

An Overview of the History of the Friends of Unity Community

Adopted from the writings of Minister Emeritus Florence Ernzen

Fall 2010	<p>Many of the people who were initially involved in the forming of this new spiritual community were formerly associated with Unity of Farmington Hills in Farmington Hills, Michigan. In the Fall of 2010, these people desired to start a new spiritual community.</p> <p>The Minister at Unity of Farmington Hills, Rev. Barbara Clevenger, endorsed and supported us. She told us that she liked to think that her church “gave birth” to a new one and believed the Plymouth area could support a new Unity church. She also told us she contacted the ministers of the other Unity Churches in the area, Unity of Livonia and Unity of Ann Arbor, and she supported our new community.</p>
October 2010	<p>The people forming this new ministry began gathering in October 2010 to share a spiritual experience and explore forming a spiritual community. They began meeting in the home of Florence Ernzen, LUT.</p> <p>The number of people desiring to attend the meetings quickly exceeded the capacity of this home, so a larger facility was rented for meetings on Sunday mornings. This facility was the Plymouth Community Arts Council building in Plymouth, Michigan.</p>
November 2010	<p>In November 2010, a Steering Team was formed to address all the aspects of formalizing the community. They chose “Friends of Unity” as the new community’s name.</p> <p>The Steering Team consisted of approximately 15 dedicated and motivated members to accomplish our goal of forming a new church. All the members of the Steering Team had previously been members of other Unity churches and were long-time Unity students. They shared enthusiasm for the Unity message and the value it could bring to more people in this new area.</p> <p>In November 2010, the Steering Team incorporated Friends of Unity as a Michigan nonprofit corporation.</p>
January 2011	<p>In January 2011, the community elected a Board of Trustees consisting of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Spiritual Leader.</p>
March 2011	<p>In March 2011, they launched a website: www.friendsofunity.org. This community has met every Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. at the Plymouth Community Arts Council since mid-October 2010.</p> <p>This facility is a beautiful building with an auditorium with seating for 110 people, two classrooms, and a kitchen area. The entire facility is handicapped accessible and has good parking available. It is conveniently located near major roads and an expressway interchange.</p>
May 2011	<p>We were approved as an Expansion Ministry in May 2011. Since then, we have filed all the quarterly and annual expansion ministry reports requested by UWM. These reports document the operations and activities history of this ministry.</p>
October 2017	<p>We were led from October 2010 through October 2017 by Reverend Florence Ernzen, a LUT ordained in 2015 through One Spirit Inter-Faith Inter Spiritual Seminary. Rev. Flossie retired from her leadership position in October 2017.</p>
September 2018	<p>From October 2017 through September 2018, we operated by utilizing Guest Speakers for the Sunday services. The ministry continued to operate under the guidance and support of the Board, the Administrator, the Music Director, and dedicated volunteers.</p>

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September 2018	In September 2018, we engaged Reverend Kathy Harwood Long, Unity Minister, as our new Senior Minister/ Spiritual Leader.
2019	In 2019, we applied for and received Full Ministry status from UWM.
February 2020	In February 2020, we began a facilitated process of exploring and clarifying our values as a Spiritual Community. We called it the "Sea of Abiding Values." This process will be ongoing.
March 2020	In March 2020, in response to the pandemic then occurring, we suspended church services at our rented facility and began "live streaming" our services.
June 2020	In June 2020, we resumed restricted services at our rented facility while continuing to "live stream" the services.
October	In October of 2020, we celebrated our 10-year anniversary as a Spiritual Community.
Today	<p>We have a strong volunteer team. They include ushers, greeters, youth education teachers, refreshments, music ministry, social events, and the Board of Trustees.</p> <p>From our beginning, we have continuously tithed 10% of our monthly gross income. Recipients usually include Unity Worldwide (Silent Unity, Daily Word, or the General Fund) and Unity Worldwide Ministries (including the Great Lakes Region).</p> <p>Our plan is to continue to rent the space we have been meeting in for the foreseeable future. We own few assets, mainly a portable sound system for the Sunday service.</p>