

Interfaith Vegan Coalition

UNITY CHURCH KIT



Demonstrating the Unity Ideals of Harmlessness and Universal Lovingkindness: Eight Steps

These are 8 steps that could be introduced at your church either one at a time or all together. The goal of these steps is to bring the golden rule ideal of harmlessness and lovingkindness into alignment with everyday church practices. You can do this alone, but it is very helpful if you have some interested church members who could join you in forming a “Green” committee or similar group that could help you promote these steps. Resources for these steps are listed below.



1. Include at least one prayer each week for animals in the church services. Join the Worldwide Prayer Circle for Animals at circleofcompassion.org as a congregation.
2. Include reverence for and kinship with all God's creatures in the church's mission statement. Include language such as “guardian” rather than “owner” when referring to companion animals. (See In Defense of Animals' Guardian Campaign, idausa.org). Use “he” or “she,” rather than “it,” when referring to animals.
3. Help develop a policy to remove or repel insects, mice and others without harming them and to protect birds from hitting large windows.
4. Encourage education and discussion about how the church can help animals by hosting films, speakers, and book studies about veganism and doing no harm to animals. Also, education about the intersectionality of all social justice movements, including animal rights, is very important.
5. Encourage church sponsored family outings that are nonviolent, such as hiking, camping, and canoeing, instead of hunting, fishing, rodeos, zoos, and circuses.
6. Require that members not wear fur into the church out of respect for God's beautiful creatures who are brutally raised and killed for vanity.
7. Begin purchasing paper, cleaning products, candles, etc. that are ecologically sustainable, fair-trade, and certified cruelty-free.

8. Certainly the most challenging step, but the most dramatic in its message of compassion and social justice, will be for the church to sponsor only cruelty-free meals. Sharing plant-based meals as a community acknowledges our commitment to our own physical health, the health of the earth, the people who are hungry in the world (since a plant-based diet uses far fewer resources than an animal diet does), and the right of all animals to live their own lives free from human exploitation and violence.

Sponsoring only plant-based meals also signifies respect and inclusion of those church members who are already committed vegans. Such meals signify our desire to mean what we say when we pray together--"on earth as it is in Heaven."

UNITY QUOTES

Charles Fillmore--Statements on Spiritual Vegetarianism

The following statement was included in the "Thirty Two Statements of Faith" which Charles Fillmore wrote after creating Unity. Until 1939, Unity taught all 32 Statements in the church, but in 1939 Unity removed this statement.

"We believe that all life is sacred and that man should not kill or be a party to the killing of animals for food; also that cruelty, war, and wanton destruction of human life will continue so long as men destroy animals."

Dr. Will Tuttle, author of the *World Peace Diet*, researched Charles Fillmore's Unity teachings and wrote, "For over forty years, from the late nineteenth century into the 1930's, Charles Fillmore, co-founder of the Unity School of Christianity, wrote passionately about the physical, mental, social, and spiritual harmfulness of eating animal foods, and the necessity of a plant-based diet for anyone serious about developing spiritual maturity and contributing to world peace. He and his wife Myrtle, the other

co-founder of Unity, were conscientious vegetarians and encouraged their students to be so. Charles's writings on this subject have been rather neglected, but in the hope that they may be of benefit to sincere spiritual aspirants, a small sampling of them is reproduced here following. These [quotes of Charles Fillmore] are excerpted from the original sources that are in the library at Unity Village in Missouri." They are also available in a bifold handout at www.circleofcompassion.org Click on "Handouts."

"I can say about flesh eating that the Spirit has shown me repeatedly that I could not refine my body and make it a harmonious instrument for the soul, so long as I continued to fill it with the cells of dead animals." "The Vegetarian," May, 1920

"The desire to demonstrate the Love Universal is lifting thousands out of every form of cruelty that selfishness has claimed is necessary to man's well-being. Therefore, in the light of the Truth that God is love, and that Jesus came to make his love manifest in the world, we cannot believe it is his will for men to eat meat, or to do anything else that would cause suffering to the innocent and helpless." "Vegetarianism," June, 1915

"The master on the spiritual plane is not a slave driver. He does not use force. The only law that he recognizes is love. To this law he must be true in all its ramifications throughout the universe of forms. He must love every creature, every beast of the field, every fowl of the air. His love must flow forth in protecting streams when any creature is in danger of violence or destruction. Thus he cannot in any way sanction the killing of animals for food, nor can he give passive assent by eating the flesh of those slain by the hands of ignorant men. He recognizes the right of every creature to fill out the full measure of its years, without interference on the part of men. This is a quality of mercy and justice which quickly falls into the mind opened toward God." "Flesh-Eating Metaphysically Considered," May, 1910



“We need never look for universal peace on this earth until men stop killing animals for food. The lust for blood has permeated the race thought and the destruction of life will continue to repeat its psychology, the world round, until men willingly observe the law in all phases of life, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’” “The Vegetarian,” May 1920.

“Every animal will fight for its life. What then can be the mental condition of the animal that has been cruelly forced into contracted pens and cars, and finally deprived of its body amid the most terrifying surroundings? Can it be otherwise than that its entire consciousness is permeated by violent vibrations of terror that act and react upon all planes of animal life with which they come into contact. You think that you eat a material thing called meat, but the fact is there is no such thing in reality. The flesh may seem to your outer sense to be a dead, inert mass, but, could your soul eye be opened, you would behold mental currents pervading its every atom, acting and reacting upon each other in a wild, bewildered manner, like the animal of whose body it formed a part. You are taking into your temple elements that will unsettle it, elements that you will have difficulty in harmonizing.” “Flesh-Eating Metaphysically Considered,” May, 1910

“Societies for the prevention of cruelty to dumb animals flourish, and large sums of money are given to them annually by those who daily eat the flesh of animals that have been cruelly carried to slaughterhouses, and knocked in the head, their throats cut and the skin stripped from their quivering bodies, all that the savage appetite of man shall be satisfied. The invisible psychic agony of millions of cruelly slaughtered animals saturates our earth’s atmosphere and the whole race suffers in sympathy. We make intimate mental contact with these psychic terrors of our little sisters and brothers of the animal world when we devour their fear-shattered bodies. Our vague fear of impending danger, our troubled sleep, our dread of the future, and numerous other unidentified mental complexes may and often are the echo fears of the brutes whose flesh we have entombed in our stomach.” “Eating and Drinking,” November, 1931

“The idea and object of Unity Inn is to demonstrate that man can live, and live well, on a meatless diet.” “The Unity Vegetarian Inn”.



“Paul says, “It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.” (Rom 14:21) “Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh forevermore.” (1 Cor. 8:13) The eating of flesh does cause your brother to stumble. To meet the demand of the flesh eater’s ferocious appetite thousands of men are daily steeped in blood and beer. These men are made to cultivate the cruel side of their natures in slaying defenseless animals in horribly inhumane ways. No man or woman “liveth unto himself” alone (Rom 14:76), and you are responsible for this stumbling of your brother in the slaughterhouse.” “The Twins: Eating and Drinking,” June, 1915 .

“When I began the study of Truth I was told that it made no difference what I ate if I was in the right thought. This seemed to prove true up to a certain point in my experience. While my spiritual development was confined to the conscious mind there seemed no special need of food discrimination. But gradually a new phase set in.” “As to Meat Eating,” October, 1903

“Again, it is proven by experiment that certain negative states of consciousness peculiar to the animal accompany its flesh in all its journeys through the body of man. All the upbuilding life goes out with the soul of the animal when it gives up its body, but the fears, the violence, the ignorance, the anger, the lust, and all that pertains to the error side of consciousness hover around the dead cells. In San Francisco a number of years ago many people were made violently ill from eating meat bought at a certain shop. Physicians investigated and they found that the carcass of a certain steer was the source, and it was presumed that it was diseased. Further inquiry developed this to be an error—the animal was unusually healthy and vigorous—in fact so vigorous and forceful

that he fought for his life for over an hour after the attempt to kill him began. He was in a frenzy of terror and anger; his eyes were bloodshot and he frothed at the mouth while the butchers were trying to slay him. The physicians decided that the anger and terror of this steer poisoned his meat in a manner similar to that of the angry mother her milk, which is well known to make the infant sick. This instance was but an exaggeration of conditions that exist in milder form in all animal flesh offered for food in our markets. Before they are slain these poor brutes are maltreated in ways almost beyond enumeration. Visit shipping pens, stock-trains, stockyards and packing houses, if you want evidence of the sufferings of the poor beasts of the field. And these very sufferings are through the law of sympathetic mental vibrations transferred to the flesh of those who eat the bodies of animals. The undefined fears, the terrors of the nightmare, and the many disturbances in stomach and bowels that man endures may be in a measure traced to these unsuspected sources.” “As to Meat Eating,” October, 1903.

“Good reasons for a vegetarian diet are many, and those who look into the matter have abundance of logic and sound sense arguments to sustain them in advocating the total exclusion of animal products as food. In discussing this question the humanitarian consideration should have first place, because it is farthest removed from selfishness; then follows the moral effect upon those who do the killing of animals; next the consideration of the various diseases that even doctors admit are caused by meat eating. All these points have been thoroughly handled by various writers. But there is a further consideration of meat eating that does not receive the attention which it deserves from either temperance advocates or vegetarians, and that is the relation which flesh eating has to strong drink. The assertion has been made, and we have not heard it disproved, that there never was a vegetarian drunkard. Here then, is a remedy for intemperance far more effective than all the drug cures that men take. That the discontinuance of flesh eating will also carry off the craving for strong liquids, like beer, whiskey, wine, tea and coffee, anyone can test for himself. Stop eating meat for even one month and that unnatural thirst which accompanies and follows a diet of flesh will disappear. There is a physiological

reason for this. Meat is always in a certain degree of putrefaction, and the decay is increased when it is introduced into the stomach. The juicy steak which lovers of flesh smack their lips over is saturated with salty urea, which in the stomach calls for liquid. Physiologists say that this juice in the steak is the urine of the animal arrested on its way to the kidneys. In eating this mess man not only makes his system a sewer for the corrupting animal flesh, but he also puts into his stomach an irritant that demands a cooling solvent at once. With this constant fever of rotting flesh in the stomach calling for a cooling draught, it is marvelous that any escape drunkenness. Blot out flesh eating and men will soon become temperate without the enactment of a single law. No one who eats the food that Nature prepared will have any desire for strong drink, not even tea or coffee. Then the sure cure for the drink habit is to stop eating meat and all animal products. This includes butter and eggs. Cereals, vegetables, nuts and oils have all the elements necessary to the body’s sustenance.” “The Twins: Eating and Drinking,” June, 1915.

Reverend Carolyn J. Michael Riley:

In 1987, the Reverend Carolyn J. Michael Riley declared Unity Church in Huntington, N.Y. a fur-free zone. Reverend Riley, a vegetarian since 1982, remains committed to her position. “I really do believe,” she says, “that everyone is able that much more to feel the Spirit, because there are no longer vibrations of death.” Reverend Riley says she wants to “help raise the consciousness of the suffering going on in the animal kingdom.” Vasu Murti quoted this in his [article](#).



UNITY POEMS

These poems are from the book *Best Loved Unity Poems*. They are not vegan at all, but they do bring out a reverence for nature, and a few animals are mentioned. They could perhaps be used to explore expanding our reverence for all living beings.. (Compiled by Dianne Waltner)

This I Pray by Ann Stark

Master of life,
Watch over me, I pray;
Walk Thou beside me
Through each night and day;

Teach my blind eyes to see
Thy presence in all things;
In smallest wind-blown flower,
The flash of wild birds' wings.

Let me ever heed
Thy wisdom guiding me,
Until I know at-one-ment,
Master of life, with Thee.



Not Believe in God!

By Ethel Romig Fuller

Not believe in God
On an April day!
Not believe in April,
One as well might say.

Not believe in God
With the world athrill
To the wakening of spring,
Meadow, stream, and hill!

Not believe in God
When a petaled tree
Is proclaiming it is kin

To Divinity!
When each nesting robin,
When each leafing limb,
When each budding daffodil
Confesses Him!



Song by J. Earle Wycoff

The day was dark, and sullen drops
Came licking at the pane;
Then suddenly a robin bold
Flung silver music through the
rain!

A little thing, the robin's song;
But shadows fled away,
And raindrops strummed the silver
tune
All through that livelong day!

Broad as the Sky

by G. C. Constable

The spire of my church, though
unseen, reaches the stars;
Its foundation rests firm in earth's
keep.
Its creed is as big and as broad as
the sky
That encircles the world in its
sweep.
The brethren are those who inhabit
the earth,
Mankind, the great and the small:
The sons of Mohammed, the rabbi,
the priest—
This cathedral has room for us all.
God speaks to me in the stir of a
leaf,
In the glorious song of a bird;
And my pew is a log or a mountain
crag—
Wherever His voice is heard.

Songs in the Unity Hymnal— “Wings of Song”

Prior to singing any of these hymns, we could ask the congregation to think of the animals of the world who are being used, abused, and killed for human taste, pleasure and greed. We can ask everyone to think of the beauty of all creation and how we can bring peace on earth to all beings, not just human ones. We can point out that our prayer—“peace begins with me”—can mean that we each make a personal commitment to do no harm to any being and certainly stop eating them and, in that way, bring peace to earth.

**Let there be peace
on Earth, #3**

**All Things Bright
and Beautiful, #14**

**All Creatures of our
God and King, #18**

Let there be Unity, #209

What Is Unity, #213

**We Thank You,
Lord of Heaven, #310**

Other Music compatible with Unity teachings

**Daniel Redwood's album, “Songs
for Animals, People, and the Earth.”**
These can be heard and played on
his [website](#). The album can also be
purchased on that website.

**Paul Seymour's songs, including
“[Maybe JC Was a Vegetarian](#).”**



BOOKS FOR STUDY GROUPS THAT ARE COMPATIBLE WITH UNITY TEACHINGS

Carbon Dharma: The Occupation of Butterflies,
by Sailesh Rao

Carbon Yoga: The Vegan Metamorphosis,
Sailesh Rao

Creatures of the Same God: Explorations in Animal Theology, by Andrew Linzey

Disciples: How Jewish Christianity Shaped Jesus and Shattered the Church and *The Lost Religion of Jesus*, both by Keith Akers

The Dominion of Love: Animal Rights According to the Bible, Norm Phelps

Main Street Vegan and *Good Karma Diet*, both books by Victoria Moran

Peace to All Beings: Veggie Soup for the Chicken's Soul by Judy Carman and *The Missing Peace: The Hidden Power of our Kinship with Animals*; by Judy Carman and Tina Volpe

A Plea for the Animals: The Moral, Philosophical, and Evolutionary Imperative to Treat All Beings with Compassion, by Matthieu Ricard

World Peace Diet: Eating for Spiritual Health and Social Harmony by Will Tuttle, Ph.D.

“Kindred Spirits: Animals as Spiritual Teachers” (This is a Unity publication and is not vegan but it might help encourage hearts to open to animals in general.)



DOCUMENTARIES AND VIDEOS

“Cowspiracy” and “What the Health” are on Netflix.

“[Earthlings](#)” is a very intense video that shows the unbelievable cruelty endured by animals at human hands. If you plan to show it, you need to give people fair warning. While it has caused

many people to go vegan on the spot, it can be traumatic to watch, and viewers need to be given great compassion and care while watching it.

“A Life Connected” is a short, 11 minute, but powerful and feel-good video [online](#).

“Our Noble Lineage: The Unity School of Christianity and Spiritual Vegetarianism,” [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

“[The Metaphysics of Food](#),” by Will Tuttle.

“Peaceable Kingdom” and “The Witness” can be watched free [online](#).

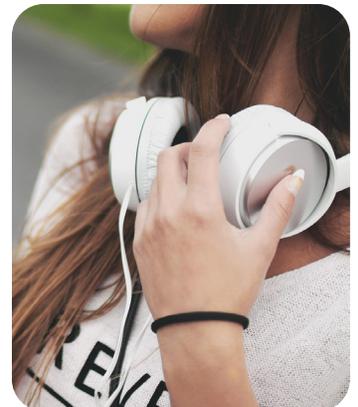
“[A Prayer for Compassion](#),” by Thomas Jackson.

“[The Theology of Christian Veganism](#).”

VEGAN RADIO AND UNITY COMPATIBLE PROGRAMS

Unity Online Radio with Victoria Moran, [Main Street Vegan](#).

[Vegan Spirituality](#) monthly conference calls. Anyone can join the calls.



UNITY PRAYERS

Prayer for Protection James Dillet Freeman
(This can be said as a blessing to the animals)
The light of God surrounds us [and all beings]
The love of God enfolds us [and all beings]
The power of God protects us [and all beings]
The presence of God watches over us [and all precious beings]
Wherever we are, God is, and all is well.

Affirmative Prayer is described on the Unity website: “By using an affirmative prayer approach, we can visualize and plan for the future with faith that the power of God is continually blessing our lives with unlimited possibilities. Affirmative prayer leads to an awakening of our spiritual selves. In faith, we

pray giving thanks in advance that the Universe is meeting our every need.” This explanation could be applied when asking for prayers for the animals suffering at human hands. For example, you could ask your minister to dedicate one of the Sunday prayers to the animals. By making it an affirmative prayer, the minister and congregation must put themselves in the place of the animals, become aware of their suffering, and pray “in advance” that the Universe is meeting their needs through people who commit to stop harming, eating, and using them.



Peace to All Beings Prayers. Judy Carman’s book, *Peace To All Beings: Veggie Soup for the Chicken’s Soul* contains many prayers for animals that could be used in Unity services and ceremonies. Some of them can be found online at www.circleofcompassion.org & www.peacetoallbeings.com.

UNITY RITUALS AND CEREMONIES

Burning Bowl. Many Unity churches use a burning bowl ceremony. This ritual is an outward sign of awareness of things that need to change and could be used to include prayers written for animals killed for food, fur, experiments, etc. and/or tortured for entertainment. For example, individuals could write a prayer for animals in laboratories or for no more cages and put that in the burning bowl. Or they could write down personal habits, behaviors, or thoughts that no longer serve them or represent their values (such as consuming animals or participating in other forms of animal exploitation) and put them in the burning bowl, releasing them and invoking kindness and compassion for all beings. And, as others see their changes being made, they may also be encouraged and inspired to change.

Blessing of the Animals. This ceremony could be expanded to include, not just pets, but also the animals being abused and killed by people. They may not be able to attend the ceremony, but they could be represented, perhaps, with photos or stuffed animals.

Peace Poles. If planting a peace pole (www.worldpeace.org), be sure to include paw prints as one of the languages.

Prayer Flags, Animal prayer flags to hang at the church can be found at www.peacetoallbeings.com.

WEBSITES HELPFUL IN ENCOURAGING UNITY TO EMBRACE VEGANISM

This is the [website](http://www.peacetoallbeings.com) of the Christian Vegetarian Association. Their handout—“Honoring God’s Creation”—can be ordered there.

<http://circleofcompassion.org/> - The congregation could be encouraged to commit to saying the Noon Prayer each day: “Compassion Encircles the Earth for All Beings Everywhere.” The prayer has been translated into many languages on the website. Also on this website is a bifold handout containing many quotes about vegetarianism by Charles Fillmore.

<http://Climatehealers.org> - This website explains the spiritual transformation necessary to save the earth from human-caused destruction.

<http://Peacetoallbeings.com> - A short video accompanied by Daniel Redwood’s music, is available here, showing prayer flags flying for animals in many places. Also some useful prayers are there.

<http://Veganspirituality.com> - This is a community of spiritual vegans from many religious backgrounds who see veganism as an essential part of their spiritual practice.

<http://Vegetarianfriends.net> - This website hosts “The Peaceable Table,” a vegetarian online journal for Quakers and other people of faith. You can sign up to receive this excellent monthly journal.



ARTICLES

[Blogs](#) by vegan Unity minister, Reverend Carol Saunders.

[Article](#) in “Daily Word.” “Growing up on Daily Word” by Victoria Moran.

[Article](#) on Truthunity.net, “We do not Eat Matter, but Life,” by Charles Filmore.

[Article](#) on Unity.org, “Seven Steps to Healthier Living,” about Victoria Moran’s guidance.

[Article](#) on Humanedecisions.com about the history of the Fillmores and Unity Church.

VEGAN ACTIVISTS FAMILIAR WITH UNITY PRINCIPLES

Victoria Moran
Will Tuttle
Dianne Waltner



Follow Up Support for You

SHOULD YOU NEED IDEAS, SUPPORT,
ADVICE, ETC., PLEASE EMAIL:

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