

“PROSPERITY GIVING” AT UNITY OF THE VALLEY

A Philosophical Approach

In considering Unity’s practice of giving and tithing, we believe Unity principles support an approach that is both generous and intelligently flexible. The key to prosperity taught through the ages is not a rigid or dogmatic formula. Rather, as Eric Butterworth writes in *Spiritual Economics*: “Prosperity is a way of living and thinking, not just money or things. Poverty is a way of living and thinking, not just a lack of money or things. Considered in the broadest sense, prosperity is spiritual well-being.”

Our spiritual well-being as a church community includes being financially secure and having the capacity to reach out to people both within and outside our community. Just as monitoring and supporting financial needs and overall prosperity is an important part of achieving spiritual well-being for our church, the same is true for individuals. *Accordingly, we encourage congregants to base their support for Unity not on a rigid traditional amount, such as the tithe (10 percent of gross income). Instead, we recommend using your own discernment of what is both a generous and practical amount of giving, both financially and in volunteer service.*

Financial Security

Unity’s board and ministerial team have a fiduciary responsibility to manage the funds of the church. This includes making sure we have enough to pay the bills, support our programs, and care for the facilities. We accomplish this by 1) creating an annual operating budget, 2) following sound procurement policies, 3) conducting fundraisers during the year, and 4) monitoring income and expenses. Most of our operating funds are donated by congregants and attendees of our programs and classes. Some funds are earned from services we provide. However, a good portion of the operating funds come from the many hours donated by our volunteers. These hours of service amount to thousands of “in-kind” dollars each year which supplement our budget and enrich our programs and community.

Prosperity Needs and Community Giving

Meeting the prosperity needs of our Unity community is being done in many ways. We give through:

- Angel Network’s outreach to congregants in providing food and visits to the sick, bus tickets, occasional child care, Christmas baskets, and notes of encouragement.
- Youth & Family Ministry’s hours of service providing our children with a spiritual foundation.
- Our Prayer Shawl Ministry’s artistic creation of shawls for people needing emotional support.
- Our chaplains’ prayer support after Sunday services, by phone, and through home visits.
- Our kitchen angels providing coffee and snacks and help with soup lunches.
- All of our ministries giving with full hearts to our spiritual community.
- We occasionally assist a congregant with their medical needs or pay tuition and expenses for children to go to camp.
- We financially support the education needs of our ministers.

We give outside our community in many ways as well. For example, we have begun partnering with a neighboring church to provide meals to families in transition to permanent housing. We support other local organizations that help people in need. We sponsor special events that are open to the larger community. We give to our regional and national Unity organizations. Our youth sponsor a child in need overseas, and raise funds from an annual pumpkin sale for Thanksgiving baskets. At Christmas time our youth give stuffed bears to children in need, and on Valentine’s Day our youth visit nursing homes.

Unity of the Valley is a prosperous spiritual community. Every person who shares their time, talent, and treasure plays an important role in a divine process that benefits the individual’s spiritual growth, our community, and the world beyond.