#### Jan 12th Nourish So That You Can Flourish

***Opening Prayer***

Good morning! Shall we open with prayer?

Although I was raised in the Unitarian church, the first time I heard The Lord’s Prayer I fell in love with it… well, most of it. I could just never get past that one line, “And lead us not into temptation.” It just didn’t make sense to me that I would have to ask God to not lead me into temptation.

And then later in life, I learned about the difficulties of translating a language like Aramaic into Greek or Latin, and therefore the mis-translations that occurred resulting in many mis-understandings.

At around the same time I was introduced to a translation of The Lord’s Prayer, also called The Prayer of Jesus by Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz in his book called Prayers of the Cosmos.

I periodically like to share this because I find it to be so beautiful and so rich. And so on this second Sunday of the new year, I invite you to close your eyes if that’s comfortable for you, and allow these words to wash over and through you.

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos - you create all that moves in light.

Focus your light within us–make it useful: as the rays of a beacon show the way.

Create your reign of unity now–through our fiery hearts and willing hands.

Your one desire then acts with ours, as in all light, so in all forms.

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight: subsistence for the call of growing life.

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us, as we release the strands we hold of others’ guilt.

Don’t let us enter forgetfulness But free us from unripeness

From you is born all ruling will, the power and the life to do, the song that beautifies all, from age to age it renews.

Truly–power to these statements– may they be the source from which all my actions grow.

Sealed in trust & faith.

Amen.

***New Member Ceremony***

**Nina**: Twice a year in we offer our New Member Orientation class, and in January we celebrate their decision to commit to their spiritual community in this elevated way by welcoming them into membership.

Invite board members to platform

Invite New Members to come forward:

List of names

Betty Clark

Joseph Reyna

Janie Swatzell

Ruth Dolan

Esme Mata

Nellie Jungmann

Ron Rohmiller

Mandy Rohmiller

**Lisa Garcia:** Membership at Unity Church of San Antonio is a decision you have made to walk the spiritual journey in community. Although spiritual understanding comes, ultimately, from a personal, individual consciousness of oneness with God, your Unity community supports you as you increasingly realize you are here to be the light of God, radiating God’s light in all you think, do, and say. Further, as members of our community, you become for others a supportive presence, a reflecting light for others’ realization of their divine identity. As incoming members, we ask you to say “Yes!” in answer to these questions:

**Juliana Berry**: Do you strive to realize there is one power within you, the only power there is, the Christ consciousness referred to as “the light of God”?

New Members: Yes!

**Carol Browne**: Do you acknowledge that as God’s light, you dance in the Truth of who we are through Meditation, Study, and Service?

New Members: Yes!

**Heather Dubois**: Do you agree to seek first the kingdom of God within you, through daily prayer and meditation?

New Members: Yes!

**Annette Gettinger**: Are you committed to radiating God’s light by furthering our principles and practices through your participation and financial giving?

New Members: Yes!

**Zeke Crowley**: Do you agree to radiate God’s light in Sacred Service within UCSA and in the community around us?

New Members: Yes!

**Flavio Vilches**: Do you intend to radiate God’s light by upholding our core values of Loving, Transforming, Empowering, CommUNITY, and Welcoming?

New Members: Yes!

**Lisa Garcia**: By your agreement, you now become a vested member of Unity Church of San Antonio. You will receive monthly telephone calls of prayer support from a prayer chaplain; you will be asked to vote on important matters such as election of board leaders, by-laws updates, and all matters that shape the future of our ministry.

**Juliana Berry:** All members of UofSA, please stand and extend your arms as if to embrace these new members. Say with me this blessing for new members - the words are up on the Powerpoint.:

(on PP):

We uphold your highest intentions.

We support your deepest desires.

We celebrate your divine identity.

We welcome you to membership at Unity of San Antonio.

Rev Nina – calls out each name on certificate and each board member will hand each a rose and their certificate.

Betty Clark

Joseph Reyna

Janie Swatzell

Ruth Dolan

Esme Mata

Nellie Jungmann

Ron Rohmiller

Mandy Rohmiller

Song:

Blessing to The World (Karen Drucker)

You are the heart,

you are the hands,

you are the voice of Spirit on earth.

And who you are,

and all you do,

is a blessing to the world.

For those of you interested in membership with Unity of San Antonio, our next New Member Orientation class will take place on March 23rd.

***Welcome***

Good morning, for those of you who don’t know me, my name is Rev. Nina Clark and I am the Minister here at Unity of San Antonio.

Welcome to each and everyone of you this morning, both here in our sanctuary and to those of us online. Would you welcome those with us online with us today by turning in your seats and giving a wave of welcome? Thank you all for being here.

I’ll hazard a guess that if you are here, in a Unity church on a Sunday morning, that you are someone who would like to live in a kinder more evolved world and that you’re willing to do your own spiritual work to contribute to that.

Thank you. Thank you, because I believe it is our collective intentional energies that make this an inspired and transformative experience for each one of us, and as we lift ourselves, our combined higher vibrations radiate out into the universe and uplift others well beyond our walls.

I want you to know, to hear and to take deep into the marrow of your bones that you, as emanations of the divine, are amazing and beautiful and whole.

Most of us don’t get to hear that enough… so let yourself take it all the way in right now: the Infinite is expressing through and as you on purpose. You are an intentional and unique and beautiful manifestation of the Divine. You are powerful beyond measure.

To that end, will you join me in a moment of silent prayer for those in the Los Angeles fires, for those who have family and friends in those fires, and as always for those in our world experiencing strife of any kind, and for our planet.

Thank you.

***Message***

When I was younger, I attended a Franklin Covey workshop and fell in love with their day planners. That beautiful smooth paper all ready and waiting for me to splash my goals and to-do’s and appointments across its pages with my newly purchased pen.

I’d get everything all organized, enter all pertinent information and… within a month I was forgetting to look at it daily, or to use it on Sunday evening or Monday morning to plan my week. This in spite of that highly inspirational workshop that had gotten me all excited!

And so I decided it must be the planner! Maybe I need a different kind of planner. Maybe I needed the one where you funneled your goals at the top of the page (personal, family, work and spiritual goals) down into definable monthlyp, then weekly, then daily tasks.

That lasted for another month.

And then there was one with inspirational and motivational sayings. There was one that was weekly rather than daily, one that was like the Franklin planner but laid out differently. And then there was the one that had me using all kinds of colors for my different objectives, tasks and appointments - that was fun!

I think I had tried about ten different planners before I finally had to admit to myself the inevitable truth. It wasn’t the planner. It was me. I was great at getting ready, great at initiating, great at getting started, great with multiple colors of pens, but not so good with the follow through.

And so it should come as no surprise to you that the first few times I did the burning bowl, by the end of January I had forgotten what I had written on that flash paper. That didn’t mean that what I had intended to release was complete - not at all. I had just forgotten what I had planned to work on.

Similarly, the first few times I wrote on my white stone, I would find it months later at the bottom of my backpack or the back of a drawer or even behind the dresser where it had fallen off.

Two weeks ago we all participated in a burning bowl service where we released our grip on one or two outdated beliefs that we felt were no longer benefiting us or were preventing us from showing up in the world as we want to, or limiting what we want our life experience to be.

Perhaps we let go of telling ourselves that we are less than or never up to the task, whatever that might be. Or perhaps we committed to letting go of telling ourselves we won’t or can’t have the love we want in our lives.

Or perhaps we let go of an old story we’ve been telling ourselves for years. We wrote that on a piece of flash paper and burned it in a ritual, and we also made note of it on a piece of paper to take home with us.

And then last week, we shifted from the who that we think we are - our manufactured identity - to the who we truly are as soul and we listened from a higher place in consciousness to our still small voice for a new name, a new direction, our next step. And we wrote it on our white stone.

And so now we have our piece of paper from our burning bowl ritual and we have our white stone.

There is a saying in the meditation community: “Don’t leave it on the cushion.” This means our work isn’t a one and done. We can’t burn a piece of paper and dust our hands off and think that this has taken care of the issue and that tomorrow we’ll wake up as a shiny new me.

We can’t write a new name on our stone and leave it in that drawer in our house that has all the miscellaneous stuff that we plan to put do something with later, or in the bottom of our backpack or even on that shelf in bathroom where we stop looking at it after a a few days and it end up just collecting dust.

Spiritual growth is a process. The change that we seek comes about from the consistent ,committed work that we do. And it doesn’t have to be hours per day. Just fifteen minutes a day with your spiritual practice can make a huge difference in your life.

I like to think of a coin jar. Say you place it by your front door. If every day as you’re leaving the house you put a dime in the jar, at some point in the future you will have a jar full of dimes.

But many of us, start off with the intention of putting a dime in every time we leave the house, and maybe we do it for a week, maybe two, maybe even a month, but then we forget, or skip a day, and then another day… and six months down the road we happen to glance at the jar and it only has a scattering of dimes across the bottom.

The key is to bring our spiritual work into our lives on a daily basis, to move from initiation to sustained action so that we can make consistent headway on the path of our spiritual awakening.

Author Earl Nightingale wrote, “Whatever we plant in our subconscious mind and nourish with repetition and emotion will one day become a reality”.

I love that: nourish with repetition and emotion. This one word -nourish - can be a game changer. It moves us from I have to, I should, from dragging ourselves to our spiritual practice, to “I get to!” I can’t wait to! I want to!

So, what could a nourishing practice look like that will allow us to not leave our burning bowl and white stone ritual on the cushion? What can we do in order to harvest the full benefits of those rituals?

The way I had suggested to do the ritual was to think of something that we wanted to express more of: health, love, peace, joy, adventure… and then look to see what stops us from doing that and then release that.

For example, if I wanted to travel more - be adventurous, what stops me from doing that? Perhaps it is because I believe that I don’t have enough money, or I don’t have someone to travel with and I’m afraid to go alone. So what I want to release could be either the belief that I don’t have enough money, or that I can’t travel alone.

A nourishing practice could be doing a guided meditation for prosperity or for courage. Go on YouTube. There are tons for free. Or download the Insight app on your phone. Loads of guided meditations there.

You could journal about your fear. You could do Byron Katie’s The Work or any sort of Inquiry work to help release your grip on the fear. I’m a big fan of The Work. And it’s free! You can google her work and download the worksheets for free and watch her work on YouTube.

Sometimes when I’m afraid to do something, I just simply sit with the fear and breathe into it until it eases.

You can journal about it. When I was much younger I journaled a lot, and I would call the initial writing ‘static.’ I would keep writing until suddenly I felt calm, and then from that space, new ideas would arise. I realized much later that I had literally written my fears away. They had leaked out through my pen.

You could walk in the woods and let the peace of nature work its way inside of you. You might look at the trees and see their strength and the way they meet weather of all kinds with flexibility and grace and allow that to inspire you.

You could read the words of spiritual travelers who have gone before you and be inspired by their practices and words of encouragement and affirmation.

And then after whatever release work you’ve chosen to do, claim your new name. In this case, your new name might be Courage. Put your stone where you can see it, and then move it around.

Mine is at my desk at home, then by my bedside table. It might be in my pocket for awhile, or by my sofa. I move it around so that it doesn’t become invisible. And every time I look at it I am reminded of what I want to claim for myself.

 “Whatever we plant in our subconscious mind and nourish with repetition and emotion will one day become a reality”.

It will one day become a reality. We will one day have that experience in our lives.

What happens is one day we might have the inspiration to look a different ways of traveling. Perhaps in this example, we will learn about housesitting internationally. Perhaps we will look into being a traveling companion for someone who is elderly but loves to travel and needs a caretaker to handle certain things. Doors will open.

The key is to keep on nourishing ourselves with our spiritual practice, whatever we choose that to be.

And when we do this, the harvest we reap is crazy good. Think of rolling a snowball down a hill. It starts off as a small ball of snow. We roll it down the hill and it slowly gets bigger, but we have to keep pushing it even though we think gravity should take over cuz of the hill. But if we stop, it just sits there as a big ol’ lump of snow.

We can look at this first part as nourishing our snowball - ensuring that it gets big enough to take off, because at some point, that snowball will start rolling on its own, and then, with no effort on our part, it gets bigger and bigger and bigger.

It’s the same in our spiritual growth. Keep doing the work to release that limiting belief that you wrote on your flash paper, making space for your new name. And then keep claiming your new name - that higher possibility of you. And one day, in the not too distant future, you will suddenly blink in surprise and realize that you are living your dream.

Will you join me for a time of reflection?

***Meditation***

Take a moment to make sure your body is as comfortable a position as possible, whatever that is for you. If you are comfortable, allow your eyes to gently close. If this is not comfortable, lower your gaze towards the floor and soften it. The idea here is to minimize the input from “out here.”

Allow the weight of your body to settle down towards the earth. Take a deep breath and feel yourself release whatever tension you might be holding as you release that breath. Take another deep breath and release a little more. One more deep breath and release a little more.

Now allow the breath to settle and to find its own natural rhythm, letting the breath breathe itself. Try not to interfere with this process, and notice how the body moves in response to the breath: the chest expanding and relaxing, the belly rising and falling. Try to let go of any ideas about how you think it ought to be, and just rest with an awareness of how things actually are for you in each moment.

And now allow your inner eye to open. You find yourself on a beach, the waves rolling in, gently hissing on the sand as they return home to the ocean. The waves roll in, and then roll out.

Imagine the waves rolling in and out with the rhythm of your breath. As you breathe in a wave flows up the beach, pauses, then flowing back out to sea again.

Then again, flowing up the beach, pausing, then flowing back out to sea.

You look to your right and there is a small stack of dissolving paper. Each piece is pre-written with what you chose to release during the burning bowl ceremony.

You pick up a piece of the dissolving paper and toss it into the waves as they recede back into the sea. You watch as the paper dissolves into nothingness. And as the next wave rolls in, it brings with it a white stone with your name on it.

You pick it up, hold it to your heart and claim it. It vanishes and you feel the vibration of your new name thrumming inside of you.

You pick up another piece of the dissolving paper and toss it into the waves as they recede back into the sea. And as the next wave rolls in, it brings with it another white stone with your name on it.

You pick it up, hold it to your heart and claim it. It vanishes and you feel the vibration of your new name rushing through you.

Again, you pick up a piece of the dissolving paper and toss it into the waves as they recede back into the sea. And as the next wave rolls in, it brings with it another white stone with your name on it.

You pick it up, hold it to your heart and claim it. It vanishes and you feel the vibration of your new name lifting you higher.

Each time you release you make a bit more space for your new name. Each time you release and claim your new name you own it more. You become more certain that this is who you are. And this certainty will take route in you and guide you in the direction of your highest good.

For a moment, just sit peacefully by the ocean, enjoying the sound of the waves, the call of the gulls, the smell of the salt air.

And now bring yourself back to this room. Whatever you cultivated during this time of reflection, give yourself permission to bring it with you to the here and now. Wiggle fingers, pat your legs and when you’re ready open your eyes.

Your practice can be this simple - closing your eyes daily for just 5 minutes and picturing yourself releasing what you’ve chosen to let go of and claiming a higher truth for yourself. You can do it in the morning, you can do it when you’re sitting at a stop light, you can do it before you turn on the television, you can do it in the shower.

I invite you to just do it. Or choose another practice where you can bring what you started with the burning bowl and white stone to fruition.

If you miss a day, don’t beat yourself up - say not one negative thing to yourself, that will just make you set it down altogether. Just start again.

Will you say this affirmation with me? “I am committed to my spiritual journey, and I will nourish myself so that I can flourish.”

Namaste.

Thank you.

***CLOSING PRAYER***

Before we close our time together, I want to acknowledge the high vibration that we have cultivated here together today. And so I invite you, if you so choose, to speak, either silently or aloud, the name of someone you know who might benefit from this high vibration. Know that as you do so, if they are receptive, this serves as an invitation and a prayer for them.

Will you close your eyes and stand with me on this firm ground of knowing our Oneness with all of Life.

Whatever gift you have received from being in this community this morning, even if you are not aware of what it might be, I invite you to take the time to give it space. Allow it to take root in you.

Give yourself full permission to be willing to feel, to experience your divine inheritance as beauty, as love, as wisdom, as intelligence, as peace, as harmony, as the light of the world.

Let that soak in.

Now, more than ever, the world needs you. And so, I invite you to carry that light that you are into the world and let yourself shine. Be your full magnificent self.

Because you matter. You make a difference.

So, let’s let it be one of love.

And we let it be so. And so it is.