

A TIMELINE OF UNITY HISTORY

1845

Mary Caroline Page is born on August 6 in Pagetown, Ohio. As a small girl she adopts the name Myrtle. She wants to be a schoolteacher when she grows up so that she can teach children to make the world a better place.

1854

Charles Sherlock Fillmore is born on August 22 in St. Cloud, Minnesota. He grows up curious about many things. He reads classic authors like Shakespeare, Tennyson, Emerson, and Lowell. He works hard as a printer's helper and later as a grocery clerk and in a bank. Then he moves to Texas and works with the railroad.

1874

Myrtle goes to Oberlin College in Ohio to study the "Literary Course for Ladies." After graduation, she moves to Texas to be a schoolteacher.

1876-1885

Charles meets Myrtle in Texas, and they marry in 1881. In 1884 the Fillmores move to Kansas City, Missouri. Charles sells real estate.

1886-1888

Myrtle becomes very ill. She thinks there is nothing she can do about it, because she has been sick since she was a little girl. Charles and Myrtle go to a class taught by Dr. Eugene B. Weeks. Myrtle leaves this talk with a stronger faith in God and a new way to pray. She says, "I am a child of God, and therefore I do not inherit sickness." When she says this, she believes she is going to get better.

Within two years, Myrtle does get better. Her family and friends are excited, and they start praying too. Charles continues studying world religions and philosophies. He also studies the link between religion and science. Charles and Myrtle start writing about their beliefs, and shortly thereafter Unity is born.

1889

In April the Fillmores publish the first issue of *Modern Thought*, a national monthly magazine devoted to spiritual questions. The magazine's name is changed to *Unity Magazine* in 1894.

1890

The Fillmores use their magazine to tell people about the Society of Silent Help (renamed Society of Silent Unity in 1891). Myrtle tells readers that the work of the Society of Silent Help is "open to everyone."

1891

Charles chooses Unity as the name for the movement they are founding.

1893

Myrtle starts *Wee Wisdom*, a monthly magazine for children, and remains editor for many years. When it is discontinued in 1991, *Wee Wisdom* is the oldest continuously published children's magazine in the country.

1894

Lessons in Truth by H. Emilie Cady is published as the first Unity book. Over the years it is translated into 11 languages, is published in braille, and sells more than 1.6 million copies.

1903

The Unity Society of Practical Christianity is incorporated as the first Unity church.

1914

The Fillmores start Unity School of Christianity to handle their publishing and educational work. Unity Society of

Practical Christianity continues the church functions of Unity.

1919

The first 58 acres of the present Unity Village site are bought in eastern Jackson County, Missouri. Other buildings are planned, but construction stops during the Great Depression and World War II.

1922

Unity becomes a pioneer in radio broadcasting. Charles gives his first Unity lesson over radio on station WOQ. This has been documented to be the first radio presentation by a clergyman in Kansas City, Missouri.

1924

The first issue of *Unity Daily Word* (renamed *Daily Word* in 1939) is published in July. Frank Whitney is the first editor.

1928

Unity buys the land where Unity Temple on the Plaza will be built (1948). Charles Fillmore blesses the site at a groundbreaking ceremony.

1929

The 165-foot-tall Tower and the Silent Unity building (later known as the Education building) are constructed at Unity Village. The Tower contains a 100,000-gallon water tank that provides fresh water. The Tower also houses a carillon that chimes music at different times of the day. In 1989 these buildings are put on the National Register of Historic Places.

1931

Myrtle Fillmore makes her transition. She is 86 years old. People call her the "Mother of Unity." She saved many of the letters she received, as well as her responses, which are about the healing power of prayer. Her beliefs are the foundation of Unity today.

1933

Charles retires from the pulpit of Unity Society of Practical Christianity. He continues as president of Unity School of Christianity. Charles marries his second wife, Cora Dedrick. During the next 10 years he spends a lot of time traveling and speaking to groups of people.

1942

The Heritage Room library opens (renamed Unity Library and Archives in 1997). The Library remains open to the public today and houses one of the world's largest metaphysical collections.

1947

The Printing Department moves from Kansas City to Unity Farm, near Lee's Summit, Missouri.

1949

Unity School moves from downtown Kansas City to Unity Farm (renamed Unity Village in 1953). Orchards with apples and peaches are grown, and there are vineyards and a dairy. People from all over Kansas City come to Unity Farm to buy fresh vegetables and milk.

1948

Charles Fillmore makes his transition. He is 94 years old. His son Lowell becomes Unity School's president.

1951

The first spiritual retreat is held at Unity Village. Today there are about a dozen retreats a year that adults can come to, including Spanish-language retreats.

Unity's Rose Garden is planted. Today the garden has 800 bushes, with nearly 50 different kinds of roses.

1952

Wee Wisdom School, a Montessori preschool, is established. Its name comes from the children's magazine of Unity, *Wee Wisdom*. Although Unity School's preschool closes in 1982, many Unity churches still have Wee Wisdom Montessori preschools today.

1953

Unity Village is incorporated as a municipality in Missouri. Unity's first television program, *The Daily Word*, is started by Rosemary Fillmore Rhea, the granddaughter of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore.

1966

The Department of World Unity begins. It works with other Unity ministers and ministries in other countries around the world. The Association of Unity Churches is officially organized. It supports other Unity ministers and ministries in the United States, Puerto Rico, and Canada.

1967

The Unity Institute for Continuing Education (renamed Unity School for Religious Studies in 1980) is established to provide classes in spirituality for adults.

1969

The Word makes its first appearance on television. Many people see these programs, which present celebrities reading *Daily Word*. The programs stop in 1992.

1978

The Unity Visitors Center staff begins giving free tours of Unity Village.

1989

Unity celebrates its centennial. The Unity School of Christianity Historical District is placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Connie Fillmore Bazy, Unity School's president, opens a new Silent Unity building so the work can grow.

1990

A Spanish-language Continuing Education Program is started. People who speak Spanish come to Unity Village from all over the world to study the Bible and other spiritual subjects.

1994

Unity's first World Day of Prayer is organized. On Unity's World Day of Prayer, more people contact Silent Unity for prayer than at any other time. Unity's World Day of Prayer is on the second Thursday in September each year.

1995

The first Unity World Conference is held in Birmingham, England. People from around the world attend to learn about Unity's work.

1997

Silent Unity, one of the oldest 24-hour prayer ministries in the United States, answers a record-breaking number of prayer requests ... two million.

1998

The second Unity World Conference is held in Acapulco, Mexico.

Unity dedicates its new labyrinth--a spiritual tool for meditation. It is patterned after the famous medieval labyrinth that was carved into the stone floor of Chartres Cathedral in France around 1200 A.D. The labyrinth at Unity is open to the public during daylight hours and is designed to accommodate wheelchairs.

1999

Seventy-fifth anniversary of *Daily Word Magazine*.

2001

Tom Zender succeeds Connie Fillmore Bazy as president and chief executive officer of Unity. Connie succeeds Charles R. Fillmore as chairperson of the Board, and Charles becomes chairperson emeritus. The responsibility for Unity's International ministries is transferred from Unity to the Association of Unity Churches.

2002

The first meeting of Unity's new Board of Directors is held. The Board is restructured to consist solely of members not currently employed by Unity.

2003

USRS is reorganized and renamed Unity Institute. Unity expands its Web ministry, including a Spanish version. Unity's poet laureate, James Dillet Freeman makes his transition.

2004

Unity participates in the Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona, Spain, and presents a panel discussion on affirmative prayer, facilitated by Dr. Deepak Chopra. There, Unity announces the formation of the Office of Prayer Research, an initiative to gather and promote scientific and medical research about the effects of prayer. *Angels Sing in Me: The James Dillet Freeman Memorial Book* is published.

2005

The online community of *dailyword.com* is launched. The Bridge of Faith rebuilding begins, and the bridge reopens with a dedication ceremony September 28, 2005. The lobby of the landmark Tower reopens with historical displays. For the first time in more than 20 years, the lobby opens to tours for guests and employees. A special Unity Congress convenes to promote renewed vigor of collaborative planning and work between Unity, the Association of Unity Churches International, and field ministries. Rev. James Trapp is named new CEO of the Association of Unity Churches International. Glenn Mosley retires. Groundbreaking is held for the new Hotel and Conference Center (also known as the Spiritual Life Center).

2006

Charlotte Shelton becomes President and CEO of Unity. Tom Zender is named president ex officio with a February 2007 retirement planned. *Daily Word* begins publication in China and now is printed in eight languages. The historic Unity Village Amphitheater is restored and reopened with a series of summer concerts. Unity Inn celebrated its 100th anniversary. The Inn is the third-oldest Kansas City-area restaurant. Unity hosts the annual Lee's Summit Chamber of Commerce Oktoberfest celebration, bringing over 35,000 people to Unity Village.

Unity Village Hotel and Conference Center opened. The 30,000-square-foot center is the first new building at Unity Village in more than 17 years and offers 50 hotel rooms and state-of-the-art conference facilities. The building is one of the nation's first certified "green" hotels and is awarded silver LEED--Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design--certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. It is only the fourth hotel in the U.S. and the first in the Midwest to receive this certification. The first event was "A New Day Dawning" retreat.

2007

Unity Institute completed its full transition to the new Ministry and Religious Studies program and introduced its first online class, History of New Thought Christianity, during the 2007 spring term. Unity.FM, the Unity online radio network, launched with daily live programming and program archives. Unity House, the publishing arm of Unity, is relaunched with the publication of Sacred Secrets. An expanded Bookstore and new coffee shop opens.

2008

An enhanced online resource for parents and children is introduced: www.unityfamilymatters.org.

Unity welcomed affiliates from around the world during the International Affiliates Conference at Unity Village. Countries represented included Argentina, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Germany, Ghana, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Trinidad, the United Kingdom and Venezuela.

Myrtle Fillmore is one of several pioneering women memorialized on the reconstructed Women's Leadership Fountain, Kansas City's oldest fountain, located near Ninth Street and Paseo in Kansas City, Missouri.

Unity special events are featured online, beginning with Eckhart Tolle's interview at Unity Village and *Jesus and the Awakening to Christ-Consciousness*, a conversation between Deepak Chopra and Rev. Wendy Craig Purcell.

2009

A new Web site is launched, www.unity.org, jointly sponsored by Unity School of Christianity and the Association of Unity Churches International.

Daily Word® magazine became a bimonthly publication with its 85th anniversary issue in July. A digital version is created for www.dailyword.com.

2010

Silent Unity celebrates its 120th anniversary.