

Wings



FIRST UNITY CHURCH – Serving the spiritual needs of the St. Louis community for over eighty-five years.

The Newsletter of
First Unity Church
Of Saint Louis

December
2010

- ❖ *Inspiration*
- ❖ *Information*
- ❖ *Illumination*

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Candle Power

By *Richard and Mary-Alice Jafolla*

Has it ever occurred to you that a candle does not lose any of its power and brilliance by lighting another candle?

We held a beautiful candle lighting service last Christmas Eve. After lighting one large candle, we had each person light their own smaller candle from it. While there were over one hundred candles lighted by the one large candle, it could have just as easily lit a million or more.

No, a candle loses nothing by giving of itself. As a matter of fact, as long as a candle is lit, there is no limit to the number of other candles it can light. Its ability to share its brilliance is limited only by the length of time it can stay lit.

Two thousand years ago a man said, "You are the light of the world" (Mt. 5:14). When Jesus uttered those words He did so with the knowledge that we have an unlimited source of light. Our source, of course, is what we call the inner Christ.

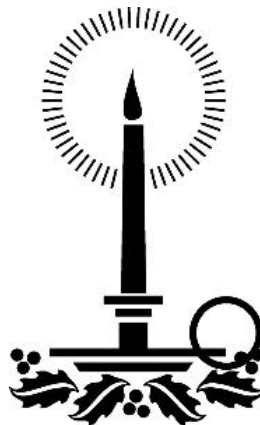
And like a burning candle, each one of us can touch untold numbers of others with our unique light. We can keep touching and touching as many other people as we can with our love and our light, never having to fear for one moment that we will deplete or diminish our own source in any way.

In fact, as we become more aware of this whole idea of passing on our light, we will discover that we do not *lose* any of our own light—we actually strengthen and intensify it! Unlike a candle, the glow is "turned up" —brightened—the more we use it. What a powerful concept this is.

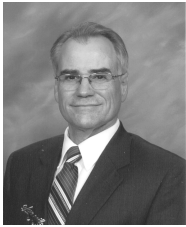
We frequently are unaware when we bring light to another soul. Some simple, casual word or gesture can serve to brighten someone else's life when we least expect it. And we often move on from the interaction without ever knowing about it or seeing the glow which we have imparted.

No we never lose even a bit of our light by passing it another. But while our light is always there, burning brilliantly within us, we can hide it from ourselves and others if we choose to do so. Placing it "under a bushel basket" of anger, worry, unforgiveness, or anxiety is a sure means of hiding it. What a waste.

It is our responsibility to keep our own light brightly shining, letting the rays beam outward in all directions—not just focusing it on those we love. This means that everyone and everything falling in the path of this light will be bathed in love and understanding. In this way we cannot help but pass the light to others. Everyone benefits.



--Continued on Page Three



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Senior Minister



Rev. Sharon Allmond
Associate Minister

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Join us for our annual
Candle Lighting
Service on **Sunday,**
Dec. 19th at 10:30
a.m. Come celebrate
the Christ's birth with
friends and family,



our First Unity choir, hand bells and chimes
with Anne Hartupée, and Dean Wiegert's
special music. Plan to stay for our **Christmas
Party** immediately following the Service.



Christmas Eve Service

We will celebrate Christ's birth
with a special service at 6:00
p.m. on Christmas Eve. Please
join us!

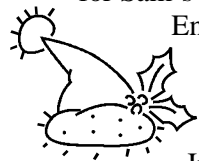
Christmas Poinsettias

In keeping with our First
Unity tradition, poinsettias
will be available for purchase
and dedication again this Christmas. The
plants are \$8.00. Please get your orders in by
Sunday, December 12th.



Prepare for the New Year right at
our annual Unity **Burning Bowl
Service** on Sunday, January 2nd.

This month the **Ladies'
Night Out Group** will be
meeting Monday evening,
December 13th at 5:30 at
Sam's Steak House, 10205
Gravois. Afterward we
have been invited to Sandy Ethridge's home,
9523 Doris Ann Ct., for dessert and a \$5
Christmas gift exchange. (There is a coupon
for Sam's Steak House in the
Entertainment book.)



Feed My People

In this Christmas season your
donations to Feed My People are especially
appreciated. You can be Santa to make
Christmas a little happier for individuals and
families this year.

www.feed-my-people.org



Dean and his band will once again present
his **Have Yourself a Swingin' Holiday
Concert**. Tickets, available at church or at
the door, are \$20. Mark your calendar for
December 18th at 7:30 p.m. and join us for a
fun, funny, and fabulous musical evening.

Silent Unity December Affirmations



Inner Peace: With my
mind on Spirit, I am
calm and serene.

Guidance: I follow
where Spirit leads me.

Healing: I am infused

with life-giving energy.

Prosperity: My world is filled with divine
abundance and unlimited potential.

World Peace: I am inspired to right action
for the good of all.

Celebrate Christmas

Decorate your Christmas tree.
Ring a Christmas bell.
Sing a joyful carol
With a jubilant noel!

Light your Advent candle wreath.
Rejoice with friends on Earth.
Give thanks to God for sending Christ
In this, His Christmas birth.

Share your joy of Christmas
And God's blessings from above.
Celebrate God's Graciousness!
Celebrate God's Love!

—Peggy Ferrell
Prayers and Poems



MERRY CHRISTMAS

From Page One



We become mighty beacons of God's healing, comforting light as it shines through us out to the world. And this extraordinary light has the power to change lives and change conditions when nothing else can!

So, never fear that lighting up the lives of others will deplete your own light. Never fear that passing your glow to every soul you encounter is going to take anything from you. Unlike the burning candle, the Source of your light is unlimited and eternal. When you allow God's light to shine through you freely and unconditionally, you are truly "the light of the world."

The Best Gift

A king sat on his throne on Christmas Day as many of his subjects presented him with gifts: jewels, gold, artwork, handmade treasures and food galore.

One man stayed back until everyone had given their gifts. Eventually, the king asked if the man had a gift he wished to give. The man said he had only one thing to present. He had nothing of material or financial value, just a friendly heart that was free of malice and full of best wishes for the ruler.

The king told the man he'd brought him the best gift of all: friendship and goodwill. How can you present those to someone this season?

Christ in you

Angelus Silesius (aka Johann Scheffler), born in Germany in the 17th century, was a physician, priest, hymn writer and poet. He knew Christ as far more than a historical figure. Silesius allowed Christ to dwell in his heart and to

guide his life as completely as possible. He wrote this poem about allowing Christ to be born and live in each of us.

Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
If he's not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn.
The cross on Golgotha will never save thy soul;
The cross in thine own heart alone can make thee whole.

Someone took Jesus

A couple of days after Christmas, the Nativity scene was still up in the chancel of a San Francisco church. Walking by it, the pastor noticed that the baby Jesus was missing from the manger.

Shortly afterward, as the pastor walked outside the church, he saw a small boy pulling a new wagon. In the wagon bed was a doll that looked very much like the missing baby Jesus.

The pastor greeted the boy and asked him about the doll.

"I got it in the church," the boy replied.

"Why did you take it from the church?"

"Well," the boy answered. "I prayed for a new wagon and told the Lord Jesus that if I got one, I would give him a ride. I got the wagon, took him for a ride and now I'm bringing him back to the church."

A Christmas blessing

May you have the Spirit of Christmas, which is Peace,
The Gladness of Christmas, which is Hope,
The Heart of Christmas, which is Love,
The Gift of Christmas, which is Christ.

--Ada Hendricks

"Quotable Quotes"

Peace on earth will come to stay,
when we live Christmas every day.
—Helen Steiner Rice

You can tell a lot about a person by the way he or she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage and tangled Christmas tree lights.

—Maya Angelou

One can give without loving, but one cannot love without giving.
—Amy Carmichael

"You are what you eat" applies not only to the physical world but also to the spiritual. There is no way to take in junk without becoming junky.

—Anonymous

He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree.
—Roy L. Smith

There has been only one Christmas — the rest are anniversaries.
—W.J. Cameron

It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child Himself.
—Charles Dickens

How many observe Christ's birthday! How few, his precepts! O! 'tis easier to keep holidays than commandments.
—Benjamin Franklin

This is Christmas: not the tinsel, not the giving and receiving, not even the carols, but the humble heart that receives anew the wondrous gift, the Christ.
—Frank McKibben Take



The Thirteen Commandments

By J. Sig Paulson

Thou shalt not Steal

The eighth commandment says simply, "Thou shalt not steal." This is a happy commandment, because once we come to discover its true meaning, it relieves us of the heaviest burden we can carry: the belief in personal possession. "Thou shalt not steal"; you shall not take or try to hold something that does not belong to you. This means (in an outer way, on the human plane) that we should never take or withhold anything that belongs to another, whether money or house, husband or wife, friend, happiness, or anything else. But there is a much deeper meaning in the commandment. Its spiritual significance is that we shall not take unto ourselves (claim as our personal possession) or try to hold that which belongs to God. Personal difficulties arise from the belief in personal possession. If we feel that we personally own something--a fortune, a home, a business, a marriage--we have a heavy burden to carry. We have to defend it from competition, inflation, deflation, taxation. The eighth commandment warns us that we must not try to take that which belongs to God. We must discover our rightful place in the scheme of things.

One of the pathetic figures of the Bible is described in this story from the Gospel of Matthew: "And behold, one came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments.

He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions. And Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And when the disciples heard it, they were exceedingly astonished, saying, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them said to them, With men this is impossible."

This young man who came to ask Jesus how he could have eternal life was no doubt an outstanding person. In the light of the practices and traditions of the day he was probably considered to be a very religious young man. He had followed the commandments throughout his youth; he had honored his father and his mother; he had obeyed the rules laid down by religious leaders. But Jesus, who saw through the outer facade, looked into his heart and said, in so many words: "There is one thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and give it to the poor; that is, give up your idea of personal possession. This fortune you have is not yours to hoard and hold. God has entrusted it to you, and you must distribute it in accordance with His law of love

and good will; otherwise your wealth will remain an obstacle to your spiritual growth."

This was too much for the young man, and he went away sorrowful, "for he ... had great possessions." He did not possess or control them; they "possessed" him. He had "stolen" or taken personal title to that which belongs to God, and he could not let go, even to follow Jesus Christ.

Often our feeling of personal possession is the last thing we are willing to relinquish in order truly to follow the Christ, to enter the kingdom of God and live in it. There is nothing wrong with wealth in itself. It is only Our attitude toward it, our sense of personal possession, that can make it disastrous to our spiritual growth. When we feel that we personally possess something in the outer world, we are really attempting to break this commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." We are trying to take unto ourselves something that does not belong to us, something that belongs uniquely and completely to God. God never gives us ownership of anything; He lets us *use* His wealth, life, strength, love, and joy. We are the distributors of wealth, not the owners.

Spiritually speaking, we can never have, or benefit from, anything that we do not share. The rich young man, regardless of how successful he was from the human viewpoint, had already lost the benefit of his wealth because of his unwillingness to share it with others. It was really nothing but a burden to him. Jesus pointed out to him that if he really wanted to follow the Christ way, to enter the kingdom of God and live there, he would have to share his riches. He would have to give up his idea of personal possession and distribute his wealth to the poor, or apply spiritual laws to the handling of it. He would have to use the wealth

entrusted to him under the guidance of God, its owner. He would have to become a good steward.

"Thou shalt not steal." You shall not take unto yourself any belief in personal possession; you shall distribute that which is God's. This is the positive side of this commandment. The negative side of it is that you shall not take that which does not belong to you. But from the spiritual, or positive, viewpoint it means, "You shall distribute, or share, or give that which belongs to God."

Now if the young man had followed the suggestion of Jesus Christ, it would not have meant poverty for him. Jesus was not asking him to become a pauper. Rather the young man would have discovered the true value of wealth. He would have dropped the sense of personal possession, the feeling that he had toward his wealth. We are not told how the young man came by this great wealth. Perhaps he had inherited it from his father; perhaps he had worked hard and had had several successful business ventures. What led him into trouble and blocked his spiritual progress was his sense of personal possession, and he was unable or unwilling to let go of this.

How often this happens to us not only to those of us who amass great fortunes, but to those of us who are in the process of trying to accumulate material wealth (wealth in the form of money, or in the form of things and projects in the outer world to which we are devoting our time and our attention). Unless we are alert, we can readily forget to apply spiritual principles to our possessions. We become personally attached to them and we forget that God comes first.

Now there is nothing wrong with these outer projects, if we remember that they belong to God, and we act only as trustees,

not owners. When we become attached to these things, through a sense of personal possession, we are stealing. We are trying to take unto ourselves that which does not belong to us. We are trying to claim that which belongs to God. First of all we steal from God, our Creator, because we are tearing down our consciousness of oneness with Him by believing that there is something in the outer world that is separate from Him; and so we do not become effective channels through which God may work to bring forth His good. We steal from God when we put anything ahead of or outside our oneness with Him. We deprive our Creator of an instrument of expression.

Second, we steal from ourselves. We deprive ourselves of that wonderful thrill of joy and accomplishment that comes when we turn our life over to God and let Him express Himself through us in every area of our life. When we recognize God's ownership of all, and realize that we are His trustees and agents, we find that all outer things become enriched. We begin to appreciate what they truly mean. We begin to get the real benefits of outer wealth, which is good in its proper place.

Third, when we are personally attached to outer things we steal from our world. We rob our world of the good that we could share, by distributing what we have.

Important as our attitude toward outer forms of wealth may be, there is an even greater wealth that we must share, and that is the treasure of the kingdom of God within us. We might rephrase this commandment in this way: "You shall not withhold from your world the treasures of the kingdom of God within you. You shall share with your world this great Truth that you are discovering within yourself. You shall give freely to the world of this inner treasure you are finding.

You shall not withhold your divine Self from any relationship, from any activity, from anything that you do."

As we recognize that our work is to distribute the treasures of the inner kingdom, to present our divine Self in every relationship and every contact that we make, we do not have to worry about breaking the commandment in outer ways. We will not be able to steal! We who profess and are sincerely trying to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and of the Bible--we who are trying to re-enter the kingdom of God and live out from it--have a great responsibility, and it is so close to us that it is involved in every single thing we do. "Thou shalt not steal," the Bible tells us. We are not to withhold our divine Self from our world, no matter what it is that we do.

We have the kingdom of God within us. We are all good enough students of Truth to know some of the elements of this kingdom. The wealth of this inner kingdom is love, faith, life, joy, strength--all the wonderful qualities that go to make up the divine Self. We are not to withhold these qualities from our outer world. We are to share them with all our contacts and in all our relationships. That means that in this moment, right now, we can begin to transform our lives by carrying out this commandment:

"I am going to express my divine Self in every single thing I do, beginning now, right this moment."

It is your divine Self that is listening now. It is that divine Presence, your true nature, that is becoming awakened and quickened by the words you hear, by the ideas you share. When some of the little tugs come from inside--the worries about your property, or your work, or your teaching, or your family--remind yourself: "I am expressing my

divine Self right here. My little self has to go. It does not belong here any more; it is on the way out. My divine Self is coming into ever greater expression."

Carry this idea with you wherever you go. It becomes a discipline, but it is a joyous discipline because it dissolves all selfish sense of possession in your outer universe. No longer do you have to carry the burden of things, of investments, of property, of problems in the outer world, because you know that your work is to let this divine inner kingdom express itself. When you do this you will discover that your whole world is being transformed.

The great secret is that we cannot have anything that we do not give. As we give from this inner kingdom, we find that all the outer needs and problems seem to be solved. We find great good coming into our life from every direction. We do not lose anything by giving; rather, we have more! No longer do we steal from our Creator, or from ourselves, or from our world. We have no reason to steal, because God has given us the power to remake and completely transform our world, provided we accept that which we are and begin to share it, to distribute it in all our relationships and in all our contacts with the world.

You no longer have to struggle to attain. You no longer have to scheme to hold on to things. You no longer have to make a violent effort to be successful, because the kingdom of God within you is beginning to express itself in and through every single thing that you do, and it *is* your success. This kingdom is not your personal possession; it is the property of God, your Creator, and you are the distributor of the kingdom. You are the channel through which it is to be brought into expression. Beginning right now you no longer withhold your

divine Self from any of your relationships, from any of your contacts. When you meet a challenge, an experience, a friend, you remind yourself that your divine Self, the Spirit of God in you, reacts, responds, speaks, thinks, listens, moves in and through that experience. You realize that the kingdom of God within you is yours, not to hoard but to distribute, to give freely to your world. This idea can completely change your life if you accept it, if you do something about it, if you bring it into your experience by practice.

"Thou shalt not steal." You shall never again look to the outer world with a sense of personal possession, or a sense of burden. You shall never again look at the things in your life with the feeling that they belong to you individually and that you have the responsibility of managing them and struggling with them and holding them. Instead, you see that they are only outer means through which your divine Self is going to be expressed; then you begin to express that divine Self. In every event, in every experience, in every contact, you pause a moment and let your higher Self react.

There is only one way to enter the kingdom of God, and that is by recognizing that we are in it right now. Right at this moment we have all the spiritual qualities we will ever have. If we are going to stay in this heavenly state we must be willing to let God live through us. We must be willing to let the qualities of love, faith, joy, strength, understanding, forgiveness be expressed through us.

We are not going to enter the kingdom of God through someone else's consciousness. We are not going to be able to steal a ride into the kingdom of heaven by joining a religious group, or becoming members of a certain organization;

but we can enter the kingdom of God right now at this moment, by accepting the truth that we *are* there, and then beginning to live as citizens of the kingdom of God should live.

We should rejoice and give thanks that we have the spiritual stamina, the persistence, the determination, the joy, the understanding that we need to live in this new realization of our oneness with God. When we go into our world of daily living, it is up to us whether we continue to live in the kingdom of God or whether we become citizens of the earth again, struggling and tugging and pulling and hauling, trying to get something that does not belong to us and never can belong to us. Let us accept the rich, inner kingdom that God gives us, accept our roles as distributors of that good, and then remember our part in and through the experiences and the events of each day.

ACTION AFFIRMATION

I no longer try to take that which belongs to God. I remember that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. I enjoy all that the Father has without the burden of possession.

December 2010

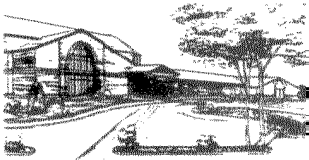
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<i>1</i> AA Men's Group 10:00 AM CA 7:00 PM	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i> Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM
<i>5</i> <i>The Five Principles</i> Class 9:15-10:15 AM Sunday Service 10:30 AM Youth Ed 10:30 AM	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i> Tai Chi 10:00 AM Zumba 6:30 PM	<i>8</i> AA Men's Group 10:00 AM CA 7:00 PM	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i> Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM
<i>12</i> <i>The Five Principles</i> Class 9:15-10:15 AM Sunday Service 10:30 AM Youth Ed 10:30 AM	<i>13</i> Ladies Night Out Sam's Steakhouse 10205 Gravois 5:30 PM	<i>14</i> Tai Chi 10:00 AM Zumba 6:30 PM	<i>15</i> AA Men's Group 10:00 AM CA 7:00 PM	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i> Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM
<i>19</i> Candle Lighting Service 10:30 AM Youth Ed 10:30 AM Christmas party to follow.	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i> Tai Chi 10:00 AM Zumba 6:30 PM	<i>22</i> AA Men's Group 10:00 AM CA 7:00 PM	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i> Christmas Eve Service 6:00 PM	<i>25</i> No Choir Or Bell Choir Rehearsal Merry Christmas
<i>26</i> Sunday Service 10:30 AM Youth Ed 10:30 AM	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i> Tai Chi No Class Zumba No Class	<i>29</i> AA Men's Group 10:00 AM CA 7:00 PM	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>	

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THE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITY CHURCH OF ST. LOUIS

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The light side

True hospitality

A 7-year-old boy was chosen to be the innkeeper in the Christmas program. When Joseph and Mary approached him, looking for shelter in Bethlehem, he simply had to say there was no room.

The kindhearted boy tried to take the sting out of the situation, however. "I don't have room for you in the hotel," he said. "But I'd love to have you come in for milk and cookies."

Now that's punishment

It was the day after Christmas. Dad was trying to take a nap, but his young son kept finding ways to interrupt his siesta. Finally, the father lost his patience and said, "Go to my room, and go now!"

Hearing this, the boy's mother asked, "Why did you tell him to go to your room and not his?"

"Are you kidding?" the father replied. "Did you see all those Christmas presents he received? In his room, he has a TV, a stereo, a computer, eight new CDs and three new video games. If we want to punish him, we have to send him to our room."

Family Photo

An 8-year-old girl was showing her 4-year-old sister some pictures from her Bible. The younger sister was fascinated by a picture of Mary and baby Jesus. After examining it intently, she asked, "But where's Joseph?"

The older sister thought for a

moment and replied, "He's taking the picture."

Newborn stats

A pastor asked a church member to have a sign made for Christmas. It was to be rather large: 6 feet long and 2 feet wide. The layperson paid for the sign, took it to the church and hung it above the front door.

Imagine the shock when people saw that it read: "Unto Mary, Jesus was born, 6 feet long and 2 feet wide."

