connecting from the Heart” videos, as well as the “World Day of Prayer,” “Voices of Gratitude,” singalongs and any of our past livestream services, by following these steps:

1. Open your internet browser and type “Unity of the Valley Facebook” in your search bar.
2. Once you’re at Unity’s Facebook Page, underneath the logo you’ll see:

[Home](#) [Events](#) [Videos](#) [More](#)
3. Click on “Videos,” and then scroll down and click on the desired video.

How blessed we are to have this resource!

Cabaret

Throughout 2021, the music team worked on our biggest project yet - an online Cabaret. Featuring 18 delightful musical numbers performed by Unity of the Valley congregants (and a few special guests). This video is the perfect infusion of joy, beauty, and fun to get us through this second COVID closure. Follow the instructions above to watch the Cabaret, and enjoy!

Singalongs

In October, we held a singalong featuring favorite songs from days gone by. In December, we held a Christmas singalong which was quite a delightful holiday showcase. For both events, we had enthusiastic audiences who participated with joy and even some dancing! These musical evenings were made possible by the incredible generosity of two anonymous donors. We extend our heartfelt thanks to those two angels!

Anonymous Trust

A different set of angels have blessed our music team with an anonymous trust fund. During 2021, the principal in our trust grew from \$50,000 to \$66,000. We received our first distribution of the dividends from that fund, a payment of \$3,126. We are still “walking on air” as a result of this gift. Thank you, angel donors!

The Piano Fund

Even more donor angels have been helping us to achieve the dream of owning the wonderful piano in the sanctuary. We have continued to make great progress, and as of this writing, we have paid \$11,500 of the \$24,500. In addition to the quality of music we enjoy from the piano, we will also receive income through facility rentals once Unity of the Valley fully reopens. We extend the deepest gratitude towards all those who have given money towards this instrument. It makes an incredible difference in our lives!



Angel Network Report

From Coordinator Julia Linebarger-Taylor

Greetings! I have served as the Angel Network Coordinator for two years. I am happy to report:

- The Angel Network currently has 27 volunteers.
- During the period of January–December 2020, the Angel Network received five requests for assistance.
- From January–December 2021, we received 29 requests for assistance.
- Requests for assistance consisted of rides to/from medical appointments or other; meals; cleaning; light moving; delivery of furniture/supplies; comfort calls; cards; guest accommodations; and small home repair jobs.
- Prayer shawls were delivered by one of our volunteers to those needing comfort.
- Almost all requests for help came via email or phone; only one request in these two years were made via the church phone system.
- One request this past year was a major job of clearing out a room full of primarily craft items for a congregant. Four Angel Network volunteers (plus 1 spouse) spent approximately 7 hours total in the home over a period of four days sorting, boxing, and hauling items for delivery to St. Vincent de Paul and Materials Exchange Center for Community Arts. The husband and wife allowed volunteers to keep items for the church or themselves. Funds were raised to hire a professional to clean the room, but they declined. These donations were sent to the church for the Angel Network fund at the request of the donors.

If you would like to volunteer on this wonderful team, please contact me at (541) 968-5896 or jlinebargertaylor@yahoo.com. If you wish to donate to the Angel Network, you can do so by making a check payable to Unity of the Valley and including ANGEL NETWORK in the memo line. You can mail your check to Unity of the Valley, 3912 Dillard Road, Eugene, Oregon 97405.

I am grateful for all the volunteers who serve our Unity Community, and it is my privilege to coordinate these efforts.

Blessings,
Julia



To Every Reader:

*We love you,
We bless you,
We behold the Divine within you.*