

First Unity Church of St. Louis

2023 Volume V
September/October

Issue 5

Minister's Corner

THE POWER OF SURRENDER

One of the things I love most about the months of September and October is the arrival of butterflies. Looking out my window, I see these amazing creatures with unique colors & intricate patterns gracefully flying from bloom to bloom on my butterfly bushes. The butterfly symbolizes transformation. A poignant story about this transformation is adapted from the Greek philosopher, Kazantsakis.

I remember one morning when I discovered a cocoon in the bark of a tree just as a butterfly was making a hole, preparing to emerge. I waited awhile, but it was too long appearing and I was impatient. I bent over it, breathing on it to warm it and expedite the process. I warmed it as quickly as I could, and the miracle began to happen before my eyes, faster than life. The case opened; the butterfly started slowly crawling out. I will never forget my horror when I saw how its wings were folded back and crumpled; the wretched butterfly tried with its whole trembling body to unfold them. Bending over it, I tried to help it with my breath -- in vain.

It needed to be hatched out patiently, and the unfolding of the wings should have been a gradual process in the sun. Now it was too late. My breath had forced the butterfly to appear, all crumpled before its time. It struggled desperately, and in a few seconds, it died in the palm of my hand. That little body, I do believe, is the greatest weight I have on my conscience. For I realize today that it is wrong to violate the great laws of nature. We should not be impatient or hurry; instead, we must learn to confidently obey the eternal rhythm of our lives.

I used to share this story with middle school students who were so impatient to grow up. Looking back, I am not sure how effective this was, but I do remember the kids using the word "cocoon" as code for "slow down, be patient." Unity Co-Founder Charles Fillmore defines patience as "An attitude of mind characterized by inner calmness and quiet endurance, especially in the face of trying conditions."

When we analyze Unity's practice of *affirmative prayer*, we know it is based on patience and a foundation of faith and trust in Perfect Divine Energy & Goodness not yet visible in the outer world. Prayer is turning within to the Christ Presence and surrendering to a Greater Power and Greater Reality. We might associate surrender with waving a white flag in defeat, but spiritual surrender is the ultimate act of transformation. This means acceptance of the eternal timing and rhythm of our lives, knowing that greater good will unfold.

Like a caterpillar feeling the tug of becoming something greater, we surrender to Divine timing, releasing the old to embrace the new. This is usually not an "instant-pudding" process; it takes time to release anxiety, thoughts of limitation, and attachment to specific outcomes. It has been said, "Until you surrender you are part of the problem. After you surrender, you are part of the solution." When we surrender, we open ourselves up the Perfect Divine Flow and know that ALL WILL BE WELL.

In 1 John 4:4, Jesus says, "...the one who is within you is greater than the power in the world." This upcoming fall season is the perfect time for us to release thoughts and attitudes holding us back, surrender to the Christ within, and like the caterpillar, patiently evolve to *be* all we are meant to *be*.

Happy fall,
Rev. Jan

Minister, Jan Mourning

Board of Trustees

Mary Tumminello - President
Betty Jean Kofron - Vice - President
Patricia Riess - Secretary
Lynn Mark - Treasurer
Larry Gibbs - Trustee
Julie Goede -Trustee

Prayer Chaplain Team

Prayer Chaplain Trainer

Mary Tumminello

Prayer Chaplains

Hope Dodson
Lynn Mark

Platform Assistants

Hope Dodson
Lynn Mark
Mary Tumminello

Bookstore Managers

Betty Jean Kofron
Mary Grace

Webmaster

Carol Ellerman

Facebook Admin

Eric Vondruska

Facebook Contributors

Carol Ellerman
Valerie Harris
Lynn Mark
Patricia Riess

Office Manager

Sara DeWitt

Music Director

Steve Schenkel

Music Soloists

Julie Goede
Chuck Seger

Youth Ministry Team

Glenda Gebhardt
Cindy Gibbs
Claire Gibbs

Sound Engineer

Jeremiah Burcher

Photographer

Roy Vaisvil

Newsletter Editor

Patricia Riess

First Unity Church of St. Louis Newsletter

September/October 2023

In This Issue:

Minister's Corner

A Prayer of Becoming

ABUNDANT and FREE

Adventures in Sacred Healing

Adventures in Resilience

World Day of Prayer

Tower Grove Pride

Route 66 Jazz Orchestra

Scooby Doom Murder Mystery

Music For September

Music For October

Up To The Minute News

Ladies' Night Out
Men's Night Out

Core Values

Humor

Photos

**A Prayer of Becoming**

Lynn Murphy Mark

I just finished reading a small book by Gregg Braden, *"The hidden power of beauty, blessing, wisdom and hurt"*. It was suggested by a guest preacher at church as a good guide to one way to pray. She told a story from the book about a Native American who was with Gregg Braden in New Mexico. He invited Gregg to go up the mountain to a sacred place to pray about the severe drought that had taken over the land. They drove into the hills and came to a spot where there was an ancient medicine wheel. Gregg watched as the man removed his shoes, walked to the center of the wheel, closed his eyes and stood still for a few minutes. Then he returned to the car and put his shoes on and got ready to go. When asked if he had actually prayed for rain, the man replied, "No, I prayed Rain".

Gregg was confused and asked for an explanation. The gist of it is this – the man did not pray FOR rain, because that implies an absence of the precious water. Instead, the man explained, he "prayed rain". He imagined the feeling of raindrops on his face, the smell of the rain, the sensation of walking through wet grass, and the sound of the rain coming down. In other words, he became rain with all of its attributes. He drew the power of a good rainfall down to the earth where he stood. His prayer was actually his feeling about the beauty and the possibility of an end to the drought.

As I read through the book, I found myself underlining passage after passage so that I could go back and synthesize what I had read. He quotes the Sufi poet, Rumi: "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right-doing, there is a field. I will meet you there." To me, that means going beyond what is known to me and trusting that there is much more. Rumi's words about the field imply that there is a place where my judging self can enter and let go of my doubts, worries, and fears. From this space, I can pray more effectively. Braden writes, "Even if it's only for a moment, we're invited to create an experience that temporarily suspends our judgments, fears, and hurts. From this neutral state, we may offer our prayer from strength and clarity, rather than from the clouded judgment that stems from hurt."

One time, when I was meditating, I had a flash of insight. What I intuited is what he calls, "The Mystery of the Space Between". That is a brief time when one action is finished and another one has not yet started. I quote from page 70: "Regardless of scale, between the 'beginning' and the 'end', there exists a moment in time when neither one has fully happened. That moment is where magic and miracles come from! In the instant of between, all possibilities exist and none have been chosen." It is in these times that prayers are given their greatest power because then nothing comes between the prayer and the Universe that receives it. In that instant of time we have the opportunity to imagine the best possible outcome.

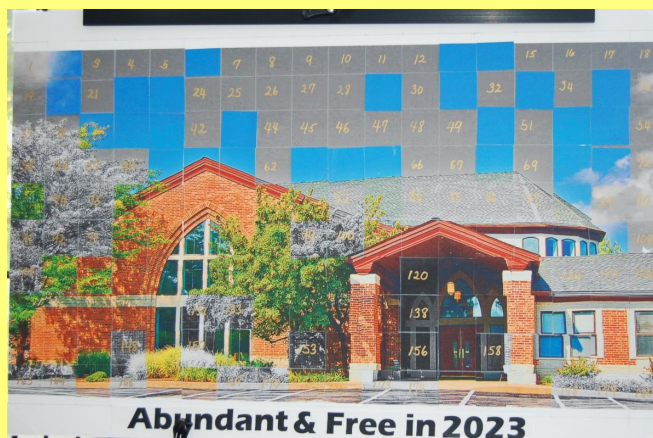
This book has gifted me with a whole new approach to prayer. Rather than praying "for" something I can learn to become that which I hope will manifest. If I am praying with another person who is asking for something, I can invite us both to enter that sacred

space where we can visualize and become the desired effect. This seems like a much more affirmative way to pray. I think I will give this a lot of thought and energy.

New Initiative: Abundant and Free in 2023!

We are involved in an exciting fund-raiser to build up our reserves to care for our beautiful church and fulfill our mission to enrich lives through positive prayer, education, and service.

In our lobby, we have a large black-and-white photograph of our church. As each person contributes a gift of any amount, he/she "picks two" numbered color puzzle pieces with the corresponding numbers on the black-and-white photograph. As more and more people continue to give, the color photograph is coming to life. At the end of this Initiative, all of the color puzzle pieces will fill the ENTIRE black-and-white photograph, and we will be **Abundant and Free in 2023!**



Come join us in the excitement of completing our Initiative. After donating your gift, take two puzzle pieces of your choice, attach them to the black-and-white photograph, and let the fun begin!

Ways to give:

- Cash / Check (made payable to First Unity Church of St. Louis)
- Credit / Debit Card
- Online by clicking this link: [Donate to 2023 Initiative](#)
- By mail: 4753 Butler Hill Road, St. Louis, MO 63128. Please mark your check "2023 Initiative."

As your Board, we are visualizing this Initiative with an unwavering belief in the power of Abundance and Prosperity Consciousness.
Thank you for helping make this Initiative become a reality!

Abundant and Free in 2023 Affirmation:

In the year 2023, we visualize prosperity and abundance for First Unity Church of St. Louis and in our personal lives. We trust God and affirm that our abundance is manifesting now.

First Unity Church of St. Louis, Board of Trustees:
Larry Gibbs, Julie Goede, Betty Jean Kofron, Lynn Mark, Patricia Riess, and Mary Tumminello.

Adventures in Sacred Healing

Adventures in **Sacred Healing**

- Yoga
- Reiki
- Nutrition
- Meditation
- Drumming
- Crystal bowls
- Aromatherapy
- Affirmative Prayer

**Unity's Prayer Chaplains invite you
to experience several approaches to
Sacred Healing**

**Saturday Morning
September 9, 2023
9:00 am – 1:00 pm**

**First Unity Church of St. Louis
4753 Butler Hill Road
St. Louis, Mo 63128**

**Love Offering basis. Healthy snacks provided.
Please RSVP by 9/1/23 to unitystl.org.**

[Click here for Sacred Healing RSVP](#)

Adventures in Resilience

September 12 - October 17, 2023

**Tuesdays: 7 pm - 9 pm
Adult Classroom**

Hope Dodson, LUT Candidate

Love Offering Basis

Book available in the First Unity Bookstore - \$16.00

Beginners Welcome!

New Class on Tuesday Evenings!

Join us in ***A Study of Our 12 Powers***

Main Text: ***Adventures in Resilience: Ignite the 12 Powers in You to Create a Radiant Life*** by Sharon Connors

"Adventures in Resilience: Ignite the 12 Powers in You to Create a Radiant Life" explores our 12 innate powers and gifts, using personal stories and inspiring examples to illustrate how these abilities can be expressed in our daily lives, particularly in overcoming adversity. This book by Unity minister Rev. Sharon Connors is a practical guide for readers who are seeking to develop their spiritual capacities.

Let's explore our 12 Powers together as a way to address the challenges we face and bring about new life and fresh starts. This class will expand our thinking and enhance our spiritual practices to transform our lives for the better!

Offered on a Love Offering basis.

World Day of Prayer 2023



Heart of Healing

Welcome to the 30th annual World Day of Prayer!

As we unite hearts and minds with people from around the globe, this year we are affirming together: *I open my heart to healing in this moment.*

World Day of Prayer 2023

First Unity Church of St. Louis will hold an all-day prayer vigil on **Thursday, September 14**. Our sanctuary will be open for prayer and meditation from **8:30 am until 5 pm**. A prayer service will be held at the top of each hour. Come by to leave a prayer request in our sealed prayer box and/or pray with one of our prayer chaplains. All prayers are held in strict confidence. At the end of the day, all written prayer requests will be sent to Silent Unity, where they will be held in prayer for 30 days.

We look forward to supporting you with prayer.



Tower Grove Pride Festival - September 23 & 24

"As part of our mission as an inclusive spiritual community, First Unity Church of St. Louis will be participating for the first time in the Tower Grove Pride Weekend. This is an event held in September over a Saturday and Sunday. This year it will be on September 23, 10 am - 6 pm & September 24, 11 am - 5 pm. This festival exists to honor the LGBTQIA+ community and showcases LGBTQIA+ businesses, artists, and performers. There will also be booths with food and drink. First Unity Church will have a booth and we hope to have several congregants who will volunteer to "person" the booth in shifts. So, if you are interested please save the dates. We will also need help on Friday afternoon to set up our booth. More information will be available closer to the date."



Route 66 Jazz Orchestra will perform at First Unity Church of St. Louis on October 6, 2023. The concert starts at 7:30 pm. Tickets may be purchased at the door for \$15.00 each. Looking forward to seeing you at the concert!

Scooby Doom
A Great Fun-raiser!

Upstage Production presents:

Scooby Doom
Murder Mystery



Oct 15, 2023
Doors open 5:30 pm
\$50 per ticket

Advanced tickets only:
Chuck Seger @ 314.614.2950
First Unity Church of St. Louis @ 314.845.8540

Venue:
Andre's Banquet & Catering South
4254 Telegraph Road
St. Louis, MO 63129

TICKETS MAY BE PURCHASED
THROUGH OCTOBER 1, 2023.

First Unity Church Presents Its Outstanding
Music Calendar for September 2023

First Unity's Music Director, Dr. Steve Schenkel, has arranged for various renowned guest musicians, singers, and groups to be with us for Sunday Services. All are truly welcome

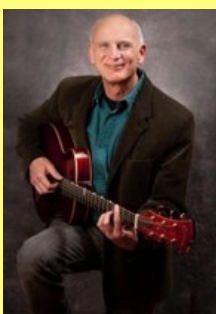
here, and we hope you will join us in the sanctuary or online as we seek together to know God, to unfold spiritually, to understand, love, and align with Spirit's Laws of Being.



September 3, Brian Clarke, vocals and guitar. Brian is perhaps the most beloved New Thought musician in St. Louis. He most recently received the St. Louis Magazine "A-List" Award as Best Vocalist and Best Musician.



September 10, Joanna Serenko, vocals. Saint Louisan since 2010, Joanna has been exploring her outlets for pursuing her passion from a young age. She has been involved in Jazz U, Sofar Sounds performances, won first place in St. Louis Teen Talent Competition, and in February 2020, she wowed all four judges during the season premiere of NBC's "The Voice." About her experience singing on national television, Joanna says, "This show has given me a whole new confidence. It's taught me that I could make it in the music industry." Her most recent release, "*Best of Me*", is available on all major streaming services.



September 10, Steve Schenkel, guitar. Steve is the guitarist and orchestra manager for the Fox Theater, guitarist for the Muny Opera and the St. Louis Symphony, and a freelance jazz musician.

Steve has a Ph.D. in Music from Washington University and a Master's Degree in Religious Studies from Webster University, where he has served as an Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies. Steve now serves as the Music Director for First Unity Church of St. Louis.

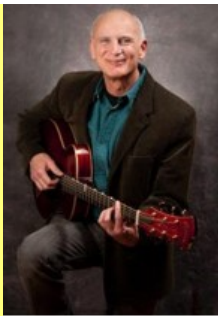


September 17, Brian Clark, vocals and guitar. Brian is perhaps the most beloved New Thought musician in St. Louis. He most recently received the St. Louis Magazine "A-List" Award as Best Vocalist and Best Musician.



September 24, Chuck Flowers, vocals. Chuck Flowers is a veteran singer/entertainer. He has recorded with the Gospel Symphonic Choir, The O'Neal Twins and the Interfaith Choir, and the Golden Gospel Singers. He performed in Porgy and Bess with Union Avenue Opera Theater.

September 24, Steve Schenkel, guitar. Steve is the guitarist and orchestra manager for the Fox Theater, guitarist for the Muny Opera and the St. Louis Symphony, and a



freelance jazz musician.

Steve has a Ph.D. in Music from Washington University and a Master's Degree in Religious Studies from Webster University, where he has served as an Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies. Steve now serves as the Music Director for First Unity Church of St. Louis.

First Unity Church Presents Its Outstanding Music Calendar for October 2023



October 1, Tyler Dale, vocals and guitar. Tyler is a graduate of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. His most recent recording, "*Last Goodbye*", is available on all major streaming services

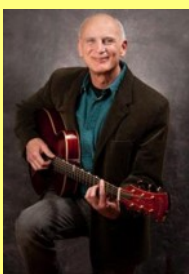


October 8, Brian Clarke, vocals and guitar. Brian is perhaps the most beloved New Thought musician in St. Louis. He is most recently the recipient of the St. Louis Magazine "A-List" Award as Best Vocalist and Best Musician.



October 15, Kim Fuller, vocals. Kim has been performing for decades in the St. Louis area. She began singing at age 5 in the Angel Choir at church. Over the years she has sung in a variety of music genres. She has been an opening act for the Jazz Crusaders, Randy Lewis, Pieces of a Dream, The Neville Brothers, and countless others. She is a member of The Jazz Story™, a group that promotes Jazz Education to grades K-12.

Kim is also a member of Oikos, a Jazz group that uses jazz as a catalyst to promote the gospel. She frequently performs around the St. Louis area with many talented musicians.



October 15, Steve Schenkel, guitar. Steve is guitarist and orchestra manager for the Fox Theater, guitarist for the Muny Opera and the St. Louis Symphony, and a freelance jazz musician.

Steve has a Ph.D. in Music from Washington University and a Master's Degree in Religious Studies from Webster University where he has served as an Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies. Steve now serves as the Music Director for First Unity Church of St. Louis.



October 22, Carolbeth True, jazz pianist. Carolbeth is well-known in the area as a performer and music educator. She is an adjunct music faculty member at Webster University and also has an extensive private piano studio. Carolbeth performs with Two Times True with her son Dave on drums; the Carolbeth Trio; the Oikos Ensemble; Wind of the Spirit Praise Band, and is an original cast member of The Jazz Story, the first educational program presented by The Sheldon. Her trio enjoyed extended runs at both the Adam's Mark Hotel and Jazz at the Bistro.



October 29, Mitzi MacDonald, vocals and piano. Mitzi MacDonald performs at numerous churches, peace events, pubs, coffee houses, outdoor concerts, and special events. She has opened for authors Alan Cohen and Neal Donald Walsh at Westport Playhouse and has performed at the Sheldon Concert Hall with CD release concerts.



Up To The Minute News

Ladies and Men's Night Out meets on the third Monday of the month!

Ladies' Night Out



September 18, 2023, at 5:30 pm.

Mellow Mushroom
3811 South Lindbergh Blvd
Sunset Hills, MO 63127

October 16, 2023, at 5:30 pm.

Viviano's Festa Italiano
55 Fenton Plaza
Fenton, MO 63026

Please contact Mary at jtpres5111@gmail.com for more information.

Men's Night Out

September 18, 2023, at 6:00 pm.

Maggie O'Brien's
3828 South Lindbergh Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63026

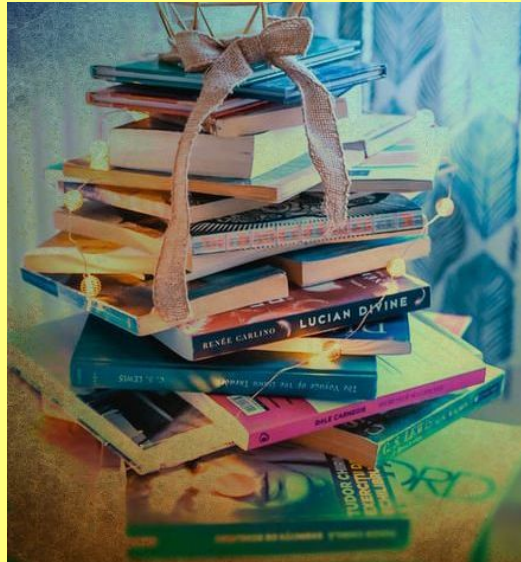
October 16, 2023, at 6:00 pm.

3 Margaritas
69 Fenton Plaza
Fenton, MO 63026



Please contact Roy at fisherofbass@gmail.com for more information.

Book Club



Join the First Unity Book Club meeting on the second Tuesday of the month from 2 pm - 4 pm. Everyone is welcome. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

The book club will be meeting at:

Miss Sheri's Cafeteria
5406 Southfield Center
St. Louis, MO 63123

Future books:

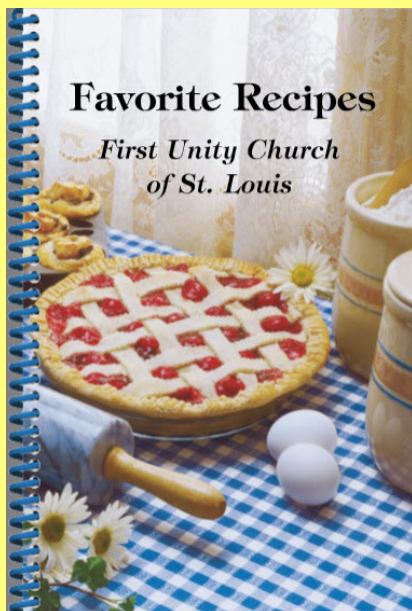
September 12, 2023 - *A Separate Peace* - John Knowles

October 10, 2023 - *Master Slave Husband and Wife* - Ilyon Woo

November 14, 2023 - *Some Day, Maybe* - Onyi Nwabineli

December 12, 2023 - *Now Is Not the Time To Panic* - Kevin Wilson

First Unity Church of St. Louis Cookbook



We want to thank all of you for the overwhelming support for our new First Unity Cookbook. We now have 300 recipes!

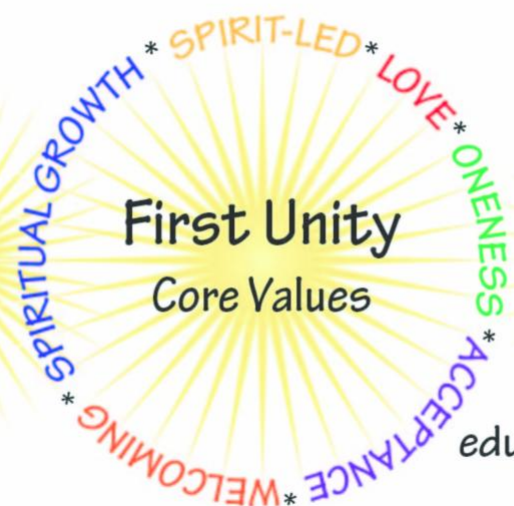
We received a generous, anonymous designated donation to pay for the cost of 200 books. We will sell as many as possible when they arrive and then keep them for sale in our bookstore after that. Many of you have indicated that you would like to purchase copies for Christmas gifts. We hope to see them flying off the shelves.

This project will not only benefit First Unity financially, but it is also a great community builder. We appreciate all the planning and effort of the Cookbook Committee.

The custom cookbook featuring favorite recipes from our community will be professionally published. It's certain to become a treasured keepsake.

Vision

In oneness
of Spirit,
we celebrate
a world
awakened
to infinite
possibilities



Mission

We are a vibrant,
inclusive Spiritual
community
enriching lives
through
positive prayer,
education, and service

One of our core values for First Unity Church is: ONENESS

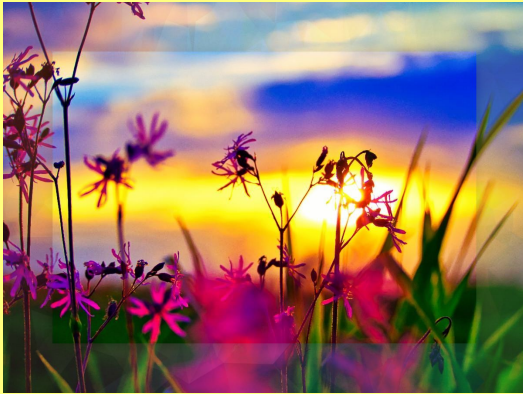
God is the loving Source of all that is, and we are one with God and one another.

COMMUNITY BEHAVIORS

- Through our indwelling Christ nature, we express qualities of the Divine moment by moment
- We embrace all people as expressions of God
- Grounded in principles of Truth we are fully connected with all life

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS

- I see myself as spiritually whole, expressing the creative life force
- My conscious awareness of oneness motivates me to help others achieve their highest good
- In Unity of Spirit, I continually seek ways to nurture my Spirit, mind, and body



HUMOR

What do you call a fish with no eyes? A fsh.

Two fish swim into a concrete wall. The one turns to the other and says, "Dam!"

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly it sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.

A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and stood in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour, the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. "But why?," they asked as they moved off. "Because," he said, "I can't stand chess-nuts boasting in an open foyer."

Two peanuts walk into a bar, and one was a salted.

There was the person who sent twenty different puns to his friends, hoping that at least ten of them would make them laugh. No pun in ten did!

Previously published by Faye Schmileg, Wings Edition: January, 2018.

[Visit our website](#)



PHOTOS







Minister: Jan Mourning
Office: 314.845.8540
Email: firstunity@firstunitychurchstlouis.org
Website: unitystl.org
SilentUnity prayer support
1.800.NOW PRAY (669.7729)
be.unity.org is a [free mobile download](#)

First Unity Church of St. Louis | 4753 Butler Hill Rd, St. Louis, MO 63128

[Unsubscribe {recipient's email}](#).

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by firstunity@firstunitychurchstlouis.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!