# COMMUNITY

# Seven Epicenters of the Unity Movement

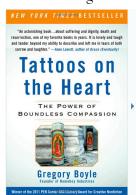
VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3 APRIL 2017

## EASTER EDITION OF COMMUNITY

This special Easter issue features a gallery spread of contributions from some of our ministers. I had asked for a paragraph or so from each and I intended to string them together with an Intro and Outro and make an article of them but each was so different and in different forms. It seemed they needed a unique way to share them so they could each stand out as the gems they are!

Lesta Sue Hardee, a Ministerial candidate from Unity of Myrtle beach provided an edited down version of an article she had written on compassionate listening which I recommend you share widely. Much of the difficulties in this world stem from not hearing and/or SEEing each other. I recently learned that at the Unity People's Convention this summer in San Antonio, TX Father Greg Boyle will be delivering a keynote speech. His book *Tattoos on the Heart* is one of the most powerful testimonials

I've ever read about the transformative power of witnessing each other. His go to bible verse is from Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world".





father Greg Boyle

Sometimes we have what seems a great idea and over time we learn that it wasn't and like our founder Charles Fillmore we retain the right to revise our opinions! So it was with the calendar pages, which for now will offer a gallery of positive memes. Does using the word "meme" make me sound younger?

# INTERFAITH NEWS

Each issue of **commUnity** presents two full pages devoted to Interfaith issues and events.

This issue presents some Interfaith news from the state of South Carolina, and the Lowcountry in particular. It seems that Rev. Jack Bomar is getting a lot of coverage in these pages and this issue is

# Coexict

no exception! He and I traveled to Savannah a week or so ago to take Rev. Dale Worley out to lunch and celebrate his birthday. Prior to lunch he and I had a marvelous visit to the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir Hindu Temple.

Lastly we have a splendid article on Eostre: The Vernal Equinox.

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- ♥ Profile on Jerry Maxey of Unity of Greenville
- ◆"Are you listening to me? Listening Compassionately" by Lesta Sue Hardee
- **♥** *Ministers Easter Offerings*
- ♥ Interfaith News
- ♥ Eostre: The Vernal Equinox by Carol Hodges
- **♥** Positive Memes



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#### THE STORY OF THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is the confluence of several streams. It began as a suggestion by Rev. Nat for a newsletter serving multiple churches based on a similar one that he published in the northwest. The seven church/centers came because of connections that your editor has made with folks primarily through SEE classes, it is a rather arbitrary selection in that several SC churches are not among them and the two

out of state churches are the only ones from their states. The **CommUnity** churches are geographically diverse, ranging from Unity of Savannah in the Coastal Empire of Georgia, up through the Lowcountry of South Carolina, on into the Grand Strand area of coastal South Carolina, stretching on into Brunswick County, NC, and our lone representative of the Upstate region of SC, Unity of Greenville.

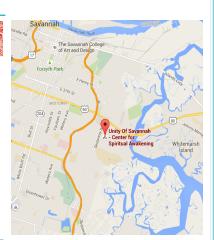


#### UNITY OF SAVANNAH, GA

Rev. Dale Worley has been a student and practitioner of Unity Truth teachings since 1996. In January of 2010, he joined the ministerial team at Unity of Savannah as Associate Minister and Minister of Creative Arts. In September 2011, Dale became a Licensed Unity Teacher. In January of 2014, he became Senior Minister, a dream and life goal that has been nearly 10 years in the making, and on March 13, 2013, he

was licensed as a Unity Minister through Unity Worldwide Ministries Field Licensing Program. Dale graduated from the Field Licensing Program at Unity Village on March 19, 2015, and was ordained at Unity of Savannah March 22, 2015 by Rev. Shawn Moninger of Unity Center of Norwalk, CT. He currently serves as Vice President of UMMAS.

www.unitysavannah.org



# UNITY OF HILTON HEAD, SC

We have been fortunate to have Rev. Nat Carter as our Interim Minister, a transitional ministry specialist with Unity Worldwide Ministries. Rev. Nat served as a guide as we prepared to transition to a new minister. His contract runs through April 2017 and his last service will be Easter Sunday. Rev. Nat taught a course titled Consciously Created Change based on Eric Butterworth's *The Creative Life: Seven Keys to* 

Your Inner Genius. He had asked us to create and manifest a project, this newsletter was my effort to meet the requirement. I will always be grateful for the many insights he has given me and wish him the very best!

We begin interviews this month, on the 8th and 9th with Rev. Therese Donlan Lee, who has also served as transitional minister!

www.unitychurchofhiltonhead.org



# UNITY OF MT. PLEASANT, SC

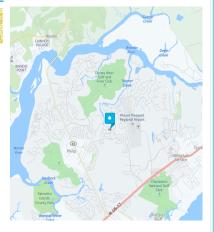
Kimberly Renollet Heck is the Spiritual Leader of Unity of Mt. Pleasant and is on a ministerial path through Unity Urban Ministerial School.

In the past few months she has conducted a Burning Bowl Ceremony, a White Stone Ritual Service, explored Louise Hay's Book, *You Can Heal Your Life*, led participation in James Twyman's 'The Great Abra-

hamic Pulse' among many other things!

A congregant says "From my very first visit I felt at peace and at home here. I've only been a part of Unity for two years now, but I've enjoyed every moment. It's the most accepting and loving environment I've ever experienced." Just what I would expect to hear about Kimberly's house!

www.facebook.com/unitymtpleasant





#### UNITY OF CHARLESTON, SC



Rev. Ed Kosak has been at Unity Church of Charleston since July of 2002. He took over from founder Rev. MaryAnn Finch who was there for almost 20 years.

Ed is a former high school teacher and clinical social worker. He did therapy for 16 years in various settings. He found Unity in 1989 when he walked into Unity of Chicago and experienced a wonderful medita-

tion. Walking out the door that day, he consciously said to himself: "I'm gonna be a Unity minister someday!" He was ordained in June of 2002 and has been in Charleston ever since. Ed's personal mission statement is: "Facilitating the spiritual and emotional transformation of those I serve, and to promote unity in our diversity."

www.unitychs.org



## UNITY OF MYRTLE BEACH, SC



Rev. Margaret Hiller took over the ministerial duties at Unity Christ Church of Myrtle Beach in April of 2005. She has over 20 years in ministry, presenting in churches, hospitals, colleges, and mental health agencies. Her wisdom and zest for life flow into humorous and heart-connected Sunday messages about current life issues.

Margaret holds a Master's degree in Thera-

peutic Psychology and has vast experience in many areas of counseling. She and her husband, David, co-authored the book *Dare to Dream: Healing Fears, Creating Miracles and Living Your Dreams.* She and David travel extensively in the United States conducting worship services and presenting a variety of workshops.

unitymyrtlebeach.org



## UNITY OF WILMINGTON, NC



Rev. Mindy Tucker's ministerial career began as Education Minister for her church of origin, Unity Church of Hawai'i. Prior to Rev. Mindy's tenure at Unity of Wilmington, she spent two years as Senior Minister in Hartford, CT.

After receiving a Bachelors of Arts in History from the University of Southern California, Rev. Mindy earned a Masters in Busi-

ness Administration from the University of Hawai'i. After 20 years of corporate service, Rev. Mindy re-engaged in Truth studies and became a Licensed Unity Teacher in 2008 and an ordained Unity minister in 2013. Rev. Mindy is in a loving, committed relationship with her partner, Dr. Nickie Golden, who is also a Unity Minister.

unitywil.com



## UNITY CHURCH OF GREENVILLE, SC



Rev. James King knew at an early age that he would become a minister. He had been involved with three non-denominational churches in Indiana, and has been the Spiritual Leader at Unity Church of Greenville since 2004. He was ordained as a Unity minister earlier this year. Music—writing and playing—is a passion for James. He is the author of the books *Dancing with the Universe: Lessons in Synchronicity* and *Jesus* 

Never Said That!: But What He Did Say Could Change The World.

James has served on the Board of Directors for the Greenville Interfaith Forum and is President of the Board of Directors for Unity Ministers of the Mid-Atlantic States (UMMAS).

www.unitychurchofgreenville.org

#### JERRY MAXEY

INTERVIEWED BY REV. JAMES KING of Unity of Greenville, SC

ow long in Unity?

I have sporadically attended Unity of Greenville for decades, but I began to attend regularly when the Church moved to the new location in 2009. I joined soon after that.

How long doing sound professionally and some examples/venues?

I started learning to run sound when I was in high school. I loved music and I'd hang out with the garage bands in town where I began to learn about and operate the sound systems. After college I toured with a couple of local "top 40" cover bands in various bars and clubs in the southeast until I landed a job as sound man for the Handlebar in Greenville. At the Handlebar I was able to learn about the sound for many types of music. I also worked with many national acts that came through Greenville including Arlo Guthrie, Leon Russell, Derek Trucks, Roger McGuinn, and many others.

The Handlebar job led to an opportunity to run a local audio and video rental and staging company where I and my crew set up and operated large video screens, audio systems, and stage lighting systems for various corporate banquets, sales meetings and conferences.

What caused you to launch your basket business?

Here is an excerpt from my "Artist's Statement" on www.jerrymaxey.com

"Since childhood, I have worked with wood in various ways, building things and refinishing furniture at my father's upholstery shop. He taught me how to do chair caning.

In my early thirties I found myself living in a small apartment in a new city where, for the first time, I had no access to a workshop. Desperate for something to make, I tried drawing, writing, cross-stitch, sewing, but nothing was satisfactory.

Then a weaver friend of mine gave me a couple of little books with basket patterns in them. Only a few hand tools were required and no workshop was needed. I made a couple of baskets and I became obsessed.

For the first few years, my materials were limited to dyed rattan and sea grass. I worked to find ways to make each basket unique. I got access to a wood shop and began to make baskets with wooden bases, then later with wooden rims and rings.

The characteristics of the wood inspire the form of the basket. The basket's rim and base will usually come from the same log. I love taking rescued firewood and transforming it into art."

What brings you joy?

I find joy by experiencing the moment, by being present in the world, here and now. Art and music help me with this. In the present moment, joy is always here.

Your wife is a Prayer Chaplain here at Unity and we appreciate her. How long have you and Sally been married?

Sally and I were married in 2006, 11 years ago. We first met in the 1980s, then lost touch for many years. We fell in love when we met again in 2005.

"I find joy by experiencing the moment, by being present in the world, here and now. Art and music help me with this. In the present moment, joy is always here."



Jerry Maxey

## Charles Fillmore from Keep a True Lent

Easter is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. Its inner meaning and spiritual significance is the awakening and raising to spiritual consciousness of the I AM in man, which has been dead in trespass and sin and buried in the tomb of materiality.

"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." The resurrection is the raising up of the whole man — spirit, soul, and body-into the Christ consciousness of life and wholeness. This Jesus did. The tomb could not hold His redeemed perfected body temple.

Resurrection is accomplished by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit.

# CommUnity

A service of **Unity of Hilton Head** 

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#### "ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME? LISTENING COMPASSIONATELY"

BY LESTA SUE HARDEE



There is an art to listening to others. Are you a good listener? Are you there with the person, not only physically "there," but mentally "there?" Are you paying attention to what they are saying or are you thinking about what you are going to say to them if they would only

stop talking? [insert eye rolling here]

People have always felt compelled to tell me their stories; and in return I've always felt compelled to keep their story in confidence.

When I was a child I noticed that people, kids and adults would tell me things, without me asking them to tell me; they would tell me and I would listen. I asked my mother one time, "Why do people tell me things?" And she replied, "Because you listen."

I found this to be a blessing and a burden. A blessing because I feel like people need to have someone they can talk to, someone they trust and feel safe with. And yet at times a burden because I didn't know what to do with what they told me. Over the years I've come to realize that I didn't have to "do" anything with what they told me; except to give it to God.

Just like in Prayer Chaplain training [Lei Lanni Burt Prayer Chaplain Training], where they teach you to give the prayer to God and let it go, this is what I learned to do with the things people tell me. So that burden I used to feel, has gone away; now I only feel the blessing of being able to listen to someone, when they feel they want to talk.

This isn't to say that I've always been a good listener, that was a skill that I had to hone and it has fluctuated over the years because sometimes I thought I was very important and would only listen with one ear, or while I was busy doing something else. But that isn't really listening is it?

A few years ago I asked a friend of mine about their listening skills. They had a way of making a person feel like they were the only person in the room and that they were important. How did they do that? And he goes, "You want to know the secret? Here it is." I leaned in closer to hear, "Look the person in the eyes when you speak to them. Look the person in the eyes when they are speaking to you." I said, "That's it? That's the secret?" But this was something I admired about this person, so I began to do more of this. I did it to a certain extent already, but I really began to focus on this. I began to

focus only on them and what they were saying, not how I wanted to reply; not what it made me think of, but what they were saying and how they were reacting to what they were saying. What the words meant to them while they were saying them to me, this is how I really listened. I felt a big shift within my heart.

There is listening and then there is compassionate listening. Listen from your heart, just listen. Let someone else tell you what they are feeling, let them express their fears, or how their day was; let them tell you something extraordinary that happened, a funny serendipitous tale, or a miracle that they witnessed. You are not here to fix anyone, however, just the act of listening to someone, to connecting with someone, heart to heart, will shift your world. Remembering that the story they tell you is their story to tell, not yours. That confidence and trust go hand in hand with compassionate listening.

While I can't say that I really know what is in someone else's heart or mind. I can say that I'm willing to listen to them tell me what's on their mind. I try my best not to put words in their mouth, I may ask a question to clarify, but other than that I usually let them speak. I know how their words make me feel and my compassion comes out at those moments, and I feel a distinct link and connection to them. I show them how I feel by the words that I speak, the look in my eyes and the expression on my face, and my body language.

It is important for people to know that you "see" them, that you "hear" them, that they are important, their life has value, their life has purpose. While this isn't exactly my "goal" in life, to let them know their life has purpose, taking time to listen to others is important to me. People don't realize how important they are, they forget and need to be reminded. Recently someone emailed me and said that I was "extraordinary," referring to how I dealt with an issue. That affected me. Because sometimes I forget. And if I do nothing more than remind people of exactly how extraordinary they are, then it will be a life well lived.

Compassionately listening to others is a gift you can give someone, but you are truly the one that will be receiving. And who knows, you might find it shifting your heart in a way you never considered.

Lesta Sue Hardee is a Ministerial Candidate and supports her home church Unity of Myrtle Beach in myriad ways.

# Easter Messages from our Ministers

#### Easter:

Reconnecting with Life

Do you ever feel that deep longing to be connected to something greater than yourself? I believe this is the call of Spirit to come home to our Self, the divinity that we are, and to recognize who and what we are: created in the image and likeness of God. The psalmist wrote it this way: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; restore within me a of being new.' (The Voice) Easter calls for us to renew our self, to rediscover our own deep awareness of our God-self. Easter calls us to ask the question "How much of my God-self am I expressing in my day to day life?" Easter invites us to engage in the cycle of rebirth and renewal on a daily basis as we live our lives to the fullest capacity that we can moment to moment. The gift of resurrection is that we are able to rebirth, renew, and recreate our lives each day. We are able to restore our mind and body to our original awareness of our own divinity. When we do this, we answer the call of that deep longing to connect, for we are bringing our awareness to the understanding that we were never disconnected, we were simply unaware.

Sacred Ache

Sometimes we need a God with skin. And sometimes...

When there is a deep loneliness,

When there's a terrible ache that simply cannot be assuaged by any person or thing or drug or food,

when there is longing as deep as the sea,

when there are unhealthy urges so strong,

when there is an emptiness that knows no bottom:

when there is a feeling of I am no good;

when life lacks purpose.

It is at times like these that I quit blaming everyone for these experiences. And that sacred ache leads me to my oneness with you My God, my Lord, my Christ, my Yahweh, sweet spirit, Allah, great creator, Unified field, pure potentiality, to the source, Krishna consciousness, pure consciousness, source and substance, pure intelligence, underpinning of everything that is, that which keeps the universe together. This puts a balm on that deep ache and fills up that deep longing. I look to the experience of you to soothe the Sacred Ache. I look to the experience of you to complete me, though in truth I am you. You are the life of my life, the breath of my breath, the heart of my heart, flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone.

You are in every cell muscle fiber feeling and thought. You ARE every muscle cell fiber feeling and thought of my being.

You are me, I am you. The Sacred Ache IS you. It is as if the ache is you calling out for me. And when I feel my oneness with you, the pain, the ache, is diminished. And I am grateful.

A Poem from Rev. Ed Kosak

Sending Love, Rev. Nickie Golden

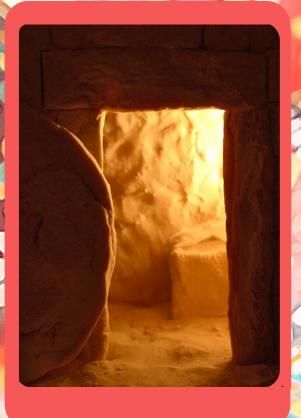


#### Be-atitudes

- Wake up! you that are open in spirit: let yourself receive the beauty of a new way of being.
- Wake up! you that mourn: and you shall be comforted.
- ♦ Wake up! you who are meek: it is time to claim your inheritance...the earth.
- Wake up! you that hunger and desire to drink only the truth: your cup shall overflow.
- ♦ Wake up! to loving without conditions: and you shall find a love that is without conditions.
- Wake up! the purity of your heart: for it is in you that you shall see God.
- Wake up! to become the peacemakers: for you are called the children of God.
- Wake up! when you are persecuted for doing and living well: for they are only jealous of your joyful way of being.
- In fact, wake up! when people don't understand you, and say negative things about you, because you live the Christ teachings. Get happy, and be joyful anyway: and your joy will be quite heavenly and blissful: For the ego will never understand the way of truth; they spoke ill of my teachings the last time and they shall do so again, for such is the way of those who have not yet seen the light.

#### In love & peace, James

Unity of Greenville is doing a special skit on Easter about what it would be like if Jesus appeared today and these are the be-attitudes that are shared as a series of calls and responses.



#### Come out of that Cave

How is everything in your life? Harmonious relationships, vitally alive, living life on purpose, experiencing abundance? Maybe some but probably not all of those. Unfortunately, we have learned to settle, maybe to give up on our dreams. We get a sense of comfort about where we are and that's a good thing. Life is meant to be lived with ease and grace. Life is also meant to be lived with growth and extending the spiritual beings that we are into the world. Well, the doors open, the stone has been rolled away and your name is being called: "Hey, come out of that cave."

We may be hiding out like Elijah, giving up like Lazarus or just comfortable with home-making or building our man-cave. It's time to rise, splendid, glorious, triumphant and free. It's time for resurrection, whatever that means in your life. However comfortable your cave is, come out into the light; step into a new life with Spirit.

Rev. Nat Carter

#### INTERFAITH NEWS

Interfaith work has become more important these past few months, a peek at the news (careful, too much can be unnerving!) makes apparent the ever increasing need for peoples of all faiths to come to understand one another and to jointly lend the power of prayer and peaceful communion to raise the state of the world's consciousness.

Lately I've been doing a good bit of work with Rev. Jack Bomar, whom I met at UM-MAS's Kanuga retreat last fall. When he moved to Beaufort and took up the Lead Pastor position at United Church he also hopped right into the Unified Interfaith Community Coalition with me, and we've done some good work together there for details see last issue of **CommUnity**. UICC will be launching "The Spiritual Reconstruction of Beaufort" in parallel with the efforts that created monuments and commemorations of the Reconstruction Era. Rev. Jack is heading up that committee. This program will begin Friday June 16th with the annual memorial service for the MOTHER EMANUEL NINE, then on Saturday, June 17th there will be a Juneteenth celebration, and a closing event on Sunday 18th will host a gathering to discuss "next steps" for the period July through December.

Rev. Jack has also launched an Interfaith Ministry Fellowship and education program at his United Church which we launched February the 9th when several friends and I presented on Native American Spirituality. This was followed on March 9th with a presentation on the Bahá'í faith by Victoria Smalls Director of History, Art & Culture at Penn Center, Commissioner at Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, and Commissioner at South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation. I filmed that presentation and will be making it available soon. On the 13th of April Rabbi TZiPi Radonsky will be presenting a "Freedom Seder" in celebration of the Jewish faith, and all are welcome. Rev. Jack has much more planned and I'll keep you informed. By the way he will be doing our April 30th service at Unity of Hilton Head.

This coming Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> I will traveling to Columbia to support Interfaith Partners of South Carolina joint event with JCC (Jewish Community Center) in a show of support and an official declaration of our intent to stand with our Jewish brothers and sisters as they are challenged so deeply these days. I urge you to offer your prayers for those who are persecuted for their faiths. Freedom of religion is one of the pillars of American society.



"I urge you to offer your prayers for those who are persecuted for their faiths.
Freedom of religion is one of the pillars of American Society."







"Our seasonal religious celebrations overlap as we are all gathered on the Mother Earth and are in alignment with Her energies and those of The Creator's Universe. Happy Spring! By whatever name we call it, Spring has sprung!"



### **EOSTRE: THE VERNAL EQUINOX**

BY CAROL HODGES

Passover, Nowruz, Easter, Eostre, Vaisakhi, Ridván are some of the names for Spring celebrations in religious communities. These developed from an evolution of religious practices centered on nature and specifically, astronomy. We're going to look more closely at the Euro-Pagan Spring festival tradition, Eostre.

In the *The Reckoning of Time* the Northumbrian monk and scholar Venerable Bede (673-735) tells us that the word "Easter" comes from a Germanic fertility goddess named Eostre, whose name was given to an entire month "Eostur-month," and eventually to one holiday in that month, Easter. Eostre's feast day was held on the full moon following the vernal equinox. The Christian feast day, Easter is counted as the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Vernal equinox.

Eostre may share linguistic origin with Indo-European goddesses of the dawn (i.e. the Greek Eos). Was the dawn named after the deities, or were the deities named after the rising sun (later, the Risen Son)? Philip Shaw, author of Pagan Goddesses in the Early Germanic World links a local goddess Eostre, to the German Austriahenea, a mother goddess connected to the East. Goddesses were often worshipped in triplicate, so Eostre might be an aspect of this great mother. In German, Easter is called Ostern, perhaps derived from Ostara. However, there does not appear to be any verifiable connection.

Neo-pagan writings suggest that Aiden Kelly, an American Witch and poet, wanted to develop a more 'pagan' sounding sabbat name for Spring Equinox. He devised Ostara for the Equinox, which has been used for about fifty years.

Currently, traditional Celtic pagans divide the Wheel of the Year into four quarters: the summer and winter solstices and the spring and fall equinoxes. In turn, the Cross Quarter days, dividing the seasons, were identified as Imbolc (or Brigit's Feast), Beltane, Lughnasadh (or Lammas), and Samhain.

On the Vernal Equinox, light and darkness last an equal amount of time; the sun rises exactly twelve hours from sunset, and vice versa. It is a time of growth and balance; thus it is the time for work on balancing ourselves and our subtle energies: our chakras, the inner masculine and the inner feminine qualities, the light and dark aspects. At the equinox Persephone returns from the underworld to reunite with her mother Demeter, making the earth green again. Kore, the maiden, returns from the dark underworld to dance with the Prince of the Sun. Daffodils, jonquils, tulips and lilies spring to life along with the new green of other plants, as if nature is celebrating their reunion. As above, so below; we see the metaphysical reflected in the earthly

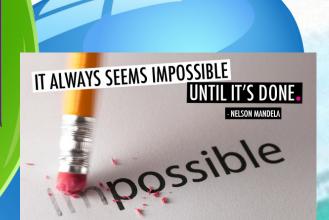
'Merry meet' in this season of rebirth and in celebration of the fecundity of Mother Earth and her creatures. Legend is that Eostre found a bird, wounded, on the ground late in winter. To save its life, she transformed it into a hare, but the transformation was not complete. The bird took the appearance of a hare but still had the ability to lay eggs. The hare decorated these eggs and left them as gifts to Eostre. And so began the legend of the Easter Bunny.

Our seasonal religious celebrations overlap as we are all gathered on the Mother Earth and are in alignment with Her energies and those of The Creator's Universe. Happy Spring! By whatever name we call it, Spring has sprung!

Carol Hodges is a prayer Chaplain and serves on the board of Unity of Savannah











# Seven Epicenters of the Unity Movement

**VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3** 

**APRIL 2017** 



# A SHARED PUBLICATION OF SEVEN UNITY CHURCH/CENTERS

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national poetry month

CAN BE FOLDED, STAPLED AND SENT TO MEMBERS NOT USING EMAIL





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