

First Unity Church of St. Louis

2026 Volume VIII

Issue 4

Minister's Corner

Declaration of Inner Independence



The months of July & August bring warm weather, days of longer sunlight, picnics and vacations. In the United States, we celebrate the 4th of July, marking the historic day the 13 American colonies officially declared their independence from British rule, establishing the United States of America as a free, sovereign, self-governing nation.

As we celebrate our country's independence, this is the perfect time for us to create a Declaration of Inner Independence and spiritual freedom. Years ago, in a class at First Unity, one of the participants shared a parable about freedom that I have never forgotten. In fact, it haunted me. The parable is about a man who spent decades locked in a small, cold prison cell. Every night the guard would come through & check the heavy door. Eventually, the prison was abandoned & the guard stopped coming by. The prisoner had no way to escape & on the brink of starvation, he pushed on the heavy door. It swung

open immediately. The door had never been locked! The prison that held him wasn't made of steel; it was made of belief. This parable is entitled A Prisoner of Belief.

This story is a metaphor for spiritual awakening, personal growth, and discovery. It illustrates how we can become imprisoned by our limited beliefs and assumptions about what is possible.

"I'm too old to apply for that position."

"I'm not good at making friends."

"I can never forgive him/her."

The freedom we desire can begin with one simple question. "What door do I need to open?" Every single one of us, no exceptions, is a divine being endowed with the power to change beliefs we are less than, unable, undeserving, unforgiving. Unity co-founder Myrtle wrote, "All power is given to you... Exercise your God-given power, authority, and dominion and rise out of bondage to conditions of lack & discord. This means in the face of any worldly challenge, we can turn our pivotal souls away from self-inflicted barriers to the understanding, "WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE."

Happy Independence Day & Happy Summer
Love & prayers,
Rev. Jan

Minister, Jan Mourning

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First Unity Church of St. Louis Newsletter

July/August 2026

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Newly Elected Members join the Board of Trustees



Larry Gibbs

I started attending Unity about 30 years ago. Cindy and I had recently moved into the area, and she was about six months pregnant with our first child. We were looking for a church we could both attend and raise our children in as well. Cindy had heard of Unity and asked me to attend a service with her. I was immediately impressed by the service, Rev. Randy's attitude, and the church building itself. He told me that the cross, as a symbol of Christianity, was not hanging on the wall for a reason. He asked me to look out the clear glass windows and tell him what I saw. I saw trees, grass, and cars going up and down the road. He asked me to look again and take a good, deep look. Then I saw the cross holding the windows together. He said that at Unity, we look beyond the cross to God's world outside the building's doors. That was all I needed to become a regular churchgoer here at First Unity.

My wife, Cindy, and I raised our three kids at Unity. Cindy and our oldest daughter, Claire, now teach in the Sunday school, children's education program. I have been a member of the board for three years. I have been bringing food and clothing to Feed My People for about ten years. Claire and I have played our flute and violin at several worship services. I have helped clean the church in the spring and decorate for Christmas. I have given lectures to senior members on Medicare, Medicaid, and senior living situations.

I have a Doctorate in Non-profit administration and a Master's degree in Gerontology, as well as a license as a Nursing Home Administrator. I have taught Gerontology at Lindenwood and UMSL for three years. I have worked for the State of MO Dept. of Senior Services for 13 years. I also administered nursing homes for 5 years, and I keep my license current by attending monthly CEU classes in gerontology. I have been a member of the STL Confluence String Orchestra for 18 years, and I play gigs at nursing homes and adult day care centers throughout the year. I also had my own cable TV show for 5 years when I lived in Chicago, where my guests and I would discuss support for social issues (marriage, adoption, divorce, senior housing, Veterans' services, health issues, jobs, etc., Ecumenical church issues).



Lisa Armbruster

I learned about Unity from a friend in Columbia, MO, while I was in college. While I never attended a church there, this friend's advice stuck with me. When I moved back to St. Louis in 1988, I started attending Unity Christ Church near Washington University on occasion.

Reverend Peter Rhea married my husband and me in 1993. We moved out to South County and started attending First Unity Church of St. Louis. I raised my children in the church and used to play guitar and sing with them in the Sunday School.

I invited my dad and stepmother to attend the church. They both loved it! They got remarried in the church around their 30th anniversary.

I introduced my sister to Unity in 1988 in Des Moines, Iowa! She fell in love with it and became a Unity Minister in Ames, Iowa.

My motivation to say "yes" to the Board nomination is twofold. First, I think it would be an interesting way to become more involved in the church's inner workings. Second, hopefully, I will be able to contribute to the church's long-term legacy.

I was married 23 years to Brent Armbruster, who sadly passed away in 2016. I have two children, Emma, 31, and Daniel, 27. I have a cat named Nutmeg and a dog named Mugsie.

I love gardening and taking care of the indoor plants at church. I have a Master's of History from UMSL and currently teach part-time at Jefferson College. I also held Series 7 & 63 licenses and was a registered stockbroker.

Three New Members to First Unity Church of St. Louis

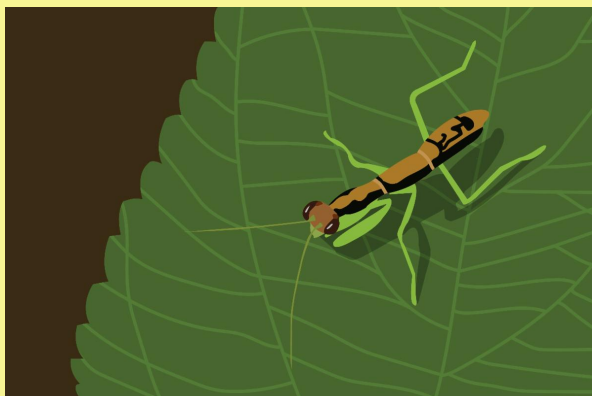


On Sunday, June 14, 2026, Rev. Jan Mourning, Board of Trustees President Ben Sauter, and the First Unity Spiritual Community joyfully welcomed three new members to First Unity Church. Pictured left to right, are Rev. Jan Mourning and our three new members: (not pictured is Board of Trustees President Ben Sauter).

- Julie Boegeman
- Michael Roessler
- Tom Tessereau

**There are so many ways to volunteer
& express your talents at
First Unity Church of St. Louis**

**Check the table in the Foyer
for sign up!**



*"Creepy Crawlies"
God's Smallest Creatures*

First Unity Church of St. Louis's summer Youth Education program is an exciting opportunity for kids to learn about "Creepy Crawlies" while having fun at the same time.

Our program is designed to provide an interactive learning experience for kids, where they can discover interesting facts about "Creepy Crawlies" and participate in engaging activities. With a focus on education, entertainment, and an appreciation for all of God's creatures, our Youth Ed program is the perfect way to spend the summer exploring.

We invite all your kids to join us on this exciting journey.

School Days, School Days



Our Youth Ed Department is starting its annual campaign for school supplies. See Claire Gibbs, Youth Education Teacher, for any additional information.

There will be a complete list of needed supplies located in the church foyer.

Donations will be collected from July 5 to August 9, 2026.

Collect school supplies and place them in the little school bus located in the foyer.

~ A special bonus: St. Louis will sponsor a tax-free weekend from August 7 through August 9, 2026.

First Unity Church Presents Its Outstanding Music Calendar for July 2026

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.



July 5, Ashby Laws, vocals. Ashby Laws is a born-and-raised St. Louis musician. Since she was five years old, she has studied and performed traditional Irish and classical music. Her primary instruments include piano, accordion, voice, guitar, tin whistle, and bodhrán. She has been to the world competition of traditional Irish music (Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann) three times, coming home with a bronze medal in 2016. She has grown up performing with her mother, Mitzi MacDonald, and her siblings in their band, Keltic Reign. She received a B.S. in music therapy from Maryville University, where she studied piano privately with St. Louis Symphony Orchestra pianist, Dr. Peter Henderson.



July 12, 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.



July 19, Kati Michalas, vocals. Kati is one of First Unity's song leaders, and she, her husband Nick, and her two sons, Niko and Braden, are regular attendees, with Niko and Braden attending Youth Education classes. Kati grew up in Unity, attending the church in Collinsville, Illinois. Kati's family was musical; both her grandfather and father played the guitar. She gained a passion for bluegrass and classic country music at a young age and says there was never a family gathering without music or a guitar. Her post-college performances include a short stint with the Autumn Fling band, United Voices of United Way Choir, Metro Trans Umbrella Group Song Squad, performing the national anthem at various sporting events, and singing at multiple weddings and funerals.



July 26, 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.

First Unity Church Presents Its Outstanding Music Calendar for August 2026



August 2, Ashby Laws, vocals. Ashby Laws is a born-and-raised St. Louis musician. Since she was five years old, she has studied and performed traditional Irish and classical music. Her primary instruments include piano, accordion, voice, guitar, tin whistle, and bodhrán. She has been to the world competition of traditional Irish music (Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann) three times, coming home with a bronze medal in 2016. She has grown up performing with her mother, Mitzi MacDonald, and her siblings in their band, Keltic Reign. She received a B.S. in music therapy from Maryville University, where she studied piano privately with Dr. Peter Henderson, a pianist with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.



August 9, 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.



August 16, 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.



August 23, 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.



August 30, Kati Michalas, vocals. Kati is one of First Unity's song leaders, and she, her husband Nick, and her two sons, Niko and Braden, are regular attendees, with Niko and Braden attending Youth Education classes. Kati grew up in Unity, attending the church in Collinsville, Illinois. Kati's family was musical; both her grandfather and father played the guitar. She gained a passion for bluegrass and classic country music at a young age and says there was never a family gathering without music or a guitar. Her post-college performances include a short stint with the Autumn Fling band, United Voices of United Way Choir, Metro Trans Umbrella Group Song Squad, performing the national anthem at various sporting events, and singing at multiple weddings and funerals.

Save the Date

**First Unity Church
of St. Louis**

***Beach Party
Bingo***

FRIDAY, August 14
\$20. for Adults
\$10. for 12 and under

Doors Open @ 6:00 pm
Bingo Starts @ 7:00 pm

PRIZES FOR EACH ROUND

50 - 50 Raffle

\$5 - 6 Tickets

\$20 - Arm's Length

Bottled Water & Snacks Included

"Beach Attire Welcomed"

4753 Butler Hill Road St. Louis, MO 63128
ADVANCED TICKETS AVAILABLE:
FIRST UNITY CHURCH @ 314.845.8540
Chuck Seger @ 314.614.2950

September 10 - World Day of Prayer

September 26 - 27 - Tower Grove Pride Event, Set-up on September 25

October 2 - Route 66 Jazz Concert - 7:30 pm

October 19 - Area Prayer Chaplain Training - October 23-24

Up To The Minute News



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

Ladies' Night Out



July 20, 2026, at 5:30 pm.

Bill Gianino's Restaurant
4571 Chestnut Park Plaza #3175
St. Louis, MO 63129

August 17, 2026, at 5:30 pm.

Miyabi Sushi and Steakhouse
892 Arnold Commons Drive
Arnold, MO 63010

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

Men's Night Out

July 20, 2026, at 6:00 pm.

Caruso's Restaurant and Croc's Sports Bar
5591 Oakville Shopping Center
St. Louis, MO 63129

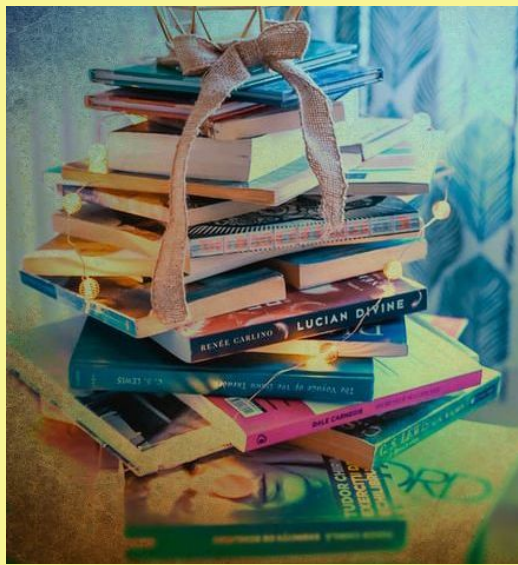
August 17, 2026, at 6:00 pm.

Chili's Grill & Bar
901 Arnold Commons Drive
Arnold, MO 63010



Please contact Eric at jcvond@aol.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. Looking forward to seeing you there!

The book club will be meeting at:

McAlister's Deli
4000 Lemay Ferry Road
St. Louis, MO 63125
(Corner of Lemay Ferry and Lindbergh)

Future books:

July 14, 2026 - *The Queens of Crime* - Marie Benedict

August 11, 2026 - *The Ghost Army of World War II* - Rick Beye/Elizabeth Sayles

September 8, 2026 - *Plain Truth* - Jodi Picoult

October 13, 2026 - *Blade* - Wendy Walker

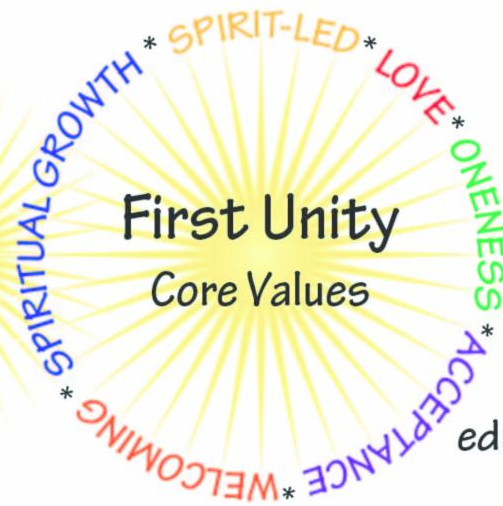
November 10, 2026 - *Don't Let Him In* - Lisa Jewel

December 8, 2026 - *James* - Percible Everett

For further information, please e-mail Carol at cabullock48@yahoo.com

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: LOVE

As expressions of Spirit, we reflect and nurture Divine in all.
Love is the nature of who we are.

COMMUNITY BEHAVIORS

- We express God's unconditional Love as we affirm good everywhere and in everyone
- Our spiritual community comes together regularly to create an environment of Love and compassion
- We commit to heart-based collaboration and cooperation as we share our ideas, gifts, and talents

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS

- I behold the Christ in others as I practice unconditional forgiveness
- As I love myself, I radiate love - drawing myself to more love
- I take the Love I experience at First Unity out into the world



HUMOR

I don't want to go to church today!

A mother went to wake her son for church one Sunday morning. When she knocked on his door, he said, "I'm not going!" "Why not?" asked his mother. "I'll give you two good reasons," he said. "One, they don't like me. Two, I don't like them." His mother replied, "I'll give you two good reasons why YOU WILL go to church. One, you're 47 years old. Two, you're the pastor!"

The coin toss

By the time Bobby arrived, the football game had already started. "Why are you so late?" asked his friend. "I couldn't decide between going to church and going to the football

game. So I tossed a coin," said Bobby. "But that shouldn't have taken too long." said the friend. "Well, I had to toss it 35 times."

The \$100 and \$1

Two well-worn bills arrived at the Federal Reserve Bank to be retired – a \$100 and a \$1. As they traveled down the conveyor belt, they struck up a conversation. The hundred reminisced about the interesting life he had, traveling all over the country. "I've been to the finest restaurants, Broadway shows, Las Vegas, and amusement parks," he said. "I even went on a Caribbean cruise once. Where have you been?" "Oh," said the one dollar bill, "I've been to a Methodist church, an Episcopal church, a Baptist church, and a Lutheran church." "What's a church?" asked the hundred.

Visit our website



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Website: unitystl.org

SilentUnity prayer support

1.800.NOW PRAY (669.7729)

be.unity.org is a [free mobile download](#)

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