



Unity of Phoenix  
Spiritual Center  
**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**FY 2020/21**

A year of challenge ...  
but still much for which  
to be thankful!



When I look back on the impact that Covid has had on our way of life over the past 18 months — including the way we do church — I'm reminded of the famous lines in Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

We have gone from rocking live services in the Sanctuary on Sundays and Wednesdays to closing the campus for the better part of a year. We went from having more than 1,000 people in the Sanctuary each week to recording services in an empty room and posting them online.

Even though we've reopened with live services once again, rebuilding our weekly attendance and giving to a sustainable level has been slow. We're currently hosting about 400 people in the Sanctuary each week. We've gone from hugging to keeping our distance; from unmasked to masked; from being already short-staffed to having just a handful of employees; and from copious activities and events to services and a few online classes.

All of this impacted our revenue over the past year, resulting in a loss of over \$30,000 per month, and totaling more than \$400,000 for the fiscal year. It has been a challenging year: the worst of times.

But we have also seen the best of times in the many ways we have been blessed. Many of you have continued to give to our ministry, even when our services were only online. Several folks began giving electronically for the first time, and even signed up for auto-giving, which is such a big help in supporting our ministry. We qualified for two PPP loans of approximately \$150,000 each over the last two years, which helped us to cover salaries and utilities.

In addition to the 400 people who are attending our live services each week, we have an average of 300 to 400 more who watch our online services. Some of these folks are still cautious about returning to a large gathering of people. Others, after getting out of the routine of going to a brick-and-mortar church, now prefer the ease and convenience of getting their spiritual boost on demand.

In the backdrop of all of this, many churches have closed, and many more are really struggling. Realizing the depth and scope that this past year has had on other supportive organizations, Unity of Phoenix continued, in faith, to tithe during these uncertain times more than \$130,000 to 19 community programs and non-profits. We fully comprehend the importance and value of giving hope to others that have been affected, as well! Though the past year has not been easy for our ministry, I am pleased, proud and thankful for the continued love and support that so many have for Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center.

All of us have kept the faith and shown tremendous resilience in learning, adjusting and continuing to find new ways to be a beacon of spiritual light, comfort and inspiration, both live and virtually. God has a plan and purpose for our lives and for our ministry. We are definitely holding an intention that our attendance and giving will increase and that new congregants will be attracted to our uplifting and empowering message. We will not only survive — but thrive — in all areas of ministry, including our finances.

God has blessed and brought us this far, and we give thanks for the good that we know is still to come! Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center is a great ministry and my prayer is that each and every day, in each and every way, we will continue to get better and better and better!!!

Rev. Richard Maraj  
Senior Minister  
Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center

*The past year has been challenging, but we've also been blessed in many ways.*



Pictured left to right: Pastoral Care Minister Rev. Lori Fleming; Senior Minister Rev. Richard Maraj; and Wednesday Evening Minister Rev. Richard Rogers.



Dear Unity Friends:

As 2021 reaches a close, I am feeling so very fortunate to be a member of Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center. I have completed my sixth year serving on the Board of Trustees, and I can tell you — beyond any shadow of doubt — that the individuals I have served with are deeply spiritual souls. They give generously of their time and talents, and are wonderfully committed to our future. The challenges of change; learning how to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic; and continuing the mission to make a difference in people's spiritual lives have allowed each of us the opportunity to rise with hope and absolute faith that God will provide for our every need.

We are blessed beyond measure. Thank you, Revs. Richard Maraj, Richard Rogers and Lori Fleming for your loving guidance, inspiration and leadership. You are reaching many people and guiding us to discover God's Spirit within each of us! I take and share your teachings everywhere I go. Thank you to our office staff members who — behind the scenes — continue to challenge themselves to meet the needs of a changing environment. We see, love and appreciate you!

Within our beloved Unity community, some may be nervous about the future. You may be personally anxious about the loss of employment; loss of loved ones; changes in relationships; stresses and anxieties of your children; and being able to meet your needs for peace, joy and connection. We have all been practicing physical distancing for what seems like an eternity during a time when we need our social closeness so deeply — it can feel overwhelming.

And yet, in the midst of all of this uncertainty, we as a community come together with gratitude because we can and we must. On behalf of your Board of Trustees, I want to thank you for continuing to find ways to connect with each other; for your ongoing financial support; and for your willingness to serve. Now, more than ever, being a community that supports each other is vital! We all become connecting stewards when we reach out to one another to keep the relationships strong.

Live church services are back in the Sanctuary — and when you are ready to join us, we will be here. We miss seeing you!

Peace and Happy Holidays,

Monica Lawfield  
President  
Unity of Phoenix Board of Trustees

# Annual Meeting

Sunday, Jan. 16, 2022 • 12:30 p.m. • Sanctuary

Please join us for a discussion about the past fiscal year's financials, by-law changes, and the announcement of this year's new Board members.

Rev. Richard Maraj, Senior Minister

Rev. Lori Fleming, Pastoral Care Minister | Rev. Richard Rogers, Wednesday Evening Minister

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