

Volume 12 Number 12  
December 2018



unity  
Spiritual Center

Sun



P E A C E

*Hope Joy*

*Goodwill*

Love • Harmony

Happiness

P E A C E

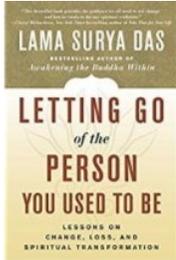
*Hope Joy*

*Goodwill*

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Happiness

## December Classes

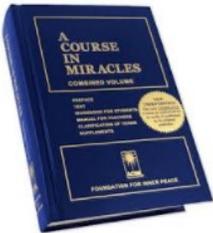


The book by Lama Surya Das *Letting Go of the Person You Used to Be* shares an enlightened approach to change and loss, dealing with difficult emotions such as fear, grief, and anger, and the role of crisis in uncovering our authentic selves. For many people, recent years have been characterized by profound change, whether it relates to financial upheaval, political shifts, or even massive losses of life to disease.

On the personal level, each must confront the curves life throws his or her way. Buddhism has a great deal to say about change and impermanence and how to meaningfully deal with it. Change--whether on a large or small scale--provides our most important opportunity for learning about ourselves and the nature of reality. From this essential insight, Lama Surya Das has created a fulfilling and important path to understanding and healing ourselves and finding peace.

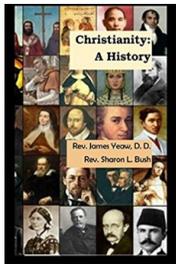
Full of personal stories, anecdotes, practical exercises, guided meditations and reflections, and pithy original aphorisms, *Letting Go of the Person You Used To Be*, addresses life's most universal difficulties in a way that is accessible to all. Learning to consciously accept and embrace change leads to a better understanding of ourselves, and our own innate divine light.

### A Course in Miracles Tuesdays at 10:30am



The Course in Miracles group meets every Tuesday at 10:30 am. The class began at the start of the book on October 2. Each week they continue from where they left off the week before. Everyone is welcome to attend this class and join in the discussion of the chapter of the week. Some consider the Course the most important spiritual document for our lifetime. After completing each chapter, the study group will listen to recordings from the world's foremost teacher of the Course, Ken Wapnick, Ph. D.

## The Evolution of Christianity



Some 2,000 years ago, a man walked the earth who had a greater impact than any other person in history. Lowly born, he rose to prominence as he spread his vision of life. He attracted the attention of faithful disciples and suspicious local authorities. Eventually, he was tried, convicted, and executed. Who was he?

Since the earliest days of the faith, questions like this have been at the heart of Christianity. Over the centuries, they have led to fierce debate and produced deep divisions among the faithful. These questions have driven profound acts of faith and worship and incited war and persecution.

Now, you have an opportunity to explore the reactions to these profound questions and the many responses believers, scholars, and theologians have developed over more than 2,000 years.

You trace this epic story as it unfolds through the various teachings and divisions in the Christian faith. *The History of Christianity* begins at the very dawn of Christianity. You will see how, over the centuries, Jesus' teachings developed into the orthodox teachings of the mainstream church as well as the divergent doctrines taught by splinter groups branded as "heretics." However, orthodox teachings were really not orthodox, but varieties of belief that developed in the ancient church: Jewish Christianity, Gnostic Christianity and Pauline Christianity.

Rev. Jim will bring this story to you in film, in discussion and historical timelines developed and presented in his book: *Christianity, A History*.



We're on the Web at  
[www.unitysc.org](http://www.unitysc.org)

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Rev. James Yeaw, D. Div.

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Cathy Collins

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Office Hours:

Tuesday through Thursday

8:30am to 5pm

Sunday 9am to 1pm

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## Advent

Unity celebrates Advent as the birth of creative, divine love. Advent is a four-week journey to Christmas. The symbol for Advent is a round wreath which represent completeness. The center candle is white and represents the Christ light to be lit on Christmas Eve. As we take the journey to Bethlehem, we light a candle each Sunday to remember Jesus who brought us a spark of new light, of new possibilities...a light that shines through the darkness and illuminates the spiritual truth of who we are...God's light shining in this world.

During this Advent season, Unity Spiritual Center will celebrate the emergence of a spiritual truth that forever changed what it means to be a human being. It's the emergence of the life-generating, creative power of divine love – that which we call God – seeking new expression through the human mind, heart and story.

That power has the greatest potential to reduce suffering and expand good in the unfolding story of humanity. We acknowledge Jesus as one of the first human beings fully awake to this creative, divine power. He became conscious of it as the spirit of his being.

Many people, including many Bible scholars, question whether the biblical story of Jesus' birth is true. What makes the story valuable is that it represents how the birth of the creative power of love – God – comes into the human experience.

The story reminds us that in the deepest, most pure and unaffected place in the human heart, a new experience of God can be born. It is God giving birth to its creative power of love through human beings. When acknowledged and nurtured, it can grow and forever transform the human experience.

Most people can believe there is a great, often untapped potential for love in human nature. They can and want to believe that the power of love can do extraordinary things when it governs the heart and mind and when it comes alive through our relationships.

The story of the birth of Jesus is a story that can be interpreted as divine love emerging from within humanity to answer the challenges that humans face.

Even though the cultural and social challenges we face today are different from those in the time of Jesus, the need for God to be born into the affairs of humanity is at least as critical because of the increasing human impact on the world. Meister Eckhart, a 14th-century Christian mystic, said: "What good is it to me if Mary gave birth to the son of God fourteen hundred years ago and I do not also give birth to the son of God in my time and in my culture? We are all meant to be mothers of God."

At Unity, we believe there is a great spiritual purpose and potential seeking to be born anew through the human mind and heart and into our relationships and interactions with

each other.

This shared spiritual awakening may be God's best answer to our needs and our prayers. As more people discover and develop that reality within themselves, we will create new, mutually enhancing ways to be in right relationship with each other and with our world.

We will discover how the unique self-interest of individuals can become aligned with the interest of the whole, and we will give birth to what Jesus called the kingdom of God.

That is the good news we are made for. It's ours if we choose it.

## Abundance: Heaven on Earth

The Christmas ads do not say, "acquire this credit card to buy something so that you will be in debt for decades after whatever you purchased is long-forgotten." No, the ads depict happy, attractive people giving expensive gifts. Think about that: prosperity is used to market debt and yet debt is the polar opposite of prosperity. Prosperity means to have abundance. Debt means to owe money.

In these weeks before Christmas I invite you to deepen your understanding and experience of prosperity and see that prosperity is not only about our finances. From a spiritual perspective, we can say that we live abundantly when we experience the greatness of God's presence on

Continued on Page 8

## Financial Statement Ten Months ending October 31, 2018

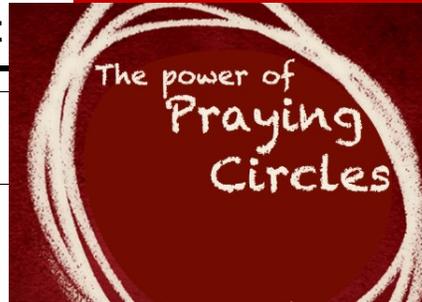
Income	
Sunday Contributions	\$ 84,787.00
Less 10% tithe	\$ (8,478.70)
Other Income	\$ 33,685.91
Net Income	<u>\$ 109,994.21</u>
Less Expenses	\$ (185,180.43)
Net Operating Loss	\$ (75,186.22)
Interest Income	\$ 90,569.73
Less 10% Tithe	\$ (9,057.00)
Operating Income	\$ 6,326.51
Designated Income	\$ 4,835.00
Less Designated Expense	\$ (21.55)
Net Income	\$ 11,139.96
Bequest Day Trust	\$ 481.46
Net Income	<u>\$ 11,621.42</u>

# December 2018 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed																					
<p><b>2</b>            9:30am—Circle of Prayer            10:30am—The Great Decision—Rev. Jim Yeaw            11:45am—Fellowship Potluck (A-D Serve)            12:30pm—The Evolution of Christianity—            Rev Jim Yeaw</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>4</b>            10am Tai Chi            10:30am A Course in            Miracles            10:30am AA            6pm Choir</p>	<p><b>5</b>            10:30am—Letting Go—Rev. Sharon            1pm—Al-Anon            6pm—Letting Go—Rev. Sharon</p>																					
<p><b>9</b>            9:30am—Circle of Prayer            10:30am—Star of Wonder—Rev. Sharon            11:45am—Fellowship Potluck (E-K Serve)            12:30pm—The Evolution of Christianity—            Rev Jim Yeaw</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>11</b>            10am Tai Chi            10:30am A Course in            Miracles            10:30am AA            6pm Choir</p>	<p><b>12</b>            10:30am—Letting Go—Rev. Sharon            1pm—Al-Anon            6pm—Letting Go—Rev. Sharon</p>																					
<p><b>16</b>            9:30am—Circle of Prayer            10:30am—Jesus' Concept of God—Rev. Jim            12:30pm—USC Board Meeting            12:30pm—The Evolution of Christianity—            Rev Jim Yeaw</p>	<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>18</b>            10am Tai Chi            10:30am A Course in            Miracles            10:30am AA            6pm Choir</p>	<p><b>19</b>            1pm—Al-Anon</p>																					
<p><b>23</b>            9:30am—Circle of Prayer            10:30am—The Wise Men of the East—Rev. Sharon            11:45am—Fellowship Potluck—(P-Z Serve)            12:30pm—The Evolution of Christianity—            Rev Jim Yeaw</p>	<p><b>24</b>            6pm            Christmas            Eve Service</p>	<p><b>25</b> Office Closed  <b>Christmas Day</b></p>	<p><b>26</b>            1pm—Al-Anon</p>																					
<p><b>30</b>            9:30am—Circle of            Prayer            10:30am—The 3-Rs:            Reflecting, Releasing,            Renewing—Rev. Lei            Lanni Burt            11:45am—Fellowship            Potluck—(All Serve)</p>	<p><b>31</b>            6pm New            Year            Burning            Bowl            Service</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"><b>December Birthdays</b></td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1—Betty Camann &amp; Mackey Essary</td> <td>16—Maria Ferran</td> <td>28—Gail Bliss</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10—Paula Warren</td> <td>17—Diane Denton</td> <td>29—Marylou Lovato &amp; Julie McKenna</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11—Susan Fisher</td> <td>19—Joyce Zimmerman</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>13—Cathleen Collins</td> <td>22—Rev. Lei Lanni Burt</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>15—Harold Compau</td> <td>26—Lori Cole &amp; Sarah Curtis</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>26—Betsy Dreyfus &amp; Jean Nesunski</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		<b>December Birthdays</b>			1—Betty Camann & Mackey Essary	16—Maria Ferran	28—Gail Bliss	10—Paula Warren	17—Diane Denton	29—Marylou Lovato & Julie McKenna	11—Susan Fisher	19—Joyce Zimmerman		13—Cathleen Collins	22—Rev. Lei Lanni Burt		15—Harold Compau	26—Lori Cole & Sarah Curtis			26—Betsy Dreyfus & Jean Nesunski	
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## Circle of Prayer = Sundays at 9:30am

Thu	Fri	Sat
		1
<b>6</b> 9am Chair Yoga 10:30am AA 2pm Blossoming Depression Support Group 7pm OA	<b>7</b> 5:30 Dinner Board of Trustees	8
<b>13</b> 9am Chair Yoga 10:30am AA 2pm Blossoming Depression Support Group 7pm OA	<b>Office Closed</b>	15
<b>20</b> 9am Chair Yoga 10:30am AA 2pm Blossoming Depression Support Group 7pm OA		22
<b>27</b> 9am Chair Yoga 10:30am AA 7pm OA		29



Long before Rev. Jim and Rev. Sharon came to Sun City in August of 2007, the community has met in prayer on Tuesday morning at 10am. We are now announcing a change to

make the time more accessible to the members of our congregation.

On Sunday mornings at 9:30am we will be gathering for a circle of prayer. The format will include reading of the prayer requests that have been submitted and a special time when anyone can briefly share their prayer story... a prayer request or a prayer answered.

Individuals may also be invited to the "prayer circle" where we will affirm the good of health, finances, or relationships in their lives.

This is designed to be a special, sacred time in life as we give and as we receive prayer treatment. Our chaplains will be especially invited to be involved in this sacred time.

It begins promptly at 9:30am and will conclude at 10am or shortly thereafter.



## Hate Thoughts



Recently a friend shared a flyer that was left on her windshield and many of the cars in the parking lot at a recent Sun City Board of Directors forum.

While the flyers, by law, cannot be considered a hate crime — The First Amendment protects several basic freedoms in our Country — in my heart this seems like a hate crime. It is so

sad that this freedom is being used to attack others.

So, to be correct, I have to name this flyer the “hateful thoughts and words” of a person consumed by inner hate and insecurity because of their need to judge our LGBT family and friends. It is these kinds of narrow-minded thoughts that led to the killing of fifty people, while scores of others were wounded, in the Pulse Nightclub.

Anytime someone goes so low as to voice hate, it is a sad and sobering event. This is true today for the victims of all hate thoughts and deeds. My friend and I shared that our human minds on some level keep asking, “When will tragic events such as these ever end?” These and other horrific events represent a challenge that has so many facets to it - least from the human point of view.

This current event can be seen as a hate action against the LGBT community. Some view it as an attack on Western values. We must not forget that humanity is interconnected and interdependent.

The tragedy of all prejudicial actions calls into question the seeming hypocrisy of claiming to want love and peace in the world when many are OK with the endemic portrayal of violence in our society. It even suggests it is time to really think about what can be done to open the hearts and minds of those who are so ego driven that they feel the need to tear down and hurt a whole group of society. What can each of us do to bring kindness, understanding and love into our world?

Albert Einstein famously said, “We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.” This statement has important spiritual implications for the issue at hand and for all challenges we face.

Practicing spiritual principles is not only about finding peace within ourselves but about contributing to the creation of peace, nonviolence and acceptance of our fellow brothers and sisters on the planet. It starts by realizing that, with God Consciousness, all things are possible. We don't necessarily have to know how to do a particular thing. That's because the solution originates from a thought system beyond our own. But we start with

the realization that nothing is impossible with the all-knowing Presence we call God.

Our task is to contribute to the peace effort to the best of our ability. We know that God can only do for us what we allow God to do through us. So, we do our part to remove from our awareness any hints of violence we may be harboring in our hearts.

We want to transform places in our minds where it is unsafe for other people to travel, because we may snipe at them with criticism or attack them in some way. Such attacks contribute to an energy field, and the by-product can create a thought atmosphere that helps produce a person who commits a horrendous act, such as placing hate filled flyers on cars, refusing service to those who seem different from us and the violent actions that keep taking place against the black community, the Jewish community, the LGBT community and other minorities. We are all brothers and sisters created in the likeness and the image of God. One with each other. This is true for all people even when they don't or can't acknowledge their bond with all of humanity.

Christmas is coming, a time when the world sings of Peace on Earth. The truest Christmas message that each of us can give is to give others kindness and love in our words and actions. Christmas isn't Christmas until it happens in our hearts. Jesus taught love and he asked each of us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Ultimately our task is to be channels of love - the enduring and ultimate reality. Every person, including the person who placed the hate flyers, was born to be a channel of love. To the extent that we are channels of God's loving presence, we download love from the higher regions of thought. This leads to loving behavior and this loving behavior anchors heaven on earth. When enough people are acting from that vantage point, we will reach a tipping point. Then qualities of God, rather than qualities of separation, have the last word.

Traditionally we close our Christmas Eve service with The Great Invocation. I would like to share it with you, so you can carry these words in your heart.

From the point of light within the mind of God  
May light stream forth into the minds of all.

May light illuminate our earth.

From the point of love within the heart of God  
May love stream forth into the hearts of all.

May Christ-love return to earth.

From the center where the will of God is known

May purpose guide the wills of all

May we know and serve the will of God.

From the center which we call the heart of all.

May the plan of love and light express.

And ever seal the door where evil dwelt.

May light and love and power restore God's plan on earth.

## Yes to Christmas in All its Expressions!



The modern festival called Christmas is a celebration of story, myth, custom and ritual. Since its inception it has been debated, ignored, celebrated, banned, but more importantly, continually reshaped. A study of its history suggests this festival has always been a weaving together of popular culture and religion. Contemporary celebrations include new stories based on “old themes.” It is in this that complex issues of Christmas materialism and Christmas spirit arise.

As a Christian event, the “Feast of the Nativity of our Lord” rather than “Christmas” didn’t make the church calendar of feasts until well into the 4th century and then as a result of a series of mixed motives, including the take-over of a number of rival ‘pagan’ festivals such as the Norse ceremonies for Odin, the birth of the Persian god Mithra and the life of the Roman Saturnalia. Such a ‘take-over’ seems to be the pattern of Christianity.

“Expansionist religions like Christianity,” writes Australian theologian Roland Boer, “work by taking over and appropriating the symbols and practices of a whole range of non-Christian belief systems.”

However, there is another very important reason: the pre-Christian folk festivals were essentially life affirming. “They said ‘yes’ to life” while the Christianity of that time - essentially a religion of the monks - “was pessimistic regarding this earth, and valued it only as a place of discipline for the life to come,” which meant it was a religion of saying ‘no’ to the world.

It wasn’t until the mid-1800s that much of what we identify as ‘Christmas’ was really celebrated. There were three cultural traditions that were born in this time. They were:

- an imaginative poem written by a protestant American minister of religion for his three daughters, called ‘A visit from St. Nicholas’;
- some art sketches inspired by that poem, along with a series of commercial advertisements for Coca Cola;
- a Christmas morality story published in England by Charles Dickens originally called *A Christmas Carol*.

The literary focus on the Santa Claus fore-runner was shaped by a lay professor of religious studies at General Theological Seminary, Clement Clarke Moore in his unpublished 1822 poem, ‘A visit from St. Nicholas’, or as it is more commonly known, ‘T’was the night before Christmas...’ A fore-runner, as Moore’s poem never mentions Santa Claus but instead has as its main character a “jolly old elf” with a beard “as white as snow” and

dressed “all in fur, from his head to his foot.”

An artistic development in the depiction of Santa Claus came with German immigrant Thomas Nast’s drawings, which appeared in the New York *Harper’s Weekly* between 1863 and 1886. However, while Nast’s vision of Santa began the process, his vision did not become the Santa archetype.

The present-day Santa Claus is recognized due to a distinctive red and white costume worn by ‘men’ during the pre-Christmas period. Prior to 1930s the costume might be in green, purple, pale blue, blue-black, brown, or red, even a multi-colored figure, smoking a clay pipe with a glass of wine in his hand. Later, during the 1930s, the American soft drink manufacturer, Coca Cola, adopted Santa Claus “as a salesman for the idea that ‘thirst knows no season’ and... that winter-time is as good a time as summer for drinking Coca-Cola.”

It is claimed that Charles Dickens, “after hearing the minister of the Little Portland Street chapel in London preach a Christmas sermon,” was inspired to write his ‘*A Christmas Carol*’. Some claim that Dickens had just returned from his first trip to America, and needed money. He quickly dreamed up a Christmas story... and dashed it off just in time for a London paper to serialize it in mid-December.

With these popular ‘reinventions’ - the story, the sketches, the poem - Christmas became a global festival heavily laced with sentiment. Over a period of time various traditions were incorporated into the festival from around the world: Germany - evergreen tree (1840s and 1850s); Holland - filling stockings; England - Christmas cards (1843) and carols (1871); Sweden - family focus; United States - Santa Claus; Australia - mass public/open air carol events (1930s). While there is still some debate about how well these traditions have been woven together, much anecdotal evidence points to the feeling that ‘this’ hybrid festival is the real Christmas.

The development of these two streams, the spiritual and the secular, is the basis for the at times bitter debate which seems to go on between ‘church’ and ‘culture’, usually initiated by evangelical Christians.

But, Christmas is a global celebration. It belongs to everyone everywhere. It belongs to all Christians and it belongs to people of all faiths, such as those where the roots are. Yet, some religious critics believe there is a ‘problem’ with the modern Christmas - a problem called commercialization.

Literalist slogans such as “put Christ back into Christmas” or “Jesus is the reason for the season” - are often equally commercialized through the production and sale of such items as tee-shirts, bumper stickers and

**Yes to Christmas in all its Expressions** Continued from Page 7



printed balloons. The answer is also not in the debate such as “where in the Bible is the word ‘Christmas’?” and “there is no biblical connection whatsoever between Santa Claus and the birth of Jesus.”

Within the history of Christianity the decision to celebrate the festival called Christmas on December 25th was not in existence until around the years 354 – 360CE, first in Rome, some years later in Antioch and the East. Opinions differ as to why and how this occurred.

Today, the role of the church is to facilitate spiritual life, to show the way into the love we call God, for our neighbor, whoever he or she may be, and for the earth. That is the center of our Christian faith. We do not have to see these traditions as rivals and eliminate them until only the simple birth of Jesus remains. Most of our customs and celebrations should be treated generously as attempts to extend the Spirit of Christmas. The purpose of the customs, the colors, and the legends of Christmas is to make available an essential Spirit of the season to all humankind.

**Abundance: Heaven on Earth** Continued from Page 3

all levels in our lives. Essentially, we’re prosperous when we have abundance in these ways:

- vibrantly alive bodies
- thriving relationships
- work (or the contributions we make whether paid or unpaid) that is our joy to do
- pockets filled in plenty

In the Book of John, it is written that Jesus said, “I have come, that you may have life, and have it abundantly.” This is a powerful statement. In Unity, we believe it means that Jesus, through his demonstration and example, showed us how to live in the knowing that God is our one true source of all good. When we do, we are free to experience the kingdom of God, the state of being where all is well, and where all that is needed is given.

Each of us is able to live in this way. Each of us can live abundantly in all aspects of our lives, just as Jesus did. The spiritual work of seeing ourselves as thriving isn’t necessarily easy, but it’s immensely transformative and worth all the courage and willingness we can muster. Together we support each other as we stretch in new ways that utilize spiritual laws, and as one community we all can personally and collectively really know what it is to live in God’s loving abundance like never before.

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