



UNITY TEMPLE

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Published on *Unity Temple Unitarian Universalist Congregation* (<http://www.unitytemple.org>)

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History

Our congregation began in 1871 as Unity Church, when a group of Unitarians and Universalists gathered in an Oak Park home to bring a liberal approach to religion to Oak Park. The community, literally, has not been the same since!

In 1905, the original building was struck by lightning and destroyed. It was resolved immediately that the group would rebuild, and the architect was chosen from within the congregation. His name: Frank Lloyd Wright, nephew of the great Universalist preacher and social reformer Jenkin Lloyd Jones. His design embodied the spiritual vision of the Unitarian Transcendentalists. Among these bold and prophetic voices in religion and society were Emerson, Margaret Fuller, William Ellery Channing and Theodore Parker.

There is no steeple pointing up to a "God-Out-There" in the distant heavens. Instead, you find a remarkable sacred space, a temple that stands foursquare, where no one is more than forty-five feet from the pulpit, where the congregation can see each other, and where all are invited to look into other human faces and find divinity there.

In 1994 our congregation, then known as the Unitarian Universalist Church in Oak Park, united with Beacon Unitarian Church which had served Oak Park since 1979. Together we now form Unity Temple Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

Our religious movement, the Unitarian Universalist Association, is small compared with others, but unlike most others, it has been experiencing steady growth for the last decade. It is within our "tradition of bold spirits" that many find a spiritual home for today and tomorrow.

The history of this movement is graced with figures like Susan B. Anthony, Clara Barton, Joseph Priestley, Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams. Some have paid a high price for a free mind: Michael Servetus, who was ordered burned at the stake by John Calvin for questioning Calvin's theology; Norbert Capek, prime mover of Unitarianism in Czechoslovakia, who died in a concentration camp for opposing Hitler; and James Reeb, murdered in Selma, Alabama in 1965 while participating in a march led by Martin Luther King, Jr.

To bear the responsibility of continuing so great a tradition is our happy and humbling task.

Source URL (retrieved on 11/18/2018 - 11:26am): <http://www.unitytemple.org/about-us/history>