



2018 Annual Report

Unity of The Blue Ridge
Annual Meeting - February 17, 2019

Unity of The Blue Ridge
Annual Membership Meeting Agenda
February 17, 2019

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Establish Quorum

Review and Approval of Previous Year's Minutes from February 18, 2017

Official Membership – Annual Renewal Process

Board and Staff Recognition & Reports

Youth Education Report

Sacred Service & Volunteer Teams

Bylaws as related to Election of Board Members

Introduction of Nominating Committee

Information on Board Candidates

Vote and Election of Board Members

Selection of Nominating Committee Representative and Alternate

Nominating Committee assembles beginning three months prior to the Annual Meeting to meet with and interview potential board nominees; making official recommendations for the board elections.

Building and Facilities Report

Board Treasurer's Report

Board President's Report

Senior Minister's Report

Vote

- (1) Building Concept with associated costs
- (2) Capital Campaign
- (3) Sale of Property bequeathed by Lucy Purkey

Board Election Results

Other Discussion

Closing Prayer

Unity Center of Christianity DBA
Unity of The Blue Ridge
Annual Membership Meeting - Minutes
February 18th, 2018

Called to order by Jim Reed at 12:14pm

Opening Prayer by Rev. Darlene

Jim Reed Established Quorum based on the number of members present.

Review and Approval of Previous Year's Minutes from February 19th, 2017 Congregant Motion to approve the minutes with 2nd by Gary Ray.

Board and Staff Recognition & Reports - Darlene acknowledged staff, Rev. Laura Collins, Rev. Andy Carlson, Rev. Christy Corna, Lantrea Raphael, Cynthia Biddle, Savanna Wheatley, Mike Birkle, James Miller, Rev. Morgan Barclay, Rev. Jane Nelson, Donna Brickey, Tracey Lilly, Judie McKown: the band including Richard Shulman, Dave de la Rosa, Pete Latrella, Joel Pressman and Kat Williams.

Youth Education Report - Savanna discussed the youth Education programs and the need for additional volunteers.

Sacred Service & Volunteer Teams - Rev. Darlene recognized team leaders including Tracey Lilly (Volunteer Coordinator) who is developing the volunteer positions at UTBR. Phoebe Reed has led our Care Team, Judy Starkweather manages our CD Duplication Team. Joe Weigner is recognized for all he does and holds for the Habitat Team, Suka Chapel-Horst is our Welcoming Team volunteer coordinator. All team members and service participants are recognized. Nicola Karesh is recognized as the leader of the Y.O.U. team.

Bylaws as related to Election of Board Members - Jim Reed explained the bylaws as they related to election of board members in accordance with our bylaws, article 3, section 5a2&3 our laws state.... a nominating committee shall be constructed 3 months prior to the annual meeting.... the board shall elect one of its members to serve on the nominating committee to select eligible Board Members to put before the congregation for a vote." and introduced Pat Cardwell, Board representative on the Nominating Committee.

Pat introduced the nominating committee of Rev. Darlene, himself and: **Donna Brickey** and **Dick Allen**. This committee had approved 4 candidates to fill 4 positions; 3 3-year positions and 1 1-year replacement position.

Information on Board Candidates - Pat presented the candidates: "Michael Chatten for the 1-year position, DeAnne McCollum for a 3 year position, Evan Ruiz for a 3 year position, Dr. Eric Randall for a 3-year position. They introduced themselves and said a few words about their desire to serve on the board.

Vote and Election of Board Members -Congregants marked their ballots and Judie McKown and Judy Weigner tallied the votes.

Selection of Nominating Committee Representative and Alternate Jim recognized the following volunteers for the committee: Rev. DeBorah Shelton-Ogiste, Approved on a motion by Jim Reed and a second by Vernetta Eleazer. Teresa Eidt was the 2nd volunteer, approved with a motion by Jim Reed and 2nd by Charley Rogers. Linda Newman and Brian McGrady volunteered as additional alternates as needed.

Board President's Report - Jim presented the President's report. He spoke with gratitude about his 5 years on the board.

From 2017 until present 72 new members were added

June 10th OLIP (Our Love is Power) empowered and energized our community.

We created a new paid Part Time Associate Minister position – for a year contract period – split into 2 quarter time positions offered to Rev. Andy Carlson and Rev. Laura Collins.

UTBR has taken a leadership role in creating bridges of compassion and connection with our 1st interfaith service, which was attended by over 100 people.

Charley and Pam Rogers facilitated "Compassionate Conversations" workshops.

We raised relief funds for Texas and Puerto Rico.

Volunteers have designed and built the community labyrinth with many thanks to Joy and Benjamin Warren for their generous inspiration and financial support.

In 2018 we move our Spiritual Community forward. The new live stream will broaden the reach of our message.

Please consider UTBR in your estate planning.

Jim will continue to be a part of the Habitat Team and moving our mission forward.

32 new members added in February, 2018:

1. Tara Ambrose
2. Ann Atkinson
3. Betty Aubut
4. Phil Barrow
5. Sharon Barrow
6. James Boyle
7. Christine Chatten
8. Michael Chatten
9. Ann Fisher Clifford
10. Gregory A. Clifford
11. Bobbi Flowers
12. Lane Godsey
13. Mark Haverly
14. Robert Hennem
15. Rosemary Hildago
16. Karen Kennedy
17. Pat Knaggs
18. Calvin Levi
19. Joyce Menges
20. Paul Menges
21. Celeste Osborn
22. Sharon Oxendine
23. Tina J. Peel
24. Barb Price
25. Rick Price
26. John D. Rankin
27. Randy Rea
28. Elaine (Laine) Schiavone
29. Hollis Smith
30. Carolyn Trapp
31. Linda (Lin) Vinson
32. Mary Weller

Board Treasurer's Report - Eric Randall presented the report summary for 2017. Eric reflected on our deep appreciation for our Church.

Income over the last 2 years has improved. 3rd year in a row that we have had a surplus.

Restricted funds at \$88,000.00. 5% increase in our budget for this fiscal year.

\$20,000.00 fundraising campaign being organized for this year.

Building and Facilities Report - Ellen presented an update on the facilities including a master planning update and recognition of the Habitat for Unity Team.

Master Planning is underway with John Yurko and the Master Planning committee team is meeting and a needs assessment survey for congregation is being developed.

Senior Minister's Report - Rev. Darlene acknowledged the service of Nicola Karesh who is stepping off the board and thanked Jim Reed for his years of service. His ability and temperament and joy of service have been essential to our growth and success and he will be dearly missed. He is presented with a certificate for his outstanding service.

Becky Franz- Paul was recognized for her extraordinary service for 6 years on the board. Eric Randall completed his three-year term and was up for re-election.

Darlene expressed her appreciation to Unity and to Tia for the love and support.

Darlene presented a new 2-tier Path to Membership -Community Membership and Voting Membership. Renewing existing members are grandfathered in and new members will move through the 2-tier process once it is in place.

New Directory is coming online shortly. Live Stream of services is expected in mid-March thanks to the team of Donna Brickey, Mike Birkle, Mike Chatten, Evan Ruiz and Chris Chatten.

Our growth is measured by our conscious growth as a beloved community.

Unity's commitment to be Caretakers of the Earth was evidenced when UTBR received the Green Star Award from Unity Worldwide Ministries and is a certified EarthCare Community. Judie McKown and Judy Conley co-chairs were recognized for their work on the Unity Sustainability Team. Interfaith community is strong and growing (April 19th is next gathering)

Engaged Spirituality- We are in the transformation business, to each recognize, ignite, and engage our calling.

Rev. Darlene introduces Ellen Winner as the new Board President. Ellen thanks Jim Reed and announces the results of election ballots to be overwhelmingly in favor of all four candidates. New Board members for 2018 are Mike Chatten, one-year term, Eric Randall, DeAnne McCollum and Evan Ruiz, three-year terms.

Other Official Business Ellen asks if there is any other official business to discuss or if there are any questions.

Closing Prayer Darlene closes the meeting with prayer at 1:32.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Cardwell

Staff & Leadership Support Reports

Senior Minister's Report—Rev. Darlene Strickland, Senior Minister

It is a blessing and honor for me to serve as your Senior Minister. Above all, my goal is to help encourage, equip and inspire all of us, including me, to grow in God-consciousness, and to be an inspiring presence for good in our world.

2018 was our fourth year together. According to various church/ministry gurus, the first three years together are the *honeymoon* stage when you “form” and find your “norms”. Then, the fourth-year transitions into the beginning of the *honey-let's-do* years, where you “storm and/or perform”. 2018 had that shift for me in a practical, organic way. The trust, admiration, joy, respect and love we have formed - are established and palpable here at Unity of The Blue Ridge. So, the natural progression is to look out into the world and focus on what we can do – as a meaningful demonstration and extension of *who we are together*.

During 2018, our devoted staff, board, team leaders and volunteers worked to accomplish the many ongoing tasks it takes to run a growing ministry, and on top of that, address the back-log of deferred maintenance and deficient systems-development. Indeed, it take a village... and we've got remarkable a one! Thanks to each and every one of you for the way you support this spiritual community, our collective mission, and embody Love in action! You inspire and bless me beyond words.

On January 1, 2019, we began our fifth year together. I can feel a new wave of momentum building as we stand upon all that has come before and *look out into the world and focus on what we can now do – as a meaningful demonstration and extension of who we are together*.

We will be renovating/transforming our physical space and helping to renovate and transform our community and world. We'll be providing our regular services (*shout out of ♥ thanks to our Sunday crew, Band and Kat!*), hosting special events and continually creating space and opportunities to *stand up, speak up and show up* as God/Love in action.

Specifically, we live out our purpose in being *Radically Inclusive, Spiritually Progressive, and Socially Responsive*. This means we affirm and advocate for the Sacredness of all Life. We are the way of Love, Peace and Non-Violence. We care for the Earth and its precious resources. We honor the many paths and names that lead to “God”. We are the Light of the world, and Now is the time.

For me it comes down to this, a church/spiritual community can teach, demonstrate and perpetuate God/Love and inclusivity or fear and separation, creating either sacred connection... or scars. We can be the healing medicine the world needs by the stand we take and the way we show up, day by day, repeating as *is necessary*. I am blessed to be here and I sincerely thank you for being here too. Let's do this!

Rev. Christy Corna - Associate Minister, Church Office Administration

In 2018, my role evolved from part-time Church Office Administrator to a full-time Associate Minister position of Church Office Administration. It is my honor to serve our CommUnity and its continued growth and expansion. The position of Administrator is integral to church function and it's been a very busy year with the growth of membership, activities and events. Our database is current with membership and visitor information. Among the many details of daily office tasks, managing the church calendar, organizing monthly outreach projects, and special events, this past year we had two opportunities for our congregants to be included in our Photo Directory by Lifetouch Photography.

I am grateful for the ongoing support of Jennifer Lilly, and other volunteers who assist with general tasks that allow us to be prepared for a smooth and welcoming Sunday experience here at Unity of The Blue Ridge. And special thanks to Linda Jones who is always willing to assist on a moment's notice for special tasks!

Kathy Tompkins, Church Financial Administrator

We were blessed to have Kathy Tompkins join us in 2018, and also very grateful to have Laura Nelson help us (again) during the interim! Kathy works Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Kathy brings years of bookkeeping experience and has also worked previously with a church. She has been a great addition to our office admin team and works closely with Judie McKown (member who volunteers her CPA support to us) and our staff and board. Kathy supports our ministry and members in all things financial. She keeps chocolate on her desk for anyone in need and has a graceful, steadfast way of keeping things organized and balanced.

She is also available to assist with setting up on-line giving, regular credit card giving, or other planned giving. Records of your giving are always available to you. You can reach Kathy at 828-891-8700 or bookkeeper@unitync.net.

Rev. Laura Collins, Associate Minister

In January of 2018, I had the great joy of traveling with Patrice Boudreaux, Bobbi Flowers, Steve McKown, and Phoebe Reed to Nicaragua to work with the Jubilee Community at the Center for Development in Central America. Helping to build an addition to a community health center and learning from the community there about life in Nicaragua was a high-light of my year. It was our privilege to share about our trip in worship in February and to host Sarah Junkin Woodard on her annual visit back to the states and to Unity of The Blue Ridge on Palm Sunday.

In February I began taking Unity's Spiritual Enrichment Education classes at Christ Church Unity in Orlando. I continued with more classes at Unity of Gaithersburg in June, where my class with Robert Brumet from Unity Worldwide Spiritual Institute led to me joining a task force to start a new Spiritual Direction Program at UWSI. Work on that task force is now underway.

I began as a full-time associate in February with Prayer and Care, Youth and Family ministries, and other duties that emerged as the year progressed. February and March included several trainings for three new prayer and care teams and the annual training retreat for Prayer Chaplains. Summer saw us re-vamp the youth education program with new curriculum and kick-off the fall with a family picnic and a new teaching team.

Organizing special gatherings for the community brought extra energy to my work this year. Special services included an interfaith summer solstice experience, a day-long prayer vigil for families separated at the border, the Unity World Day of Prayer, Maundy Thursday and an Easter sunrise service on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Being on staff here this year, working with Rev. Darlene and our amazing team, fills me with joy. The volunteers I am blessed to know here – from the Prayer Chaplains to the Youth Ed teachers to the Care teams to the Habitat team and the Board – make me laugh, smile, and cry (in a good way) day after day. I see 2019 unfolding with a new level of vitality and I am beyond grateful to be part of it.

Rev. Andy Carlson - Associate Minister, Community Connections

I was grateful to be back at the helm of Associate Minister in charge of Community Connections in 2018. As many of you know, my body suffered a stroke in November 2017, and I was unable to continue my Associate Minister functions for a number of months. Madeline Parker and Cynthia Biddle stepped in (after Tracey Lilly stepped down) and capably took over the Volunteer Program Coordinator responsibilities.

Along with others, I now volunteer as Associate Minister – and my focus is Community Connections. My focus is to get the Affinity Groups up and running. To that end, I enlisted the help of Rev. Morgan Barclay because of his experience with affinity groups in the past. Our goal is to have these groups organized, trained, and started in 2019.

Another function I have taken on is the Unity of The Blue Ridge Daily Meme. Who knew the extent of the impact these thought-provoking memes would have. From September 21, 2018, through January 29, 2019, the daily memes have been seen by 136,580 people, in all 50 states, and they continue to draw more people to the Unity of The Blue Ridge website and Facebook page every day. It is possible we will have over 400,000 views this year. We are spreading the Unity message of love, peace, kindness, forgiveness, inclusivity and compassion near and far. Amen!

Rev. Morgan J. Barclay – Associate Minister, Special Support

Along with other ministers who have found their way to Unity of The Blue Ridge, I serve as a volunteer Associate Minister – offering support wherever it may be needed. I am a retired Ordained Unity Minister, so I am grateful to support Unity of the Blue Ridge and Rev. Darlene in various ways. Some areas of focus have been:

- Men’s Group Support—provide leadership and support for this monthly activity.
- Assist the Financial Administrator by training money counters.
- Support Rev. Darlene, minister team and others as needed.
- Support with Sunday & special services and prayer or pastoral care.

Youth and Family Ministries – Rev. Laura Collins

Nursery. Kari Smith has been faithfully tending our littlest ones in the nursery all year. She is highly qualified, and the kids and parents love her. We are grateful Kari is continuing with us this year and in March we will divide the group into Nursery (infant through 23 months) staying with Kari and UniTots (2-4 year-old). We are currently advertising for this new child-care position. Please see Rev. Laura Collins if you are interested.

UniKids. In early 2018, Savana Wheatley was leading the UniKids class, made up of all elementary ages. She held down the entire program by herself for several months. Since the Spring, a teaching team made up of Rev. Laura Collins, Tammy Barnwell, Gay Fritzemeier, and Rev. Gaby Michel worked with teaching assistants each week as we began using the Joyful Path curriculum. Joyful Path includes a weekly affirmation, story time, and lesson activities that reinforce the affirmation.

At the end of the summer, we held a picnic and festival to kick off the new school year and introduce the teaching team to the parents. In November, Tammy Barnwell and Rev. Laura attended a Unity Youth Ed training in Charlotte that helped us think about new ways of engaging the students.

In December, the UniKids sang Christmas and Hanukkah songs for the whole congregation. Attendance ranged from 1 to 10 kids. We plan to split the group into two ages (k – 4th grade and 5th through 8th grade) by the fall. Please see Rev. Laura Collins if you are interested.

Youth of Unity (Y.O.U.) At the beginning of the year, Nicola Karesh led our senior high group of two young women. When Nicola’s daughter graduated in May, she was ready to step down. Over the summer several talented adults stepped forward to lead Y.O.U. but early fall outreach did not result in any teens. In the later fall, Elder Sharon Oxendine planned a monthly gathering for young women called **Girl Tribe** and four young women have now been meeting for four months and will continue in the new year. We plan to have another group of teens that will be co-ed start this year in addition to Girl Tribe.

Rev. Jane Nelson - Minister in Residence, Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC)

As MCC Minister in Residence, Rev. Jane Nelson is active as a volunteer minister within community life and representing Unity of The Blue Ridge in community activities and outreach. Her duties support others along their spiritual and educational journeys as mutually determined alongside Rev. Darlene, Associate Ministers, and the Church Staff.

During her first year as volunteer minister on staff, Rev. Jane assisted and supported Sacred Service and its Lay Leaders; prepared written resources; participated in *New to Unity* meetings; facilitated a *Spiritual Gifts 2-Part* workshop; represented UTBR in the Heart of Hendersonville Project with Pam & Charley Rogers and Rev. DeBorah Ogiste as a facilitator of a Book Study on *Healing the Heart of Democracy* by Parker Palmer and participant in Community Action Circles (Addiction Task Force); facilitated a home discussion group for our 2018 Fall Book Study: *More Together Than Alone* by Mark Nepo; assisted in the Children’s Ministry as a Sunday School assistant; and participated in Sunday services, in Unity’s Minister’s Group quarterly meetings, and with the 1st Leadership Dinner meeting.

Rev. Jane is prepared and thrilled to now serve her UTBR family.

Music Program - Richard Shulman, Music Director

We are blessed to have a singing minister and one of the best bands a church can imagine. Each Sunday is an uplifting experience where music keeps the energy flowing, opens and moves us, and often brings us to our feet with awe-inspired appreciation!

Our house band includes Richard Shulman directing and on keyboard, Kat Williams on vocals, Dave DeLaRosa on guitar and vocals, Joel Pressman on bass and Pete Latrella on drums. Rev. Darlene writes some of our music and guides the selections, and Richard takes it from there.

We are also blessed to have several members of our congregation join the band on occasion, including Don Mercer on harmonica, Evan Ruiz on the continuum and keyboards, Connie Eichenberg on cello, Pat Cardwell on guitar and vocals, Melody Cooper on piano and vocals, and other singers.

This year, Kat Williams received the gift of a kidney (transplant) so local favorites Rhoda Weaver, Paula Hanke, Geoff McBride, and Peggy Ratusz joined us for special music. Each of them expressed their gratitude and joy in being here, and we were blessed in return.

Volunteer "Sacred Service" Program, Madeline Parker & Cynthia Biddle, Co-Facilitators

In May of 2018, Madeline Parker and Cynthia Biddle took over coordinating the Sacred Service Volunteer Program. Since then, the program has been renamed, revamped and rejuvenated with a lot of things happening. It began with creating several new means of communicating with UTBR volunteers and members:

- A page was set on the UTBR website to access volunteer information
- Descriptions were rewritten to reflect current volunteer teams and community activities
- Team descriptions were compiled into a book with opportunities for volunteering
- A brochure was written describing the volunteer program and opportunities
- Current opportunities for sacred service are posted on a sign in the church lobby.

Sacred Service Volunteer Program activities included:

- Team Leader Meeting was held in July
- Sacred Gifts Discovery class led by Rev. Jane Nelson was held in September
- Coordinators attended volunteer work groups
- Planning meetings were held with team leaders
- Coordinators began representing sacred service during offering at Sunday service.

At the beginning of 2019, Madeline Parker assumed the sole role of Volunteer Program Director.

Plans for 2019:

- Volunteer recognition and appreciation event
- Recruitment fair
- Regular contact with each team and team reports to BOT
- Ongoing team leadership meetings and training, discovering gifts workshops, team recognition during Sunday services, begin sacred service training after second service.

Sacred Service is a vital part of the life and sustainability of Unity of The Blue Ridge. All are invited to find a way to express your individual gifts in service to our community and in enrichment of your personal spiritual growth.

Bookstore - Cynthia Biddle, Bookstore Manager

The Unity "Connections Bookstore" is a service offered to our community that enhances and supports the spiritual growth of everyone. As such, the bookstore offers a variety of publications, which include books, pamphlets, cards, and magazines. Also, available are incense, pendulums, bumper stickers, and bracelets.

We carry books that have been specially ordered by the leaders of study groups. And, we are available to place special orders for anyone who has a request. Without the support of this wonderful community, we would not have a bookstore. All materials that are carried in the bookstore are intended to support this Ministry's Mission and Vision Statements.

New to the **bookstore** is the "Works of Heart: Creative Activities of the Soul" Art Exhibitions. This year "Works of Heart" featured three distinct Artists: Lauren Rutten – World & Local Photography, Marilou Solares – Buddha paintings & prints, and Michelle Soule – sculptures titled Soul Figures.

We are accepting applications, for any and all Artists interested in displaying their creations in the bookstore. Please see Cynthia in the bookstore for more information. Thank you for your interest and support of our commUnity Bookstore!

I.T./Live Stream/Social Media – Donna Brickey, I.T. Program Director

- Supported PC and Printer Hardware, ATT Wireless Router and Software for all areas with no incidents.
- Expanded further utilizations of Power Church for Ministry Visits and documentation with Rev. Laura
- Applied and Received \$247 Grant from Unity Headquarters for Unity Branded Website that was utilized to assist with annual fee.
- Began renovation of website. New Website will be live by Easter.
- Converted audio/video sound booth from paid position to volunteer staff excluding sound board engineer.
- Implemented Live Streaming
 - ❖ Researched and implemented Live Stream equipment with a budget of less than \$2000.00. Cameras and stands were donated.
 - ❖ Recruited and trained Volunteers – we have 4 team members that rotate every 4th Sunday - Jan Stanton, Nova Carlton, Evan Ruiz, Donna Brickey. Thanks also to Mike Birkle who continues to help with sound and/or video for special events and as possible available.
 - ❖ Created written procedures and checklist for camera setup and operations. Special thanks to Nova Carlton for sharing her professional video expertise with us!
 - ❖ We now have an average 18 -25 attendees on live stream each Sunday with most staying to end of service. We are continuing to improve the quality of our live stream and will be implementing more graphics and bumpers (openers and closers) for our services over the next few months.
 - ❖ All services are posted on website and Facebook page by noon on Mondays
 - ❖ Quotes from someone watching live stream:
 - *"Today was the first time that we experienced the live stream of a Unity service in our home and it was outstanding! The camera work was excellent; the sound, through our system directly to my hearing aids, was wonderful; and the message was inspiring, thoughtful...thank you!"*
 - *"We are at Unity because of watching the Live Stream. Upon moving to Asheville, we started looking at churches and when watching the Live Stream, we saw the quality and the felt the love and we knew we needed to visit, and we did and stayed." This couple was from Mile Hi Unity church in Colorado.*

We have grown our YouTube subscribers from 378 to 550 with an increase of 172 for 2018 which is an increase of 25% and our watch time is up by 28% which means our audience is not only clicking but watching more of the service's video.

- Facebook (social media)
- Total followers – 3,809 – Increase of 117 followers in 2018 with international and nationwide followers.
 - ❖ Followers by Countries – (not all countries are listed)
 - United States of America - 3,597
 - Canada - 48
 - Nigeria - 20
 - Dominican Republic - 15
 - Australia - 10
 - India - 10
 - Philippines - 10
 - Puerto Rico - 10
 - Argentina - 8
 - Indonesia – 8
 - ❖ Followers by Cities
 - Asheville, NC – 821
 - Hendersonville, NC – 163
 - Los Angeles, CA – 57
 - Atlanta, GA – 56
 - New York, NY – 43
 - Nashville, TN – 37
 - Greenville, SC – 36
 - Sacramento, CA – 30
 - Lees Summit, MO – 30
 - Charlotte, NC – 27
 - Kansas City, MO – 26
 - Black Mountain, NC – 26
 - Brevard, NC – 25
 - Phoenix, AZ – 24
 - Mills River, NC – 24
 - Tampa, FL – 13
 - Canton, NC – 13
 - Denver, CO – 12
 - Marietta, GA – 12
 - Santo Domingo, Santo Domingo Province, Dominican Republic – 12
 - Santa Fe, NM – 11
 - Wilmington, NC – 11
 - Cookeville, TN -11
 - Saint Petersburg, FL – 23
 - Weaverville, NC – 18
 - Orlando, FL – 17
 - Candler, NC – 17
 - Jacksonville, FL – 16
 - Miami, FL – 16
 - Waynesville, NC – 16
 - Durham, NC – 15
 - Flat Rock, NC -15
 - Portland, OR – 15
 - Austin, TX – 15
 - Houston, TX – 15
 - San Diego, CA – 14
 - Arden, NC – 14
 - Raleigh, NC – 14
 - Sedona, AZ -10
 - Boulder, CO – 10
 - Fort Lauderdale, FL – 10
 - Swannanoa, NC – 10
 - Columbia, SC – 10
 - Naples, FL – 9
 - Fort Myers, FL - 19
 - ❖ We have increased our post views this year with the daily Meme postings by Rev. Andy with our largest views being 4,400. Wow!

For 2019

- New Unity Branded Website- goal to be live by Easter
- Expansion of Live Stream with additional graphics and videos
- Sound Board Training for additional backup for Thom
- Procedures in place for organizational operational support
- Volunteer Power Point training and procedures documented.

Board President Report – Ellen Winner, Board President

I am so grateful for the privilege of serving as your Board President this past year. I enjoy working with your Board of Trustees - a dedicated, passionate and talented group of individuals working together for the greater good of Unity of The Blue Ridge. Our ministerial staff is a constant source of inspiration and a demonstration of love in action. Their experience, faith, wisdom, leadership, and teamwork are such a blessing to this community.

Our band is a joyful gift each week - a consistent expression of talent, collaboration, and the heart-filling sacredness and healing power of music.

Volunteers support the well-being of Unity and its people. We have fun, make friends, and this sacred service is the backbone of our community. The participation of every one of the community members sustains this church and deepens our community connection.

Our membership continues to grow as our message of Oneness spreads. We received 53 new members in 2018 and are expanding through word-of-mouth, through our international livestream audience, through our social media presence, through Unity's participation in socially conscious community outreach, and through the messages and demonstrations of love and inclusivity that we hear and embody every week.

With well over 300 members, this expansion is creating extraordinary demands on our physical facilities, our staff, and our volunteers to serve the needs of our community. To that end, 2018 was a year of developmental planning (preceded by a year of research and surveys to determine our direction) that aimed to manifest our growing community's vision. A master plan was developed in 2018 by architect John Yurko through a series of Master Planning Committee and congregational meetings. Today, we are excited to present the next step for our community, one which will necessitate active engagement by all.

This building and grounds calls us to renovate and grow – to shift our attention from keeping the lights on to growing our light for the world – to enlarging our capacity for love and inclusivity, rather than focusing on repairing our walls. It is by faith and the determined, persistent action of our ever-strengthening community that this vision will be realized.

As our community expands, so does the necessity for direct, active participation of its members. By the strength of our collective efforts, bound in Oneness, we are moving into an exciting year of action in 2019. As we focus on abundant grace, this year is an opportunity to “use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms”. – 1 Peter 4:10

“We are the light of the world. If not us, who? If not now, when?” - Rev. Darlene Strickland

With much gratitude,

Ellen Winner

Volunteer and Sacred Service Reports

Prayer Chaplain Program

The Unity Prayer Chaplain program provides confidential face-to-face prayer after each Sunday morning service for anyone requesting it and holds the prayer concerns of the whole community in prayer each week. 2018 started with ten chaplains in service. Six of those chaplains became Prayer Chaplains Emeritus in the Spring, when they decided not to continue with the regular schedule. We give thanks for the ministries of Marian Behnke, Meagen Mealer-Gosiewski, Tim Norwood, DeBorah Ogiste, Connie Rowe and Mary White. In March, Rev. Laura Collins led a 2-day training for the four continuing and three new prayer chaplains and all became certified in the Light & Love Ministries prayer chaplain program. After the retreat, Michael Wackerly and Diane West became co-coordinators of the ministry. Under their loving leadership, the Prayer Chaplains have met monthly for ongoing training and have provided service at all regular Sunday services and several special services during the year. In addition to the leaders, our current prayer chaplains are: Julia Byrd, Carol Lane, William Marshall, Michelle Smith, and Diane Swift. Deep thanks for the ways they uphold us all in prayer and raise the prayer consciousness of the congregation.

We are seeking new Prayer Chaplains to be trained March 29-31 this Spring to join the team. Please see Rev. Laura Collins if you are interested.

Care Teams

In February, Rev. Laura Collins held two training sessions – one for Caring Friends and one for Caring Visitors. The purpose of Caring Friends was to provide dropped-off food or to run simple errands for Unity members who are sick or temporarily disabled or who are caring for family members who are in the hospital or in health care facilities and need support; and to write cards or make phone calls to those who are sick or shut in. The purpose of Caring Visitors was to provide on-going care to Unity members who are in long-term care facilities or home-bound, and to visit Unity members who are in the hospital or in health care facilities for short-term rehab. The people trained for these two teams included Fond Daughtridge, Connie Eichenberg, Lane Godsey, Jennifer Hastings, Jennifer Lilly, DeBorah Ogiste, Phoebe Reed, and Elaine Schiavone. Because of the size of the teams and the availability of members, it was decided to combine the two teams. Another training was held by Rev. Laura in November and additional members were added to the renamed Care Team: Tammy Barnwell, Dana Curtin, Kelly French, Liz Krieg, Julie Mahler and Rainbow Walker. The team is still seeking additional new members and leadership and working out the best ways to hear and respond to community needs. One of the outgrowths of these teams was the renewal of the Prayer Shawl ministry. Led by Jennifer Hastings and Linda Fitzsimmons, we have received many shawls this year that were knitted or crocheted by Unity members, which have been distributed by the Care Team and ministry staff this year.

Sacred Prayer Circle

The Unity Sacred Prayer Circle was formed and had their first meeting in April of 2018. They have met monthly since then. The Circle began with six participants: Linda McCrea, Nancy Moody, Phoebe Reed, Maria Roach and Diane West, Facilitator. Michael Wackerly joined us in July, and Linda needed to drop out around the same time.

The purpose of the circle is to pray weekly for those who have requested prayer, support each other and learn more about ways of praying by reading and discussing “How to Pray Without Talking to God”, by Rev. Linda Martella-Whitsett. Much gratitude to the on-going prayer support this circle provides. We would love to see more people join us this year!

Flower Team – Geri Conley, Leader

Unity's flower team is composed of 6 floral artists who enjoy the beauty of flowers and the desire to share that beauty with each of you. Each of them works their flower magic every Sunday (except during December when we help decorate for Christmas). In 2018 we designed 48 arrangements for our stage and plan to do the same for 2018.

Thank you flower Angels – *Geri Conley, Sharon Dunfee, Betsy Whatley, Sarah Wall, Barbara Holland and Lisa Bruggeman.*

Safety Team – Jim Reed, Team Leader

The mission of the Safety Team is to develop and maintain safety policies and procedures for the sole purpose of maintaining a safe environment at Unity of The Blue Ridge. Team members are *Dick Allen, Jim Reed, Chris Walsh, and Michael Winner*. The Safety Team met 5 times in 2018.

- At the request of the Board, Joe Weigner presented a report to the Master Plan Committee of suggestions relative to Safety for any future church facility.
 - All team members participated in a First Aid Training class presented by the Henderson County Rescue Squad.
 - The team completed, with input from staff and Board, a ***Self-Inspection Checklist*** developed by our insurer, Church Mutual. This document via input from the Safety Team, serves as a baseline of best practices for UTBR and guides the Board of Trustees to recommended action steps.
 - Safety Team members, along with other volunteers, helped assure safe parking for two evening events in 2018, including the Christmas Eve service.
 - The team is reviewing a policy document from Unity of North Atlanta to advance Safety policies and procedures for UTBR to the Board.
 - In December, the Safety Team hosted a fire extinguisher training session by Mills River Fire and Rescue Dept.
- Any member interested in serving the church via the Safety Team may contact Jim Reed or Madeline Parker.

PowerPoint Team - Bobbi Flowers, Team Leader

The Power Point team serves as an important part of the service each Sunday. They advance the PowerPoint slides, which are loaded and ready to go when they arrive. This team welcomed and trained new volunteers in 2018, and we look forward to adding more members to this team in 2019. It's easy and fun. Thanks to current team members: *Jennifer Hastings, Richard Heim, Bobbi Flowers, Susan Muir, Ellen Winner, Esella Thompson, Julie Dyer, Jessica Cole and Noel Jefferson*. Please contact Bobbi Flowers if you have interest in joining this team.

Habitat for Unity – Joe Weigner & Chris Walsh, Co-Leaders

1. Ongoing repairs to flat roof and interior ceiling tiles, skylights and exterior siding and windows. Shoveling snow and ice off the roof!
2. Paint and Replacement of baseboard molding in offices.
3. Performed multiple preventive maintenance functions on HVAC unit.
4. Exterior lawn mowing and landscape improvements including floral plantings, mulching, weeding and tree/brush trimming.
5. Maintenance and improved exterior and interior lighting.
6. Major house cleaning, junk removal, and organization in garage and other storage areas.
7. Built and installed hose reel shed for labyrinth.
8. Engaged in numerous World Class Debates which did, in fact, ease national tension - thanks mainly to the good coffee and really great treats.

Team Habitat membership currently includes: *Dick Allen, Steve McKown, Jim Reed, Kent Smith, Gayle Ray, Sarah Wall, Rob Hennett, Mike Stuart, Jim Mowitz, Charleene Nicely, Lethea Gerbens, Chris Walsh and Joe Weigner*. Newcomers to this team are always welcome!

Unity Sustainability Team – Geri Conley & Judie McKown, Co-Chairs

We recognize and promote the sacred interconnection of all creation through intention, education, dedication and loving conscious action.

The US Team received its second Green Star Award from Unity Worldwide Ministries, which fosters awareness of spiritual oneness with our Earth home and promotes active care of creation for the environment. Rev. Darlene accepted our award at the Unity Ministers' Convention in June. The award is hanging with our other awards in the hallway to the restrooms.

Our education of the congregation on sustainability issues continued with a flyer on reducing and eliminating waste. In April, we held a repurpose/recycle event as a fundraiser for the Team. Members of the congregation brought gently used items they no longer wanted, and other folks took them and gave a love offering to the US Team. This is a perfect way to recycle! We plan to hold another similar event this coming spring.

Our biggest project of the year was researching how we can make the renovation of our Unity building as eco-friendly and energy efficient as possible. We provided a report to the Board of Trustees with our ideas and suggestions on solar, green architects and builders, lighting, HVAC, etc.

Goals for 2019: We intend to continue educating our congregation on sustainability issues. We would like to be involved in the renovation plans for the building, stressing eco-friendly alternatives. We will continue to have recycling/repurposing events and look for ways to invest our proceeds into nurturing and protecting our beloved Earth. We will also apply for and hopefully win our third annual Green Star Award. We look forward to running out of space in the hallway for all of our awards!

Welcoming Team – Team Leaders: Patryce and Vernetta Eleazer

We continue to have very active and vital Welcome Teams for both the 9:45 and 11:30 Sunday services. These are the "face of Unity" and the first warm welcome for visitors and members alike. Longtime leader of the 11:30 service, Suka Chapel-Horst, stepped down to follow a new calling with the Red Cross emergency team, travelling across the country providing prayerful support to communities struck by natural disasters. Ongoing leadership of the 9:45 service has remained in the capable hands of Jennifer Hastings and Lisa Bruggeman. The 11:30 team leadership has enthusiastically been accepted by Patryce and Vernetta Eleazer and is going strong. We are happy to have added several new members to both teams.

Several moves and changes were tried in 2018 and discarded as we found that "If it isn't broken, don't try to fix it." holds true. However, in trying new things we tested our flexibility and discovered information helpful in other areas, such as relocating the prayer request table to the rear of the chapel where it is more private. One good and effective change was adding red hearts to the blue welcome cards to help locate visitors as they leave the services. Pens are also given out with the cards and team members will wear green tags to identify them as a way for visitors to get additional information about UTBR.

Feed the Kids Community Outreach Program – Geri Conley & Laura Nelson, UTBR Representatives

This year, 2019, will be our 9th year participating in Feed the Kids. Unity is one of 6 faith-based groups and who that prepare meals for 300 kids every 6 weeks. Our team is composed of many Unity members plus several from other spiritual homes as well. So we are a "mixed bag" of beliefs who come together and work as one....it is a "wonderful" experience!!!! We need a team of 13-14 to serve at the Boys and Girls Club, one volunteer for transporting and 2-3 cooks to assist Laura (our kitchen coordinator) to prepare a meal for 300 hungry kids. This service began as a result of some kids not having a hot meal till they returned to school on Monday....Feed the Kids was born out of this need to feed hungry kids every Friday year-round. In 2018 we prepared over 2400 meals and served over 2000 kids. We also have a program to serve lunch when to the year-round school kids when they are on breaks. We thoroughly enjoy feeding the kids and feel we are the "lucky" ones performing this wonderful service...No Child Should Go Hungry!!!!!!

Compassionate Congregation in Action - Charley & Pam Rogers, Team Leaders

As a Compassionate Congregation, partnering with Charter for Compassion International, Unity of The Blue Ridge has been active in community outreach with the following service during 2017:

- Collaboration with other Compassionate Congregations to organize and facilitate community-wide book studies, task groups, and dialogue (one-on-one and in groups) to bridge what divides us;
- Participation in quarterly Adopt-A-Highway trash pick-up on a one-mile stretch of Old Fanning Bridge Road/Ferncliff Road

Labyrinth Team

We are grateful for the inspiration and financial support of Joy and Benjamin Warren, who, with a team of dedicated professionals and volunteers, help maintain our Community Labyrinth to be a sacred space and nature blessing for anyone to enjoy. Special thanks to Sally Sturdevant for her hours of volunteering!

Former member and former labyrinth leader, Sam Richardson made his transition in June 2018. A celebration of life service was held at the labyrinth for Sam.

Benches were added around the labyrinth in 2018. A growing number of people in the greater community enjoy using our community labyrinth.

Keeping the labyrinth free of weeds (without using harmful products) requires many hands, so volunteers are always welcome. Thanks to each of you who help keep our labyrinth beautiful.

2018 Membership Updates
53 new members in 2018

New Members joined February 4th, 2018

Tara Ambrose
Ann Atkinson
Betty Aubut
Phil Barrow
Sharon Barrow
James Boyle
Christine Chatten
Michael Chatten
Ann Fisher Clifford
Gregory A. Clifford
Bobbi Flowers
Lane Godsey
Mark Haverly
Robert Hennet
Rosemary Hildago
Karen Kennedy

Pat Knaggs
Calvin Levi
Joyce Menges
Paul Menges
Celeste Osborn
Sharon Oxendine
Tina J. Peel
Barb Price
Rick Price
John D. Rankin
Randy Rea
Elaine (Laine) Schiavone
Hollis Smith
Carolyn Trapp
Linda (Lin) Vinson
Mary Weller

New Members joined August 29, 2018

Monica Burch
John Caprell
Jason Hawbaker
Monica Frasure
Michelle Miller
Melanie Koebel
Esella Thompson

Gloria "Dody" Schultz Pratt
Sharon Schultz Pratt
Deb Pullen
Laura Pullen
Adam "Augustus" Renzi
Angela Leigh Tucker
Betty C. Roberts

New Members joined November 18, 2018

Sharon Bonnville
Rebecca (Becky) Jones
Debbra L Kaufman
Fred Racey
Lynn Racey
Suzie Zenker
Tom Zenker

Beloved Members Deceased 2018: Lucy Purkey, Dr. Carol Kendig, Sam Richardson

Unity of The Blue Ridge
 Financial Information
 January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018

Below are the results of operations of Unity of The Blue Ridge
 for the year January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018

Cash Operating Income/Expense

Income from Cash Operations (This is an increase of approximately \$36,000 over the prior year)	\$	342,731
Less: Expenses from Cash Operations	\$	(320,026)
Net Income from Cash Operations	\$	22,705

This is the fourth year in a row that we have had a surplus.

Cash Position of Unity of The Blue Ridge as of December 31, 2018:

Operating Checking Account - cash available for operations	\$	49,384
Raise the Roof funds	\$	7,500
Our Love is Power Fund	\$	7,733
Labyrinth Fund	\$	9,685
Restricted Funds Operating Account	\$	17,628
Restricted Funds - Capital Account	\$	86,350

Additional Information:

Average Attendance per week – 216

Mortgage balance at 12/31/18	\$	198,219
Mortgage balloon or refinance amount due December 2020	\$	145,815

**Unity of The Blue Ridge
Contribution Ranges
January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018**

<u>Contribution Range</u>			<u>Number of Giving Units</u>	<u>Total Given</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>Average per Giving Unit</u>
\$0	to	\$100	429	\$35,120	10.60%	\$82
\$101	to	\$250	48	\$8,369	2.53%	\$174
\$251	to	\$500	36	\$13,143	3.97%	\$365
\$501	to	\$1,000	36	\$26,494	8.00%	\$736
\$1,001	to	\$2,500	33	\$50,638	15.29%	\$1,534
\$2,501	to	\$5,000	20	\$70,371	21.25%	\$3,519
\$5,001	to	\$7,500	9	\$58,935	17.79%	\$6,548
\$7,501	to	\$10,000	2	\$17,844	5.39%	\$8,922
\$10,001	to	\$15,000	2	\$22,673	6.85%	\$11,336
\$15,001	to	\$20,000	0	\$0	0.00%	\$0
\$20,001	to	\$25,000	0	\$0	0.00%	\$0
\$25,001	and above		1	\$27,641	8.35%	\$27,641
Total			616	\$331,228		\$534

2019 Board Candidates – 2 Vacancies



Barbara “Bobbi” Flowers

Bobbi is the mother of two adult children and 11 grandchildren, she is very family oriented. She loves to spend quality time with family and friends. Bobbi has been in the Asheville area for about 40 years with the exception of a six-year period when she lived in Charleston SC.

Bobbi works as a Training Consultant for IBM providing education on a medical software program for hospitals. Prior to going to work for IBM Bobbi worked as a PICU nurse at Mission Memorial and Family Nurse Practitioner in a pediatrician’s office, but after the death of her husband she choose to go into education.

Bobbi says, “I think our ministry is excellent... my values begin with ‘love one another no matter what’ and I truly believe our ministry does this.”

Bobbi volunteered with the *Our Love is Power Summit* in 2017 and traveled to Nicaragua with a team from Unity in 2018. She currently serves as Team Leader for the Power Point Team, and also serves on the Welcoming Team.

Bobbi’s hope in becoming a board member is to assist the team in doing whatever needs to be done and making decisions that will help grow our church in the most positive way.

_____ **Bobbi Flowers, Running for 3-Year Term**



Brian McGrady

Brian moved to the Asheville area in 1986. Brian says, “I love hiking and being out in these beautiful mountains that surround us. I began my spiritual education in my early twenties and was blessed with many amazing teachers both in print and in the flesh. I have had a basically stable meditation practice for about twenty years or so and now, because of Unity, this is coupled with a prayer life as well.

A few years ago, I was craving community, specifically a spiritual community. So, one Sunday I came to Unity of The Blue Ridge with a friend. I was surprised by the size of the congregation only to learn later that it was Easter—Who knew? The music, the message and the overall heart-felt atmosphere of the service moved me. I knew I would be back. And about a year later I became a member.

Being a part of this community means so much to me. I feel grateful and lucky to be a part of it. The teachings and the message of Unity has allowed be to feel more connection with others, less isolated in my own spiritual path. And now, I feel I am in a position to give back in sacred service by serving on the board. Plus, I just really like hanging out with these people.”

Brian volunteered with the *Our Love is Power Summit* in 2017 and served on the recent Master Planning Committee. He currently serves on the Welcoming Team and assists with Youth Education.

_____ **Brian McGrady, Running for 3-Year Term**