

# Companions on the Path

A monthly publication of West Sound Unity Church

January 2006

## The journey continues

### *Encircled by the arms of a mystery*

By Reverend Max Lafser

Hildegarde of Bingen, a Benedictine nun from the middle ages, once said, "God hugs you. You are encircled by the arms of the mystery of God." Hildegarde was saying we are encircled by the arms of a mystery, which is always revealed to us as love.

My grandmother liked to read mystery novels. As a little boy I would get up on the bed with her while she read to me. I always marveled how this gentle, non-violent woman could sit spell-bound over some gory mystery tale.

In one sense, we are all somewhat like her. We cannot be content merely to experience, but must seek to make sense of our experiences—to know their cause and significance, to find out the truth behind the fact. We all want to penetrate the mystery, to figure out the plot so that in some measure we will figure out the

author, or the plotter. We are not satisfied being told that God is a mystery that cannot be comprehended, only loved. Since each of us is created in the image of God, we have the same burning need to know our Creator, as an earthly child has to know its biological parents.

So when we attempt to penetrate the mystery of God, we may confuse something visible for God. Perhaps that is why we have Jesus, the Son of God, so we could see God? If this all sounds mysterious and somehow illusive, that is because that is what God is like, and all our best thinking and rational analysis will not reveal God to us.

The only way we will experience God will be as we feel ourselves loved. Then we become willing to say "Yes" to the mystery of being loved into aliveness. Thus we

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Dove Award presentations

In recognition of the loving service by two generous spirited members, the Dove was given to **Don Cowdery** and **Carmel Pennington**. We bless them, we love them, we appreciate them, and we see the Christ light shining brightly in their faces!

## January lesson titles

- ◇ **January 1:** Encircled by the arms of a mystery
- ◇ **January 8:** The highest we can attain
- ◇ **January 15:** Life's decision made
- ◇ **January 22:** Wyming Sun—The kingdom of heaven
- ◇ **January 29:** Everything beautiful in its Time -- Family Sunday

## Milestones

**Flo Swope**, a long-time member of our congregation, made her transition December 18. Remember her family in your hearts. There will be no services. The family suggests memorial donations be made in Flo's name to Special Olympics NW Region, 19231 36th Ave., Suite K, Lynnwood, WA 98036.



### **Mission statement:**

West Sound Unity Church is a ministry using the teachings of Jesus Christ to inspire the experience and joyful manifestation of God's unconditional love for all in a safe, loving, and nurturing environment.

*(Continued from page 1...Encircled by the arms of a mystery)*

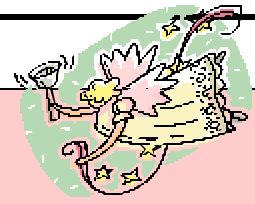
make our surrender to a God we can neither define, nor see, nor control. Our true relationship to God is not altered by the fact we cannot see or understand God clearly. When we absolutely and eagerly surrender ourselves to the will of God, even though God remains a mystery, we cease to writhe under a sense of deprivation and begin to assimilate the mystery into ourselves. We become loving.

Look, for example, at the New Year's celebration. All the noise and clamor are only a vestige of the myth of the eternal rhythms and the eternal return, the periodic destruction and recreation of the cosmos. There is a moment between the turning of the old year into the new, a mysterious

interval where we have the opportunity to be renewed at the gate of something we do not understand, something that is mysteriously unknown.

This is illustrated in a children's story. A child asks Mary Poppins, "When does the old year end?" "On the first stroke of midnight," answers Mary. "And when does the new year begin?" asks the child. "On the last stroke of midnight," replies Mary. "What then," asks the child, "happens in between while the clock is striking 12?" For centuries in primitive religions, this moment was described as the ritual pause.

Come join us on Sunday, January 1, as we pause before the New Year, "Encircled By the Arms of a Mystery." January will be a special month of renewal for all of us. A blessed New Year is yours.



Angel notes

**Thanks with a hug!**

- ◇ **Marilyn Carlson, Mike and Evie Deignan, Jamie McAllaster, Byron Payton, Ron and Linda Rice, Deb Jesewitz, Jana Wilde, Nora Clemons, Beverly Good, and Maureen Kelly** were the decorating angels who festively transformed the sanctuary and fellowship hall for the holiday season.
- ◇ **Debbi Zukauskas** organized the adopt-a-family gift giving and assisted in the office.
- ◇ **Linda Rice** produced, copied, and stuffed the Sunday bulletin materials; volunteered as bookkeeper for the bookstore; and helped stage the Christmas Eve service.
- ◇ **Ed and Becky Duhamel** bought us a wonderful new coffeemaker.
- ◇ Thanks to **Don Cowdery** for his cheerful "fix it" services on baseboard heaters, light switches, toilets, and roof leaks

**Thank you for your Christmas Spirit of Giving**



*By Kay Watkins*

I'd like to send a BIG THANK YOU to every-

one at church. Our church collected a bunch of wonderful teddy bears and stuffed animals this year. The teddy bear delivery and caroling at Belmont Terrace was lots of fun, and we had lots of people and enthusiastic bell-ringers from the church join us. Everyone there seemed very happy, and it brought a lot of Unity joy and light into their

day. Every time they squeeze their new "bear" friends, it will bring them comfort and joy.

So many people donated gifts for our adopted family this year. Even an anonymous "Santa" sent personalized stockings along for Christmas Eve! Thank you, thank you, thank you! Each of you who donated your time, talents, or treasures helped this family have a much happier Christmas.

I can't express the joyous feeling I

have in my heart for getting to participate in such a loving activity. This to me is the true meaning of Christmas, because I felt like one of God's angels getting to do God's work here on earth! If you didn't participate this year, don't miss this experience next year. It will fill your heart with overflowing love—guaranteed.



Sally Mathes

## From the board

By Nancy Sally Mathes, Secretary

Wow, what a year it has been at West Sound Unity

Church.! We have witnessed more change than we are probably comfortable with. But as we all have learned, change is good. I am so happy for Richard Stone. He is with such a wonderful church, and I am certain that he is where he is supposed to be, and we are just beginning our exciting journey. We have experienced many challenges—but without challenges, there are no lessons.

I am so excited to have Max Lafser as part of our journey. I truly feel that it was in divine order that he was available at the perfect time. He will be able to teach us so much over the next year, and what a journey it will be! We are already experiencing this on the board. He is a wonderful mentor and teacher and we have a lot to learn. Only good can come from this experience. Please join the board in visioning our church as a healthy and growing church.

Speaking as a board member, I would like to personally congratulate Carmel Pennington and Don Cowdery for receiving the Dove Award. We are so blessed in our church to have such wonderful volunteers.

I would like to talk about the importance of volunteering in our church. One of the challenges we are facing right now is our need for more volunteers. As you are all aware, we have had to make several cuts in our budget. Because of that, the need for volunteers has increased. It has been very difficult for Margie, because there is so much to do. We would appreciate any time that you could offer. We need cleaning angels, office help, maintenance work, ushers, hospitality, bookstore, etc. If you feel a calling to volunteer in any capacity,

## Your Board of Trustees

President.....Ron Bruchet  
 Vice-President.....Cathe Craigmiles  
 Secretary.....Sally Mathes  
 Treasurer.....Nancy Plankenhorn  
 Trustee.....Sally McAllaster  
 Trustee.....Carmel Pennington

please contact one of the board members or Margie. We will gladly accept any time you are able to give.

Thanks to all of our current volunteers. We couldn't do what needs to be done without you. You all contribute so much and it is greatly appreciated.

## January Prosperity



Tithes were sent to the Association of Unity Churches and the NW Region of Unity Churches.

	October	November
Income	7474.85	7,456.74
Expenses	<7634.57>	<8,054.43>
Net (+ or <>)	<159.72>	<597.69>
Credit Card balance	24,312.35	21,915.17
Other current payables	<7183.47>	793.86
Total Payables	32495.82	22,709.03
Kitsap Bank loan	7565.73	7,373.03
Total Debt	\$31,878.08	\$30,082.06

***Through God's abundant love, I have opportunities to experience prosperity in every area of my life. I am open to the potential that each day offers me.***

**Happy  
January  
birthdays!**



- 1/8 Anne Richardson
- 1/8 George Christensen
- 1/10 Janice Lofall
- 1/11 Sandi Peterson
- 1/14 Gary Barber
- 1/20 Ted Robinson
- 1/22 Del Richardson
- 1/22 C. Richard Stone

**Did we miss your birthday? We'd love to recognize your special day. Please contact the office so we can add your name.**

**In praise of song**

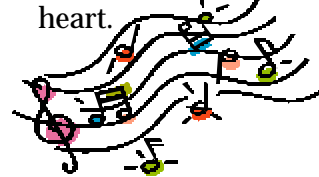
*By Jim Bryan*

First I would like to thank all the lovely people at church who sing for me—especially Sally, Randy, Nancy, Megan, and the choir. I hope it is heartening to them to know that there is at least one congregant who listens (although I am sure others do also).

Although I am a non-singer, my inadequate voice does not interfere with my enjoyment of others' more talented renditions. For awhile, I used to lip sync in order to fit in and appear to be a dedicated singer (most people don't understand non-singers). Eventu-

ally, I came to the realization that lip syncing is not being honest. Many people lip sync their lives, essentially agreeing with whatever the majority feels is proper, and do not take a stand on their own belief. Have you ever done that? (I bet we all have.)

I heartily recommend that you thoughtfully and carefully drop the unnecessary lip syncing in your life, listen to the Creator's music, and always sing with your heart.



**KOFE Radio Hour**

**Brought to us by Bellevue's Best Coffee  
January 28, 2006, 7:00 pm**

A little nostalgia and, a blast from the past right here at West Sound Unity in Bremerton, brought to you by *Bellevue's Best Coffee* on KOFE Radio.

The radio announcer, the comedy skits, talented musicians, and singers—including **Daryl Spadaccini** on piano for the evening, **Rev. Max Lafser**, and a few more vocal surprises from our own musical family—as they join with “Mo Coffee,” Bellevue’s answer to the Andrews Sisters, for a revival of the “old time” radio hour program.

Bring your family, invite your friends, and come enjoy an evening of laughter and music you

may remember from years before TV began it's reign in our living rooms and Nintendo became the latest in entertainment.



Join in this “fun-raiser” for our church by participating in the production of the evening. There are lots of ways to help out: take a ticket packet to sell and invite

your friends, neighbors, and co-workers to join us for this evening of talent; volunteer to help with the intermission sale of coffee (what else?) and treats; a few capable carpenters and helpers are needed for the afternoon of Saturday, January 22, to build a stage extension; ushering for the performance on January 28; and affirm the success of this event as part of your prayerful support of West Sound Unity.

Let's fill the sanctuary with our joy, our love, and our enthusiasm for this evening of sharing musical memories and humor.

## Wyming Sun returns for more illuminating Aramaic Bible interpretation

**January 22, 2006**

In the Sunday message and an afternoon workshop, *The Kingdom of Heaven*, Wyming shares with us that Jesus' message was not about proclaiming himself the Kingdom of Heaven, but rather showing us the way to find the Kingdom within. His Gospel was not about taking sin off our shoulders, but showing us how to live in the full consciousness of the imminent presence of God. The "Sermon on the Mount" is often referred to as "the Constitution of God." Come explore these ideas with linguist and Bible scholar Wyming P. Sun. The workshop will be followed by a healing service with Wyming. Both are available for a love offering.



## Chaplain training retreat planned for February

Our Chaplain Team is a service opportunity for members who are truly seeking the next step in development of their personal spiritual journey and level of commitment in their spiritual growth.

Chaplains are here to:

- ◇ Support each individual's spiritual journey,
- ◇ Create and hold sacred space with our family members,
- ◇ Listen and hold what is heard in the strictest confidence, and
- ◇ Pray with our family members.

Chaplains may choose to contribute in any of the

## Christmas events light the season with joy

*By Margie Hyatt*

Thanks to all the wonderful elves who helped make our annual Santa Tea a spectacular day.



**Joyce Cowdery, Evie Deignan, Pat Fontaine, Nita Hartley, Donna Huntwork, Devina Huntwork** (jr. photographer), **Margie Hyatt** (photographer) and **Susan Shroyer** all contributed to the festivities. The **Youth Ministry teacher team** supplied yummy holiday treats for fellowship—and a big hug to Santa!

"Three Wise Dudes," the youth ministry Christmas play, was produced by three excellent "dudettes:" **Brenda McCormick, Megan McCormick and Monica Cowdery**. All our wonderful children played their parts with enthusiasm and style. Can you get over the sweet little angels? The la-a-a-mb? And how about that

Unity minister?? He was just about the coolest dude ever, man! Well, next to the secret service dude in sunglasses. And the three dudes themselves...just about the wisest! Our videographer, Joyce's dad Paul Drnjevic, promises he'll sort out the technical stuff of reproducing from mini format to video and make copies available soon. If you weren't here for the creativity of this nativity, you missed a delightfully delivered message of the season. Don't be left out of the fun and memories next year!

The Candle Lighting Service was joyful, reverent, and filled with the light and warmth of love. Thanks to the musicians who made the evening sacred with song: **the Unity Choir, Randy Parris and Daryl Spadaccini; Linda Rice** for helping set the stage for this beautiful evening; **Cathe and Greg Craigmiles** for being candle lighters; **Kathy Rongholt, Evie Deignan, Nora Clemons, and Ed Duhamel** for ushering; and **Amy Plankenhorn and Barbara Simpson** for acting as greeters. The light was brightest in each of these giving hearts and on the faces of those who shared this beautiful service.

following ways: available for one-on-one private prayer following Sunday services; participate in wellness calling to the congregation each month; make hospital and home visits; support the telephone and email prayer chain work, lead prayer services. Are you called to service in our church family through prayer support? Our "chaplain captain," **Deb Jesewitz**, along with **Rev. Max Lafser and Margie Hyatt**, will lead a training for anyone who wants to participate in this very important, caring and nurturing service. Contact Deb or Margie for details.

## Upcoming Events at West Sound Unity Church January 2006

### Sunday, January 1

Rev. Max Lafser, Encircled By the Arms of a Mystery

### Wednesday, January 4

6:00 pm Potluck  
7:00 pm, Meditation  
7:30 pm, Metaphysics of Unity Principles, with Rev. Max

### Sunday, January 8

Rev. Max Lafser, The Highest We Can Attain

### Tuesday, January 10

5:30 pm, Board Meeting

### Wednesday, January 11

6:00 pm Potluck  
7:00 pm, Meditation  
7:30 pm, Metaphysics of Unity Principles, with Rev. Max

### Sunday, January 15

Rev. Max Lafser, Life's Decision Made

### Monday January 16, 10:00 AM

12th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Celebration, President's Hall, Kitsap Co. Fairgrounds

### Wednesday, January 18

6:00 pm Potluck  
7:00 pm, Meditation  
7:30 pm, Metaphysics of Unity Principles, with Rev. Max

### Thursday, January 19, 6:30 pm

Kitsap 'Kordianists Social, an evening of enjoying accordion music with local players. Bring your accordions and one or two numbers to play, or bring your enthusiasm to listen! \$2 requested donation, refreshments served. Call Jeannie at 874-6899 for more information.

### Saturday, January 21

Stage extension building work party for the "KOFE Old Time Radio Hour" program. A few good carpenters needed. BYOTools!

### Sunday, January 22

Speaker: Wyming Sun, The Kingdom of Heaven  
**Noon—2:00 pm**, Workshop, The Kingdom of Heaven  
**3:30 pm**, Healing Service

### Wednesday, January 25

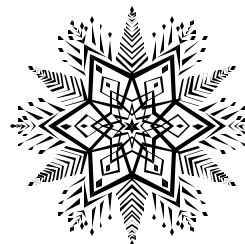
6:00 pm Potluck  
7:00 pm, Meditation  
7:30 pm, Metaphysics of Unity Principles, with Rev. Max

### Saturday, January 28, 7:00 pm

KOFE Old Time Radio Hour program, an evening of comedy and music with "Mo Coffee" Singers, Daryl Spadaccini, Rev. Max and more!

### Sunday, January 29

Rev. Max Lafser, Everything Beautiful in its Time, Family Sunday!



# January 2006

*With each footstep, I am always on holy ground!*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>10:00 AM Service, Rev. Max Lafser</p> <p><b>New Year's Day</b></p> 	<p>2</p> <p>6:30 PM A Course in Miracles</p>	<p>3</p> <p>6:30 PM Eagle Clan Medicine Wheel</p> <p>7:00 PM Women's AA</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Mid-week Renewal, 6:00</p> <p>Potluck, 7:00</p> <p>Meditation, 7:30</p> <p>Metaphysics of Unity</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8</p> <p>10:00 AM Service, Rev. Max Lafser</p>	<p>9</p> <p>6:30 PM A Course in Miracles</p>	<p>10</p> <p>5:30 PM Board Meeting</p> <p>6:30 PM Eagle Clan Medicine Wheel</p> <p>7:00 PM Women's AA</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Mid-week Renewal, 6:00</p> <p>Potluck, 7:00</p> <p>Meditation, 7:30</p> <p>Metaphysics of Unity</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>10:00 AM Service, Rev. Max Lafser</p>	<p>16</p> <p>10:00 AM Rev. MLKing Community Celebration</p> <p>6:30 PM A Course in Miracles</p> <p><b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b></p>	<p>17</p> <p>6:30 PM Eagle Clan Medicine Wheel</p> <p>7:00 PM Women's AA</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Mid-week Renewal, 6:00</p> <p>Potluck, 7:00</p> <p>Meditation, 7:30</p> <p>Metaphysics of Unity</p>	<p>19</p> <p>6:30 PM Kitsap 'Kordianists' Social</p> 	<p>20</p> <p>Board of Trustees Retreat</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Stage Extension Building Party</p>
<p>22</p> <p>10:00 AM Service, Wyrning Sun</p> <p>12:00 PM Workshop with Wyrning Sun, The Kingdom of Heaven</p> <p>3:00 PM Healing Service</p> <p>Board of Trustees Retreat</p>	<p>23</p> <p>6:30 PM A Course in Miracles</p>	<p>24</p> <p>6:30 PM Eagle Clan Medicine Wheel</p> <p>7:00 PM Women's AA</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Mid-week Renewal, 6:00</p> <p>Potluck, 7:00</p> <p>Meditation, 7:30</p> <p>Metaphysics of Unity</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>7:00 PM KOFE Old Time Radio Hour</p>  <p>Gold Bar Teachers' Retreat</p>
<p>29</p> <p>10:00 AM Service, Rev. Max Lafser, "Family Sunday"</p>	<p>30</p> <p>6:30 PM A Course in Miracles</p>	<p>31</p> <p>6:30 PM Eagle Clan Medicine Wheel</p> <p>7:00 PM Women's AA</p>				



January 2006

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Please call 360-479-1757 for address changes.

## West Sound Unity Church Ministry Services

### **Prayer Ministry**

Call the church office anytime, day or night, with your prayer request and we will inform our prayer circles and Silent Unity.

### **Hospital Visitations**

Please advise us if you or someone you know has entered the hospital. Local hospitals usually do not inform us when someone is admitted, even though you may disclose your church affiliation.

### **Weddings, Christenings and other Services**

Our minister is available for a variety of services customized to your needs. Please call the church office for more information.

### **Personal Consultations**

Our minister is available in matters of spiritual guidance. Please call the church office to schedule an appointment.

## **Sunday Service and Youth Ministry Schedule**

The Sunday Service is 10:00 am. Our Youth Ministry is also 10:00 am and includes Nursery—0 to 3 years old, Youth Ministry—3 years through grade school, Uniteens—Jr. High, and Youth of Unity—High School.

## **Hours and contacts**

Church office - Wednesday, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm; other times by appointment. Bookstore and Lending Library hours: Sundays - before and after service and during office hours. **Telephone numbers:** Office (360) 479-1757; Bookstore (360) 479-1757; Fax (360) 479-1758 (call first); **E-mail:** Unitychurch@qwest.net

**Website:** <http://www.westsoundunity.org/>