

Journey to UNITY

Information & Membership
Class Manual



Unity of Fairfax
Church of the Daily Word

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All photos courtesy of Beverly Ellis, Steve Marcom, and Midd Hunt

Introduction



Welcome!

If you are reading this, you are either exploring the possibility becoming a member of [Unity of Fairfax](#) or simply wanting to learn about Unity of Fairfax or the Unity movement. In the *Journey to Unity Information and Membership Class Manual* you will learn about the Unity movement, Unity teachings, and Unity of Fairfax. Additionally, a Unity resource list is provided for you. Also included in this manual are a number of links to connect you to many online resources, like the link above to the Unity of Fairfax website!

Unity is a positive path for spiritual living that provides practical teachings to help people live healthy, prosperous and meaningful lives while making a positive impact in the world. My affirmation is that you will be inspired to continue your spiritual journey with Unity for years to come.

At the conclusion to each section, you will find reflection questions. We will discuss these questions—either in person or via Zoom—prior to making application for membership at Unity of Fairfax. Please reach out to me if you have any questions about this “Journey to Unity,” Unity of Fairfax, or the Unity movement. My contact information is found below.

Yours in Unity,

Rev. Russ

Rev. Russell Heiland, Sr. Minister

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Part I: What is Unity?



What is Unity?¹

- Unity is a positive path for spiritual living.
- Unity offers practical spiritual teachings that empower abundant and meaningful living.
- We are inclusive and progressive, encourage personal initiative and growth, and value a spiritual, holistic and intuitive approach to living.
- Unity provides practical teachings to help people live healthy, prosperous and meaningful lives.
- We provide a positive a positive spiritual experience.
- We believe in the power of prayer and meditation.
- We help people discover and live their spiritual purpose and potential.
- We help people have a stronger connection to God every day.
- Our spiritual centers have inspiring ministers and are involved in spiritual social action and social activities.
- We provide a philosophy that is spiritual, but not religious, and love-based, not fear-based.
- We honor all paths to God.
- We believe in making a positive difference in the world.
- We believe in being a positive example and role model.

A Brief History of Unity

Founded in 1889 by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, Unity offers a practical philosophy for spiritual living. We have no strict creed or dogma, but offer a comprehensive teaching to all who are seeking a deeper understanding of their spiritual nature.

The actual impetus for the founding of the Unity movement came from Myrtle Fillmore's remarkable healing of tuberculosis. She had long been told and believed that her illness was inherited. From a lecture on metaphysics in 1886, however, she suddenly grasped the idea that she was a child of God and did not inherit sickness. She prayerfully applied her new insight with great success, and her health instantly began to improve. In describing her experience, Myrtle writes:

“I have made what seems to me a discovery. I was fearfully sick; I had all the ills of mind and body that I could bear. Medicine and doctors ceased to give me relief,

¹ *Contact*, Vol. 42, Issue 4, December 2010/January/February 2011.

and I was in despair, when I found practical Christianity. I took it up and I was healed. This is how I made what I call my discovery:

I was thinking about life. Life is everywhere...Ah! Intelligence, as well as life, is needed to make a body. Here is the key to my discovery. Life has to be guided by intelligence in making all forms. The same law works in my own body. Life is simply a form of energy, and has to be guided and directed in man's body by his intelligence. How do we communicate intelligence? By thinking and talking, of course. Then it flashed upon me that I might talk to the life in every part of my body and have it do just what I wanted. I began to teach my body and got marvelous results"²

It was the central event of Myrtle Fillmore's healing that provided the inspiration for the Unity movement, and Charles was the next to apply this insight. As a boy, Charles Fillmore had suffered a hip disease and curvature of the spine. He, too, grasped and applied divine law and reaped benefits physically, mentally and materially. In 1889, they began to devote themselves full time to a ministry of prayer and helping others.

The publication of the first Unity magazine took place in 1889. One of its longest running publications was *Wee Wisdom*, the first children's magazine in the U.S., which was printed for almost 90 years.

Unity now publishes two magazines: *UNITY Magazine*, a monthly magazine of inspirational articles, and *Daily Word*, a bi-monthly, pocket-size magazine containing a prayer for each day of the month and a short uplifting message.

Teaching the practice of prayer led to the establishment of Silent Unity in 1890, which is the prayer ministry and the heart of the Unity work. Someone is always praying in Silent Unity around the clock. At any time, anyone may request prayers for him- or herself or for another. Silent Unity can be reached at any time of the day or night by calling 1-800-669-7729, by visiting silentunity.org or through the BeUnity app on a smartphone.

In the book, *The Story of Unity*, James Dillet Freeman writes:

Unity is a way of life, a way of thinking that emphasizes humanity's divine nature and the goal of expressing that nature in every area of life. One of Unity's fundamental working propositions is that the way we think and feel about ourselves, our fellow human beings, our world and God is a determining factor in the expression of that divine nature.³

[The Myrtle Fillmore Healing Story](#)

video on YouTube

[INTRO: Charles Fillmore - American Mystic](#)

video on YouTube

² "Pearls of Healing Wisdom," booklet published by Unity, 2009, quote dated 1897.

³ James Dillet Freeman, *The Story of Unity*, Unity House, 2000.

Unity Today

In *Unity: 100 Years of Faith and Vision*, Connie Fillmore writes:

“Since I am a member of the fourth generation of Fillmores to serve the Unity work, people often ask me for my vision for the future. Unity stands on the brink of its next 100 years. Its headquarters rest squarely in the middle of a country that for several decades has dominated world history and that currently finds itself in a state of some confusion and disorder. Unity calls itself a movement of Christianity, and yet many of the fundamental Christian movements would dispute our right to say so. There are those who say our world is breaking up under the stresses of economic and political maneuvering, and those who say we are passing into a New Age of oneness, harmony, and light. Just what is Unity’s place in the midst of all this?

Unity is a place of prayer. It is a place of commitment to spiritual values. It is a place of integrity, where what is said and what is done are one and the same. It is a place of dedication to serving the spiritual needs of God’s children. Unity is a haven of Truth that stands outside the limitations of time or place. Unity is the awareness you carry that God is good and is always with you.

Unity rests solidly on a core of teachings set forth by Charles Fillmore and other early Unity teachers, and these teachings provide a framework to consider any challenge of modern-day living. Truth is timeless and holds within it the tools to approach all human situations. The Unity teachings function as well in a world confronted with the possibility of nuclear war as they did in a world torn apart by conventional weaponry. They function as well in a world terrorized by AIDS as they did in one crippled by polio. The essential human needs do not change, and God’s capacity to meet those needs doesn’t change.”

Today, Unity’s work continues through the prayer ministry of [Silent Unity](#), publications, retreats, educational activities, and of course, through the approximately 1,000 Unity ministries and study groups found [throughout the world](#).

Charles R. Fillmore, grandson of Unity co-founders Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, writes in *Unity: 100 Years of Faith & Vision*:

“[Unity’s] influence has reached far beyond those who consider Unity to be their only religious affiliation. Unity ideas concerning spiritual healing, positive thinking, brotherly love, freedom from undeserved feelings of guilt, and the justification of personal property are widely understood to be desirable characteristics of a full life. These and many other concepts pioneered by Unity have been accepted by thinking people the world over.

“When asked what the next century holds for Unity, my answer is that I believe the message will continue to attract intelligent, progressive, positive-minded people. The future holds unlimited promise for continuity and expansion. Our spiritual movement will not be confined by the limits of a dogma etched in stone, because freedom of spiritual thought breaks all barriers of negation.”

Connie Fillmore continues:

“Unity doesn’t hold the answer to every question in everyone’s heart, because only God and that person know the answers to those questions. What Unity does know how to do, and is always willing to do, is to help people find their own answers. We do this by praying with them so they may tune into God’s guidance for them. We do this by offering educational programs so that friends may better understand themselves and their relationship with God. We do this by publishing and distributing inspirational materials so that words of Truth may go places where a teacher may not be able to go.”

“Today we see our message turning up in more and more places. We hear the words we’ve been speaking for 100 years in Army slogans, sermons by non-Unity ministers, and self-help books. We rejoice to hear this special awareness of the goodness of God echoing around us. Our purpose is to bring light wherever it is needed. The past 100 years have been a wonderful beginning for Unity. The next 100 years hold a promise:

When light is needed, Unity will be there;

When love is needed, Unity will be there;

When peace is needed, Unity will be there.

We cannot know specifically what tomorrow will bring. But with God as our unfailing support, we can know that it will be good.”⁴

Reflection Question

In the readings for Part I of Journey to Unity, what stands out for you as notable aspects of Unity?

⁴ Connie Fillmore, Unity: 100 Years of Faith and Vision, Unity School of Christianity, 1988, pp. 156-157.

Part II: Unity Teachings



Foundations

Unity teaches that each person is a unique expression of God created with sacred worth. Living from that awareness transforms our lives and the world.

Unity emphasizes the creative power of thought in our life experience. We refer to this as the [Law of Mind Action](#). When we take personal responsibility to choose life affirming thoughts, words and actions, we experience a more fulfilling and abundant life.

Unity emphasizes the importance of applying spiritual principles in our daily lives.

Unity teachings continue to evolve as we identify, embrace, and apply spiritual insights and the spiritual implications of new discoveries.

Five Basic Unity Principles

Although we teach many Principles in Unity, the “Five Basic Principles” are the touchstone recognized throughout the Unity movement. You will find them phrased in different ways; however, the spirit of each Principle will be the same regardless of how the Principle is expressed. Versions languaged for both adults and youth are presented here.

Five Basic Unity Principles ([Adult Version](#))

- 1 - God is the only true presence and power in the Universe.
- 2 - We are individualized expressions of God; our divine potential and spiritual essence are called the Christ.
- 3 - We create our reality through the thoughts we hold in consciousness.
- 4 - We become aware of our oneness with God through prayer and meditation.
- 5 - We must put spiritual truth into practice in order to change our lives.

Five Basic Unity Principles ([Youth Version](#))

- 1 - God is all good and active in everything, everywhere.
- 2 - I am naturally good because God's Divinity is in me and in everyone.
- 3 - I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.
- 4 - Through affirmative prayer and meditation, I connect with God and bring out the good in my life.
- 5 - I do and give my best by living the Truth that I know. I make a difference!

About God

We believe in a loving, not judging, God. God is not some human-like being, far away, but a very real spiritual presence that dwells in us all. God has many names. God is the Source, Spirit, Creator, Intelligence, Divine Mind and Sustainer of all.

We believe that there is only one Presence and one Power in this universe—God the good. In *The Quest: A Journey of Spiritual Rediscovery*, Richard and Mary-Alice Jafolla write,

“There is only one Presence. There is only God. Therefore, God is Omnipresent...Since God is all, there can be nothing outside of God. Therefore, God is more than Omnipresent, God is Omnipresence.” “...everything is part of God, everything. Think of how that knowledge affects us. Think of how such an abstract statement helps us live better lives. If we embrace the fact that everything is part of God, then we must admit that we are all part of God, we are all one with God and one with each other. There can be no quarrels, no conflict, and no wars among people who truly understand that oneness.

God is also Omnipotent, All-Powerful. This is another aspect of God. Yet even more than being all-powerful, God is Omnipotence, All-Power, the only Power there is. And this Power is good! Not only are there no other powers, there can be no other powers! Since God is in all places, there is no room for any other gods or any other powers. That means the power that is God is always in our lives and always available to us. And we can use this power to the extent that we can recognize and acknowledge it.

God also has universal knowledge: God is Omniscient. God knows all things. More correctly, God is Omniscience. God is All-Knowledge, which is all knowingness. The mind of God is universal and encompasses all things. How could it be otherwise? How could the ultimate Creative Force not totally embrace all knowledge? It is all knowledge. And that’s great news, too, because it means there is an answer to every problem, to every challenge in our lives. Here’s why: Since we are part of God, our own minds are part of God’s mind. God’s mind operates through us! This means we have access to all of the intelligence of the universe.”⁵

About Jesus

In *The Quest: A Journey of Spiritual Rediscovery*, Richard and Mary-Alice Jafolla write:

“[Unity] is based on the teachings of Jesus...When we study Jesus’ life (instead of worshipping Jesus the man), we see a perfect example for us to follow... His life and teachings are the examples we can learn from in the quest for the transformation of our own lives.”

...So much attention has been paid to Jesus’ divinity that we have overlooked his humanity. He was born fully human, just like the rest of us. He was tested in the

⁵ Richard and Mary-Alice JaFolla, *The Quest: A Journey of Spiritual Rediscovery*, Unity Movement Advisory Committee, 1993, p. 41.

same ways that all of us are tested, but he transcended his humanness and opened the way to self-mastery, to a oneness with God...”

From *Unity: A Path for Spiritual Living*, Association of Unity Churches:

“We believe that Jesus expressed his divine potential and sought to show humankind how to express ours as well. We see Jesus as a master teacher of universal truths and as our Way Shower. In Unity, we use the term “Christ” to mean the divinity in humankind. Jesus is the great example of the Christ in expression.”⁶

About Consciousness

[Eric Butterworth](#) writes in *Unity: A Quest for Truth*:

“We all are constantly making ourselves what we are. Unity reveals that our lives and affairs are completely influenced and shaped by the character of our thinking, that a person is not limited by God’s will or by heredity or environment or by fate or circumstance—but by his own dominant state of mind.”

We see the world not as it is, but as we are. We co-create our life with God. And when we change our thoughts—our consciousness—we change our world.⁷

The following topics are taken from *Unity: A Path for Spiritual Living*, Association of Unity Churches, International.⁸

The Nature of Humankind

We are each individual, eternal expressions of God. Our essential nature is divine and therefore inherently good. Our purpose is to express our divine potential as realized and demonstrated by Jesus and other master teachers. The more we awaken to our divine nature, the more fully God expresses in, through, and as our lives.

The Bible

Unity cofounders, Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, studied the Bible as history and allegory, and [interpreted it as a metaphysical](#) representation of humankind’s evolutionary journey toward spiritual awakening. In addition, Unity recognizes that the Bible is a complex collection of writings compiled over many centuries. We honor the writings as reflecting the understanding and inspiration of the writers at the time they were written. The Bible continues to be a valuable spiritual resource for us.

⁶ “Unity: A Path for Spiritual Living,” pamphlet by Unity Worldwide Ministries.

⁷ Eric Butterworth, *A Quest for Truth*, Robert Speller and Sons, 1965, p. 46.

⁸ “Unity: A Path for Spiritual Living,” pamphlet by Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Prayer and Meditation

[Affirmative prayer](#) is the highest form of creative thought. It includes the release of counterproductive, negative thoughts, as well as holding in mind statements of spiritual truth. Through [meditation](#), we experience the presence of God and enter the sacred Silence. Prayer and meditation heighten our awareness and thereby transform our lives.

Children and Youth

Unity recognizes that there are many expressions of family life. All are welcome. Unity creates an affirming environment that fosters positive self-image, personal responsibility, and unconditional love and acceptance.

Unity provides a strong spiritual foundation for children's lives, and:

- Beholds all children as whole and perfect expressions of God.
- Empowers children to fulfill their divine potential.
- Teaches children to meditate and pray.
- Invites children to experience a loving God.
- Encourages children to make constructive impacts in the world.

Psychology

Unity and the science of psychology share many of the same antecedents, so subjects and topics related to sound mental well-being are often present in Unity churches and centers. There are many connections especially to [Positive Psychology](#) and the [Analytical Psychology](#) of Carl Jung, and it is common to hear in Unity churches and centers references to topics such as self-esteem, shadow work, synchronicity, personal boundaries, and recovery from addiction to name a few.

Reflection Question

In the readings for Part II of Journey to Unity, what stands out for you as notable teachings of Unity?

Part III: The Unity Movement



Denomination or Movement?

Although it could be said Unity is a denomination within Christianity, the best term to describe the churches, centers, alternative ministries, educational institutions, publishing, and online media outlets that promote Unity teaching is “movement.” In Unity, there is no ecclesiastical hierarchy, no creedal professions, and no required rituals; however, there are many key constituent parts that work together as an organic whole which are described below.

Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM)

[Unity Worldwide Ministries](#) In 1966, Unity World Headquarters spun off a new organization which most recently was known as Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM). UWM functioned primarily to address the denominational needs of Unity churches and centers; however, over time there were attempts to establish “unity in Unity” by becoming one organization again. In November 2025, a path for doing so was approved by both organizations. Effective January 1, 2026, the functions of UWM were incorporated into the new Unity Communities and Leaders department of Unity World Headquarters.

Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village (UWH)

[Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village](#) is a global, inclusive, spiritual community that offers practical tools and uplifting resources to help people of all faiths apply positive spiritual principles in their daily lives.

Spiritual Leadership Training

Unity World Headquarters provides online and in-person [spiritual education](#) for laypersons interested in pursuing their spiritual growth and individuals seeking credentialing as Unity leaders including Ministers, Licensed Unity Teachers, Spiritual Directors, Certified Spiritual Educators (for youth).

Position Statements from Unity

Speaking in Washington, D.C. on February 6, 1968, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right.” This sentiment is not only true for individuals, but also true for movements like Unity that are committed to raising consciousness and “co-creating a world that works for everyone.” The former Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM) and Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village (UWH) have issued a variety of position statements on various matters. All statements can be found by clicking [here](#) or visiting <https://unityworldwide.org/who-we-are>.

Reflection Question

In the readings for Part III of Journey to Unity, what stands out for you as notable parts of the Unity Movement?

Part IV: Unity of Fairfax



Membership

Membership in Unity of Fairfax means that, aside from acquiring voting privileges, you have decided to make a deeper commitment to your spiritual life. You are encouraged to become more active in the life and outreach of our spiritual community. Anyone at least 18 years of age is eligible to join, following membership criteria described in the bylaws.

Unity of Fairfax Vision

We envision a world of peace, abundance, and respect for all creation.

Unity of Fairfax Mission

Aligned with the indwelling Christ, we co-create a world that works for everyone.

Unity of Fairfax Core Values

- **Spirit Centered:** Spirit is at the center of who we are and what we do;
- **Integrity:** Integrity is the practice of maintaining honesty and respectfulness;
- **Oneness:** Oneness is the call to revere Divine Life in all living beings and systems;
- **Love:** Love is a magnet for good and an agent of healing;
- **Engagement:** Engagement means participating with others in conscientious dialogue and collaborative action.

Brief History of Unity of Fairfax

In 1956, Rev. Mildred Park founded the Unity Study Group. This group met in the Fairfax Town Hall until 1958, when it moved to a little white church at 202 E. Main Street in Fairfax. In 1961, the Unity Study Group was renamed Unity of Fairfax Church of the Daily Word.

As the church membership continued to grow, it purchased land and drew up plans to build a new church home at 2854 Hunter Mill Road in Oakton, Virginia. This church, the smaller of the two buildings on our 5 acres, was completed in 1975. That building now houses [Hunter Mill Montessori](#).

By 1986 the congregation had outgrown this building as well, until the church purchased the adjoining property known as Hill House. This house provided space for classrooms and offices, and allowed expansion of parking as well. This worked well from 1988 to 2001, when

further growth necessitated another move. This time, the congregation decided on an ambitious building plan that would allow for continued growth in place and eliminate the need to move again. The project involved demolishing Hill House and erecting the beautiful building we have today. The new building was dedicated in November 2002, and in 2003 Unity of Fairfax members decided to rename the original church building The Mildred Park Center in honor of our founder.

The spiritual contributions of Unity of Fairfax are felt far beyond our building walls. Over the years, over 30 members have gone on to become ordained Unity ministers. In addition, we have sponsored six new churches either with ministerial support or with committed financial support. Unity of Fairfax indeed makes a loving difference in the world!

Unity of Fairfax today is growing. We have Sacred Service Ministries and groups that serve within our walls and beyond. With your commitment to membership in Unity of Fairfax, you are encouraged to actively engage with any of the ministries and groups noted below. Information on all ministries and groups can be found under the [GET INVOLVED](#) page on the Unity of Fairfax homepage or by clicking [here](#).

AUDIO VISUAL

Staffs the sound booth, the computer and video projectors and the live streaming console.

BIKING CLUB

Cycle together on short local outings or overnight adventures on multi-state, scenic trails.

BOOKSTORE

We have books on many spiritual practices and understanding different cultures.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Contributes to the well-being of others locally and globally through generosity and service.

COMUNIDAD HISPANA

En las reuniones se discuten libros y lecturas de autores metafísicos, así como también se comparten mensajes inspiradores, oraciones y meditaciones que alinean la mente y el corazón con Dios. Las reuniones son en español.

EARTHCARE

Maintains our sacred 5 acres and meditation garden, and educates on ecology, climate change and storm water management.

GREETERS

Stand at the entrance door and greet everyone coming to the Sunday services.

HIKING CLUB

Find a connection with the Source (Divine) in nature. A hike could be a mountain, a river or a beach shore, steep or flat.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The IT team takes care of all computers, phones, internet, and technical infrastructure of the church, hardware and software.

MARKETING

The Marketing Team advertises upcoming church activities and events using the web site, social media, brochures and ads.

METAPHYSICAL GROUP

Sunday Adult Education: Stimulate Your Mind and Spirit.

MUSIC & ARTS

Music Director Amy Conley, guest artists and Unity Chorus provide music during Sunday services.

PLATFORM ASSISTANTS

Platform Assistants help run the stage, the announcements, and act as MCs of the Sunday service.

PRAYER CHAPLAIN MINISTRY

A Prayer Chaplain is available after every Sunday service to pray with you.

RETREATS

The Retreat Team provides a variety of opportunities for spiritual renewal both at Unity of Fairfax and offsite.

SAGES

Every week a new topic to engage your curiosity and imagination ... and to learn something useful.

SMALL GROUPS MINISTRY

The Small Groups Ministry supports our vibrant spiritual community by providing personal opportunities for connections, friendship, spiritual growth, and fun.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Inspires Unity of Fairfax to promote social justice, equality, and respect for all through education and action.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The Thought for the Day is available over the phone 24 hours a day: Main Telephone: 703-281-0335.

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Our curriculum nurtures and explores the innate wisdom and divine qualities within each participant from ages nursery through high school.

Governance

Governance, including fiduciary oversight, of Unity of Fairfax is invested in the Bylaws and Policy Manual and operationalized by the Board of Trustees. Click [here](#) for governance information, and [here](#) for information about the Board and Staff.

Unity of Fairfax 2026 Board of Trustees

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Rev. Sherrie Quander | First Chair |
| Joe Liu | Second Chair |
| Sue Carrillo | Secretary |
| Kalahn Taylor-Clark | Treasurer |
| Tammy Nguyen | Keeper of the Flame |
| Midd Hunt | Member-at-Large |
| Tina Ralicki | Member-at-Large |
| Tim Tomastik | Member-at-Large |
| Dave Richardson | Member-at-Large |

To contact the Board of Trustees, use: board@unityoffairfax.org

Unity of Fairfax Staff

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
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| Annie Ray | Youth and Family Ministry Coordinator | youthandfamily@unityoffairfax.org |

To call the staff, use: 703-281-1767

Reflection Question

In the readings for Part IV of Journey to Unity, what Core Values or Ministry Teams stand out for you as notable parts of Unity of Fairfax?

Part V: Resources

Visit the **Unity of Fairfax Bookstore** located in the church!



Websites

Unity of Fairfax:

unityoffairfax.org

Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village:

unity.org

Silent Unity:

silentunity.org (or call 1-800-NOW-PRAY)

TruthUnity:

truthunity.net

Spanish Language Resources

Libros y revistas en español están disponibles en la librería Unity of Fairfax

unity.org/es

Podcasts

Inspiration from Unity of Fairfax

unityoffairfax.podbean.com

Books and Magazines

Discover the Power Within You, Eric Butterworth

Heart-Centered Metaphysics, Paul Hasselbeck

How to Pray Without Talking to God, Linda Martella-Whitsett

Myrtle Fillmore, Mother of Unity, Neal Vahle

Spirituality and Health: A Unity Publication

Daily Word Magazine

Reflection Question:

Visit some of the websites noted in Part V of *Journey to Unity*. Which ones were most helpful to you in learning about the Unity movement and why?

