

The History of Unity Church of Delray Beach, Florida

Every mighty work begins with a spark of inspiration. In 1948 Mrs. Frances Jarrell, a dedicated Truth student, started a class of instruction in the Delray Beach Women's Club. Her class consisted of one student. It gradually grew as others who were seeking greater spiritual understanding joined the class. Soon it became obvious that the need for a more suitable meeting place was fast approaching. With the understanding of Unity's philosophy – that where there is a definite need, Divine Supply would be forthcoming – the group opened their minds and hearts to receive.

Through the generous interest of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Grimes, the group moved to an upstairs room on Atlantic Avenue; it was fondly referred to as the Upper Room. In the Upper room recently ordained Rev. Francis Jarrell conducted her first service on December 16, 1950. She continued to teach and serve the needs of the community until 1954.

Her splendid example was carried on by the Rev. Lucy Stringer until 1955 when she was succeeded by the Rev. Eva Rosencrans. The consciousness of the Upper Room attracted well-known speakers and ministers from all over the world. It was through the Rev. Rosencrans' inspired leadership, guidance and loving efforts that Unity of Delray Beach outgrew the Upper Room.

Once again God's substance flowed generously to meet the needs of Unity of Delray Beach. Unity was the recipient of five and a half acres of land given by Mr. and Mrs. Warren Grimes in 1961. On January 5, 1964, the first service was held in the new sanctuary.

Rev. Eva Rosencrans said of the new building, "Our Unity sanctuary, hexagonal in shape and walled with clear glass, reflects the dignity and simplicity of a Unity service." To this day the church, surrounded by gardens, is known for its design. While sitting in comfortable wicker chairs, one can contemplate the oneness, wonder and magnificence of God.

In 1964 the Rev. Rosencrans had a dream to provide a loving, caring atmosphere for children to grow and develop academic excellence based on spiritual ideals. Her Unity congregation supported this concept and through this vision, Unity School was born. Once again, the generosity of the Grimes family provided the first buildings for the school. Today Unity School provides an excellent educational program for children of pre-school age through the eighth grade. It is recognized by the community as a thriving, successful and unique campus.

Rev. Mary Kupferle became Eva Rosencrans' associate in 1966 and became senior minister in 1968. Rev. Kupferle brought a devoted sense of dedication to church and school. She was loved and widely known throughout the community, school and the world through her radio broadcasts and her inspirational writings. Her words of wisdom were the lead articles in Unity's *Daily Word* magazine for many years; her books continue to inspire and bless many. Rev. Kupferle is a visionary and a light. She served Unity of Delray Beach for 18 years and continues to be an

active, loving part of Unity of Delray Beach as Minister Emeritus.

In 1983 Rev. Richard Barnes followed Mary Kupferle's successful leadership. Rev. Barnes caught the vision for Unity School. Because of past experience as an educator and school administrator, he brought direction and professionalism to Unity School while continuing to enhance the vision of Unity Church.

Rev. Greg Barrette assumed leadership of the church in 1990. It was through his dynamic Sunday lessons and dedication to youth that Unity of Delray Beach attracted more and more families, thus increasing Sunday attendance.

Rev. Nancy Norman became Rev. Barrette's associate in 1992 and assumed the position of senior minister in 1996. Rev. Nancy Norman's ministry is filled with grace, love and light. Her teachings

and lessons have inspired and helped many. Through her writing and published works she is fulfilling her personal vision: "To empower people to realize their full God potential."

Each minister has brought to Unity of Delray Beach an abundance of special gifts and talents. It is through the consistent consciousness of leadership and congregation that Unity of Delray Beach continues to grow, expand and prosper.

God is supplying Unity of Delray Beach with all it needs to fulfill its divine purpose. As we plant our feet in spiritual understanding and wisdom, we stand firm in what we believe, knowing that the loving power and presence of God is with us always. For all of these things and through His Spirit, we go forward in gratitude, trust and joy.