

# 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

March 2010

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

#### Inside this issue:

News and events

Truth Thoughts

Quotable Quotes

Calendar

Humor

When We Fall from  
Grace

## Beginning again

By *Lavella Medford*

SOMETIMES WHEN we have suffered great disappointments, we wonder if we can begin again. We may feel tired, unappreciated, and unwanted. We may wonder what we are to accomplish in this life, especially when things do not seem to be going our way. We may wonder if God has a plan for us. It may seem that He does for everyone else, but not for us.

Do not believe it! God has a plan for each of us. Anytime we come to a door that is seemingly closed, we can know that this, too, is a part of God's plan for us, which helps us to find our perfect place of service.

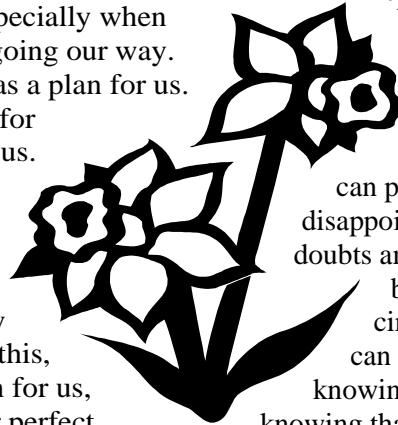
If we chanced to see the earth only in the depths of winter when all is under a blanket of snow, skies dark and cloudy, and trees brown and bare, it would appear to be completely lifeless. But God has planned a wonderful surprise. As the snow melts and days become warmer, small patches of green begin to spring up from among the withered, brown grass. Buds begin to swell and burst open on the desolate branches of shrubs and trees as if in a joyous celebration of life's renewal. Crocus and daffodils spring from their hiding places in the dark, rich soil to awe us once again with their delicate beauty. The cycle of life is beginning again!

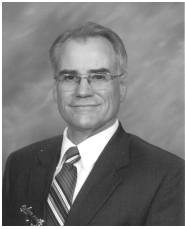
Thomas Edison and his team of scientists experimented with over 10,000 different materials as elements for the light bulb before finding one that worked satisfactorily. If he had not been willing to begin again those 10,000 times, we might not have light bulbs today.

We, too, can begin again,

as often as we decide to. We can put behind us all the disappointments of yesterday, all our doubts and fears. We can refuse to be bound by a belief in circumstances or situations. We can ask, "What now, Lord?"

knowing that an answer comes; and also knowing that regardless of how great our disappointments have been, God has a surprise for us as wonderful as the awakening and rebirth of spring. We can know that the power that brings the beauty and freshness of spring into being also brings the beauty of our potential into being. We, too, can begin again.





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## St. Patrick's Day Party



First Unity's lucky leprechauns invite you to break Irish bread, eat Irish stew and baked potato soup, and share the Unity spirit on Sunday, March 14, at 11:30 following the worship service. Guests are welcome!



**Dave and Mary Lossos**, we send you our sincere gratitude for taking such good care of our indoor garden for the past several years. You have kept it beautiful for all to enjoy, and we give thanks for this generous service.

Our **Sunday school** would like to thank everyone for supporting their lemonade stand. Almost \$400 was raised for the children of Haiti. It brings us joy to see our Unity kids caring about people in another country and doing their part to help. Awesome!

If you would like to help in this effort, we recommend donations to Teaching Haiti Foundation through The Bryant Institute which was founded by personal friends of Rev. Randy and Faye. We know that every penny will go to help provide the basic necessities of life: food, water and shelter. To find out more about the school/orphanage go to: [www.teachinghaiti.org](http://www.teachinghaiti.org)

### Children's Easter Program

Our Sunday school has some new and exciting ideas in the works, and they will be practicing for their Easter program this month. Come and join in and be a part of what's happening on Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>!

This month the **Ladies' Night Out Group** will be meeting Monday evening, March 15<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 at Pasta Plus, 123 Concord Plaza.



### Feed My People

Every year Feed My People gives out produce seeds and encourages their clients to grow some of their

own food. All types of produce seeds are appropriate, although tomato seeds are especially popular. Because everyone can use a little beauty in their lives, flower seeds are also welcome. Food is, of course, always useful and this month protein items will be much appreciated.

[www.feed-my-people.org](http://www.feed-my-people.org)

### On-Going Class

On Sundays from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m., Jan Mourning and Deb Fry are teaching a ten-week class inspired by the



book *The Concentric Perspective* by Eric Butterworth. The class meets in the lending library. Eric Butterworth writes, "You are a spiritual being, and life can only flow from within - outwards." When viewed from the concentric perspective, or from within-outward, all the various aspects of living -- loving, giving, receiving, forgiving, meeting challenges -- take on new meaning, bringing greater satisfaction, deeper understanding, and a zestful sense of living life to the fullest.

All are welcome to join in any Sunday!

### Celtic Grace and Celtic Dreams Concert Friday, March 19

We are proud to present an evening of traditional Irish music by nationally recognized musicians Colleen-McNally-Harris, soprano and Harper Kirk, harpist. The Ohio based duo is currently touring the Midwest the week of St. Patrick's Day that includes a performance at the national Shrine of St. Patrick in St. Patrick, Missouri.

### March Affirmations

- Inner Peace:** I am at peace when my heart and mind are on God.
  - Guidance:** I quietly tune in to the wisdom of God and receive divine direction.
  - Healing:** I am grateful for the energy and strength of my healthy body.
  - Prosperity:** God's unlimited good flows to me and through me.
  - World Peace:** As we express the peace of God, our world is transformed.
- [www.dailyword.com](http://www.dailyword.com)

## Amazing gratitude

John Chrysostom was an early church father who lived in Constantinople in the fourth century A.D. He spoke plainly against all kinds of iniquity. Unfortunately, his preaching made immoral people uncomfortable, so he was exiled from the city.

When Chrysostom wrote letters to people who had befriended him, he ended every letter with the words, "Praise God for all things!"

Faithful souls truly do praise God for all things. After all, it is life's hurtful, painful blows that compel us to seek his mercy and guidance. God's love enables us to praise him for everything — no matter what.

## The red-faced usher

When an elderly woman asked a church usher to seat her close to the pulpit, he tried to talk her out of it. "If you sit up front, you won't be able to sleep," he said.

The woman looked the usher square in the face and asked, "Do you know who I am?"

"No, I don't," he responded.

"Well," she said firmly, "I'm the preacher's mother."

Fully embarrassed, the usher asked, "Do you know who I am?"

"No," she answered.

"Good!" whispered the fellow. "Sit anywhere you want."

## What is faith?

"Sight is not faith, and hearing is not faith, neither is feeling faith; but believing when we neither see, hear nor feel is faith; and everywhere the Bible tells us our salvation is to be by faith. Therefore we must believe before we feel, and often against our feelings, if we would honor God by our faith." -Hannah Whitall Smith

## For the impatient

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was a French philosopher, Jesuit priest, scientist and author of *The Phenomenon of Man*. Because Teilhard de Chardin knew people's tendency to be impatient, he wrote a devotional titled "Waiting" that includes this:

Above all, trust in the slow work of God .... Give our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete. Above all, trust in the slow work of God, our loving Vine-dresser.



## "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"

On Palm Sunday, many congregations sing a hymn written for children but loved by adults, too. Jeanette Threlfall, an Englishwoman, composed "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna" in 1873.

Threlfall's parents died when she was still very young, so she was sent from one relative to another. She also had two serious accidents during childhood, leaving her disabled.

Threlfall handled her difficulties by developing a beautiful, cheerful character. She was more concerned about others than herself. People loved to visit her because they left feeling uplifted and joyous. Threlfall became known for her sacred poems and hymns. Many are considered classics, filled with sound doctrine and fervent devotion.



Here is the first stanza of her Palm Sunday anthem:

Hosanna, loud  
hosanna, the little children sang;  
Through pillared court and temple

the lovely anthem rang.  
To Jesus, who had blessed them  
close folded to his breast,  
The children sang their praises, the  
simplest and the best.

## "Quotable Quotes"

Through the Spirit of the Lord within, you are more than equal to every occasion.

- Myrtle Fillmore

The great and glorious masterpiece of man is to know how to live to purpose.

- Michel de Montaigne

Chronic remorse, as all the moralists are agreed, is a most undesirable sentiment. If you have behaved badly, repent, make what amends you can and address yourself to the task of behaving better next time. On no account brood over your wrongdoing. Rolling in the muck is not the best way of getting clean.

- Aldous Leonard Huxley

I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies, for the hardest victory is over self.

- Aristotle

Seek out that particular mental attribute which makes you feel most deeply and vitally alive, along with which comes the inner voice which says, 'This is the real me,' and when you have found that attitude, follow it.

- James Truslow Adams

One must never lose time in vainly regretting the past or in complaining against the changes which cause us discomfort, for change is the essence of life.

- Anatole France

## When We Fall from Grace

*By Constance Foster*

To be in a state of "grace" means many things to many people - all of its meanings good. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines state of grace as "state of being pleasing to God because of responsiveness to grace; also, state of the elect." To me, based on personal experience, grace means a sustained sense of God's nearness and dearness. This is a deep inner feeling of true security, an exhilaration and yet a quiet peace, an utter conviction that no matter what goes on about me, all is well. In it I feel protected against all harm, oblivious to fear, served by a real and active mercy that is a gift of the Spirit. Certainly grace is nothing anyone can buy or even deserve, but only something that God Himself can freely give out of His great love and forgiving mercy.

No one would willingly slip out of such a condition, for living it is literally living in heaven here and now. Yet we have the testimony of even the saints that a fall from grace does occur at times. Saint John of the Cross, the Spanish mystic of the sixteenth century, aptly calls this experience "The Dark Night of the Soul." It is characterized by a feeling of bereftness and spiritual "dryness," a sense of having lost the consciousness of God's nearness, a despairing loneliness as the soul gropes to recapture the realization of its

original oneness with Him as before.

I am not talking here about the depression that comes from failure to demonstrate release from some illness or problem. When you are in a state of grace, you always find power in God to meet discouraging situations triumphantly. The fall from grace is a more subtle and more terrible torment because you feel out of touch with that power and unable to make contact with it. It is the experience Paul refers to when he says, "having no hope and without God in the world."

Truth rightfully emphasizes the joy and radiance of the spiritual life. So as Truth students we often feel guilty when we hit one of these occasional "dry" or "arid" times. We think that we have failed miserably if we cannot perpetually retain our high and glorious moments. Rather than condemn ourselves, let us remember that many spiritually sensitive souls have walked victoriously through such "dark nights" before us.

Jeremiah, Job, and the Psalmist experienced them. We have only to recall such verses as "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" which Jesus Himself quoted from the cross, or

"O Lord, why dost thou cast me off?"

Why dost thou hide thy face from me?"

The real truth may well be that exceptionally sensitive souls are especially liable to touch the depths simply because they are capable of reaching the heights.

The higher a person is able to ascend in consciousness, the lower he is correspondingly able to fall when he is troubled or disquieted. This explains why Jesus' dark hour in Gethsemane is rightfully called the supreme example of human suffering. Having attained the summit of spiritual realization, He was more vulnerable than other men to grief. But on the cross He, having achieved the overcoming of the lower self, was able to say in a paean of triumph, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!"

Some of us human beings are more subject than others to these mood swings from joy to despair. But it behooves none of us to condemn the other for a lapse from grace when these dark moments come. For it is never the callous sinner or the indifferent soul who is faced with the problem. Where a person has made no attempt to find God, he does not miss Him when the Presence seems to recede. It is when you have been lifted up by that glorious vision and then lose it for a time that you are mightily cast down into despair.

Indeed it is often a sign that growth is taking place inwardly when you are passing through a "dark night." Sometimes in our spiritual progress we have to go through the deep waters, over a rough road, or into a dark forest where the light filters through to us only dimly. For the truth is that we are still "evolving" creatures and that means we still have some changing to do before we can attain to spiritual perfection.

It is well for us to remember with Paul that "the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons." And one greater than Paul, even Jesus Christ Himself, told us that in the world we would have tribulation. Blessedly He did not leave it there. He added in deeply comforting assurance to troubled hearts, "But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Now that, of course, is exactly what we, too, are here to do. But I want to say a kind and understanding word for those of us (and we are legion) who are learning to do our overcoming gradually - "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."

I recently had a "dark night of the soul" myself and learned a great deal from it. My first reaction to the heaviness in which I found my usually joyous self was severe condemnation. I tried to "will" myself out of it but this was as impossible as walking without legs. Soon I could not even pray with any feeling that I was reaching God. He seemed far removed from me and I was utterly alone, bereft of His presence. It is this sense of separation from God that makes for the intense suffering. I want to make it plain that intellectually I knew God was right there with me. I had not lost faith in Him and I did not doubt His existence. But knowing a thing with the head

is a far cry from feeling it with the heart.

I finally reached the point where I stopped trying to pray at all because prayers had become just words. I said simply, "Father, I can't pray to You right now but I know that You will take care of me anyhow." (This, of course, is really a prayer in itself.) Before any improvement came, I first had to forgive myself for the lapse. I had to stop blaming myself and feeling unworthy of God's grace. Quietly I found myself saying one day, "OK, God. I don't know why this had to happen to me and I no longer wish to know. I'm going to leave it all to You and give myself to You to do with as You will. You take over now. I am ready to go forward again whenever You are ready. Be in me what You wish to be."

That very afternoon a wonderful thing happened. I dropped in at the library and was browsing through some stacks of old religious books. There I ran across a dusty old tome that gave me a lot of new spiritual knowledge and inspiration for which I must have been ready. I am sure that God spoke to me through that book for He showed me what had been hampering me. I had been using my sense of oneness with God for my own personal satisfaction and that is a form of selfishness.

When we enjoy God's presence in prayer and meditation not for the love of God but for the love of self, we may then lose the assurance of His presence until we are ready to make a true self-surrender and be willing to live not for the "I, me, or mine"

but for God alone. It had been necessary for me to go through a "dark night" in order to find this out and experience what the saints and mystics called a period of "self-naughting."

Such a depression should not be lightly dismissed because it represents a chance to make real spiritual progress. We actually slow down our spiritual development when we try to squirm out of the setbacks that have something vital to teach us. Instead of praying, "Lord, take this away from me," try praying, "Lord, show me what You have to teach me." God uses everything to His glory - even our sadnesses and sorrows. By taking them to Him, we discover the good in them. Look behind any depression and you will see His face.

In my own case I joined a prayer group and used my consciousness of God's presence to help heal others instead of just for the comfort of personal communion in a quest for spiritual blessings. At once I was released from the deep heaviness of heart and was again my usual buoyant, happy self. To enjoy God for oneself is not enough. I learned that we must become channels through which He can express Himself to bless and help others.

If as you read this article you, too, are cast down and disquieted, here are some simple techniques that will help you to weather depression with greater equanimity:

1. Count your blessings. Number and write down the things you have to be thankful for. Include all the little as well as the big ones. Are you

healthy, have you eaten today, did you sleep last night, see a flower in bloom, get a letter from a friend? Is there a roof over your head, do the birds sing in your yard, did the sun rise this morning, have you a good book to read? Add these blessings up and do not stop until you have passed the hundred mark. At about ninety you will begin to feel a little sheepish at your blindness.

2. Do something for somebody else. Many depressions are due to a preoccupation with the self. It is hard to stay blue and be chiefly interested in some other person at the same time. A friend of mine was in a deep depression following the sudden tragic death of her young son. She saved her reason, she tells me, by deliberately looking for things to do for other people. Once she rushed out of her house, beside herself with blind grief, and bought all the newspapers left in the hands of a young newsboy on the corner. She went back into the house with fifteen copies of the evening paper and a considerably lighter heart because of the happy smile on the boy's astonished and overjoyed face.

3. Depersonalize your depression. The thing that bothers me most when I am in one of these arid periods is the feeling that I am not being true to my real self or to God. I have learned to free myself by saying, "My mind is troubled but *I* am not." By thus

separating yourself from the difficulty, you can stand above it, get the right perspective on it, and never let it control you or get the upper hand of you. You are then able to hold to the truth about life and get a certain detached point of view toward the trouble. Your attitude is enlarged, and you realize that your real self in Christ is not being touched at all by the fevers and alarms of the mortal part of you.

4. Stop trying too hard. Perhaps you have been attempting to "bring it to pass" yourself. God says, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit." And Jesus said, "I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works." So let go and let God. It is always the light touch that works best - not the long, labored prayer, but the simple, heartfelt one.

5. Finally, do not resist these dark moments if and when they come. You only give them more power if you try to fight against them. Just accept them quietly and do not even ask why they have come to you. Say:

"Father, what have You to teach me? I am ready to learn it. Here is my hand. Lead me. I will do whatever You want me to do and be whatever You want to be in me."

Then you will know that no matter what happens, rain or shine, sun or shade, you are living in His protection and guided by His loving care. Even

if a dark night of the soul descends on you, your heart will be set to singing again. For we are told, "When *men* are cast down, then thou shalt say, There *is* lifting up" (Job 22:29 A.V.).



## New Life

*By Elizabeth Searle Lamb*

Are you held by the past?  
Oh, let it go! Let it go  
Into a total nothingness  
And instead let there flow  
The joy of the Presence,  
The Presence of God, that so  
Enfolds you it brings  
All you can possibly know  
Of health, of abundance,  
Of peace. Thus you grow  
Into the fullness of being.  
The past is done; let it go.  
Let God's goodness, His truth,  
From now on be all that you  
know!

# March 2010

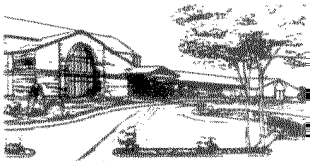
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i> "Discover the Power Within You" Class 10:00 AM	<i>3</i> AA Men's Group 10:00 AM  CA 7:00 PM	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i> Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Bell Rehearsal 10:30 AM
<i>7</i> Concentric Perspective Class 9:15-10:15  Sunday Service 10:30 AM Youth Ed 10:30 AM	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> "Discover the Power Within You" Class 10:00 AM	<i>10</i> AA Men's Group 10:00 AM  CA 7:00 PM	<i>11</i> Board Meeting 7:30 PM	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i> Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Bell Rehearsal 10:30 AM
<i>14</i> Concentric Perspective Class 9:15-10:15  Sunday Service 10:30 AM Youth Ed 10:30 AM  St. Patrick's Day Party 11:30 AM	<i>15</i> Ladies Night Out ... "Pasta Plus" 123 Concord Plaza 5:30 PM	<i>16</i> "Discover the Power Within You" Class 10:00 AM	<i>17</i> AA Men's Group 10:00 AM  CA 7:00 PM	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i> Celtic Grace & Celtic Dream Concert 7:00 PM	<i>20</i> Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Bell Rehearsal 10:30 AM
<i>21</i> Concentric Perspective Class 9:15-10:15  Sunday Service 10:30 AM Youth Ed 10:30 AM	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> "Discover the Power Within You" Class 10:00 AM	<i>24</i> AA Men's Group 10:00 AM  CA 7:00 PM	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i> Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Bell Rehearsal 10:30 AM
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## Wings

### THE MARCH NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITY CHURCH OF ST. LOUIS

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## The light side -- *Do you know these St. Louis facts?*

The first Jewish congregation west of the Mississippi was founded in St. Louis, as was the first library west of the Mississippi.

Famous writers including T.S. Eliot, Maya Angelou, William Gass, Tennessee Williams, Eugene Field and many others were from St. Louis.

The Missouri Botanical Garden is among the top three botanical gardens in the world.

The first ironclad boat was built by James Buchanan Eads in the Port of St. Louis. Eads also invented the diving bell to salvage steamboat wrecks from the Mississippi River and built the first bridge using steel

truss construction - the 1874 Eads Bridge.

St. Louis offers more free, major visitor attractions than anyplace outside of the nation's capital, including the Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis Zoo, Cahokia Mounds, Museum of Westward Expansion, and St. Louis Science Center, Missouri History Museum, Anheuser-Busch Brewery, Grant's Farm and more.

Peanut Butter was invented here on a visit from George Washington Carver (whose home was in Southwest Missouri near Joplin).

The bread slicer was invented here circa 1900.

The first kindergarten in the U.S. was founded in St. Louis by Susan Blow.

Famous musicians including Chuck Berry, Tina Turner, Miles Davis, Albert King, David Sanborn, & Michael McDonald (The Doobie Brothers) were from St. Louis. Missouri native, Sheryl Crowe, taught school in St. Louis.

The Mercury and Gemini space capsules were built in St. Louis by McDonnell Douglas - now Boeing.

St. Louis was the first American city to host the Olympic Games (1904).

*-Thanks, James Petrovic*