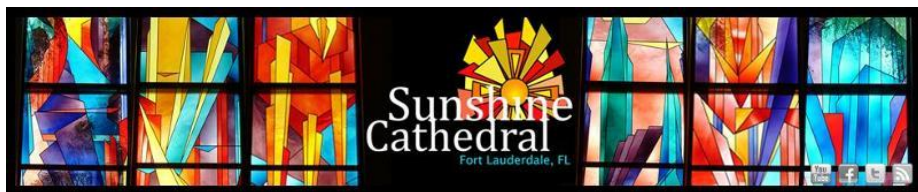




Spirit & Truth
A Samaritan Press Publication

March - April 2016



www.sunshinecathedral.org

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2016 Spirit & Truth

Spirit & Truth has been “reimagined” for 2016. Readers of *Spirit & Truth* will spend 2016 going through the bible. Of course, simple reflections and prayers won't cover every word in or every story of the bible, but what this year's reflections will do is take some passages from every book of the bible and use those passages for contemplation and prayer. Hopefully, readers will be inspired to read more of the bible on their own, but even if they do not, they will still have been exposed to some thoughts from every single book of the bible, and they will have used ideas inspired by biblical passages as part of their affirmative prayers.

The scriptural quotes for the daily reflections are paraphrased by Rev Dr Durrell Watkins. The *Spirit & Truth* reflections for 2016 began as a book project (and may wind up as a book yet), but first will be our *Spirit & Truth* prayer aid throughout this year.

Enjoy praying your way through the bible in 2016!

The daily prayers were written by Durrell Watkins. Photos and art are taken from the Internet (and all believed to be in the public domain) unless otherwise noted.

Leadership Academy: The Soul of Leadership

The Sunshine Cathedral 2016 Leadership Academy is a one day training retreat where Sunshine Cathedral leaders (staff, deacons, board, key volunteers, and anyone who is interested in leadership) re-energize, develop new skills, and recommit to servant-leadership.

Leaders of other Progressive churches are always welcome to join us.

The fee is only **\$10** for the day and lunch is provided. This year's Leadership Academy's theme is: **The Soul of Leadership**. Deepak Chopra's book, *The Soul of Leadership*, is recommended reading before the retreat, but is not required. The Leadership Academy will be offered on March 5th from 10 am to 3 pm at the Sunshine Cathedral.

Spiritual Heroes for March

March 2: John and Charles Wesley (1703-1791, 1707-1788)—Anglican priests and founders of Methodism. While attending Oxford, John and Charles founded the “Holy Club” to practice the worship and discipline of the Prayer Book. They were so strict they were given the nickname “methodists.” Both became Anglican priests, but later had experiences of inner conversion, which John described as having his heart “strangely warmed.” John created a synthesis of sacramental faith, a personal religion of the heart, and an active concern for social justice. Charles is remembered for writing over 6,000 hymn texts.

March 5: Karl Rahner (1904-1984)—Theologian. Rahner was a Jesuit who worked to build bridges between Christian faith and the modern world. He believed that all human existence was rooted in the holy and infinite mystery of God. He tried to reduce the divisions between faith and science, the church and the world, and emphasized grace as a relationship. He played a critical role in the Second Vatican Council.

March 7: Ss. Perpetua and Felicity (d. 203)—Martyrs. Perpetua, who came from a wealthy family in North Africa, and Felicity, her friend and servant, were martyred at Carthage during a period of Roman persecutions. Despite the pleadings of her family and the prospect of being torn apart by savage animals, Perpetua refused to renounce her Christian faith. In death they comforted each other, and in one final act before the jeering crowds they kissed each other. Writings about their death were wildly popular in the early church, and are important for reflecting the perspective of an independent woman of faith who claimed her own identity and vocation despite the demands of a patriarchal society.

Paramahansa Yogananda (1883 – 1952) – a spiritual teacher who emphasized each individual’s ability to experience Truth for herself or himself rather than relying on inherited or “blind” belief. He believed every individual has the ability to experience the Divine directly and should rely on that experience more than on religious dogma. Yoga was one of the spiritual disciplines he practiced and taught.

March 8: Annie Rix Militz (1856 – 1924) - was the founder of both the New Thought publication *Master Mind* magazine and the Homes of Truth movement.

March 9: Mikao Usui (1865 – 1926) - the founder of the complementary healing technique known as “Reiki” (universal life-force energy). Reiki practitioners allow themselves to be a channel of Universal Life-force Energy, imagining symbols as they place hands

on or near certain spots of a person's body (they also give "distant treatments" for people far away). Practitioners share the energy but remain detached from the outcome. They trust the energy will flow freely to accomplish whatever is most needed. The principles Reiki practitioners try to live by are simply: "Do not be angry. Do not worry. Be grateful. Work with diligence. Be kind to people." Reiki is not a religion and can be practiced by people of any or no faith tradition.

March 10: Harriet Tubman (1820?-1913)—Abolitionist. Born into slavery, Tubman escaped to the North in 1849. In the next 10 years she made 19 trips into the South, leading 300 slaves to freedom. Soon she was known as 'Moses.' During the Civil War she served as a spy, scout, and nurse. Later she worked for the cause of women's suffrage. She was a member of the AME Zion Church.

March 14: Fannie Lou Hamer (1917-1977)—Prophet of freedom. Raised in a family of sharecroppers in rural Mississippi, Hamer rose up as a prophet to challenge the oppression of segregation and poverty. At the age of 45 she attended a civil rights rally and committed herself to the freedom movement. On several occasions she was arrested and beaten, but despite the dogs, fire hoses, clubs, and bombs she drew on her deep faith and vision of justice to challenge the powers of oppression. She died of breast cancer.

March 14: Nona Brooks (1861 – 1945) – a major figure in the New Thought movement and one of the founders of the Divine Science Church.

March 17: St. Patrick (389-461)—Bishop and missionary of Ireland. This day is mostly known as a celebration of Irish pride and culture, rather than a remembrance of the historic Patrick. He was born into a Christian family in late Roman Britain. At 16 he was captured by Irish raiders and taken into slavery, where his only consolation was his Christian faith. Years later he escaped and returned to England, where he eventually became a Bishop. He felt called back to Ireland, and there was able to spread the Christian faith by working through the tribal leaders.

March 24: Archbishop Oscar Romero (1917-1980)—Martyr of El Salvador. As the violence of the death squads escalated Romero experienced a personal transformation as the voice of the poor and a fearless champion of justice. He was unafraid to confront the political, military, and even religious forces of oppression. The masses of poor found in him a shepherd who loved them. He was assassinated at the altar while saying Mass in a hospital.

March 26: Bishop Richard Allen (1760-1831)—Founder of African Methodist Episcopal Church. Born a slave, Allen was sold to a Methodist farmer and was converted. After purchasing his freedom

he felt called to preach. He felt the needs of African-Americans were best suited by the message of hope he heard in the Wesleyan movement. After many years of struggle against white control of Black churches, in 1816 he organized the first major black denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

March 27: Meister Eckhart (1260-1329)—Dominican theologian and mystic. Eckhart's writings were largely condemned in his lifetime, however he is today seen as a prophet of modern spirituality. He wrote in mystical and paradoxical terms of the union of the soul with God, of a God-consciousness that is attained only by emptying and detachment. His thoughts show many similarities to Zen Buddhism. He liked to say "Do not cling to the symbols, but get to the inner truth!"

March 29: Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688 – 1772) – Swedish scientist, philosopher, and Christian mystic. His writings influenced William Blake, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Balzac, and Helen Keller. His writings also offer the theological framework for the Swedenborgian Church.

March 30: Sister Thea Bowman (1937-1990)—African-American Franciscan. Thea Bowman was born in rural Mississippi. As a nun she worked to integrate her Catholic faith and her identity as an African-American woman. Being the only black face in a white religious order she tended to stand out! Rather than conforming to European models, she was determined to express her black cultural identity, but as a Catholic. She earned a doctorate in English, and was known as a spellbinding preacher. In her final struggle with breast cancer, her prayer was "Lord, let me *live* until I die."

Maimonides (1135 – 1204) - a Jewish rabbi and philosopher (sometimes called by his admirers the "second Moses"). He is considered the premier Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages. Maimonides sought to harmonize faith and reason, and was open to elements of Neo-Platonism. He interpreted the bible allegorically and minimized anthropomorphic (human) characterizations of God.

March 31: Rene Descartes (1596 in France – 1650 in Sweden) – Descartes wrote, "God is the First Cause which must have produced the idea of God in the thinker." Of course, his most famous quote is, "I think, therefore I am." He believed that Mind knows Itself before anything else. He encouraged methodic doubt, saying it "is necessary for honest thought."

MARCH

1 Samuel – Esther

Omnipresent Life is my life; It expresses through and as me. I am an individuation of the Whole, a unit of Pure Consciousness. As I am one with divine Life and within divine, universal Life is all that I need to experience happiness, abundance, harmony, love, and good health, I affirm that my good is at hand and there is nothing to keep it from me. I accept my good gladly and I give thanks for it. And so it is!



Photo by Kareem Murphy
One of the sanctuary windows, Sunshine Cathedral
Ft. Lauderdale, FL

1 – God Knows

“Let’s ask God what to do!” 1 Samuel 14.36

What should I do to help my body be as strong and healthy as possible? God knows. What should I do to be as happy as I deserve to be? God knows. What should I do to attract prosperity into my life and experience success? God knows. What should I do to heal from the past and create a glorious future? God knows. I now ask and allow Divine Intelligence to lead me in the paths of peace and plenty, health and harmony. Amen.

2 – *Divine Assistance*

“God is with me and will help me!” 1 Samuel 17.46

When Goliath, representing overwhelming conditions, threatened David, David’s affirmation was simple but powerful: “God is with me and will help me.” That is my affirmation today as well. *God is with me and will help me. And so it is.*

3 – *Love Power*

“Jonathan and David made a covenant together because they loved each other so deeply.” 1 Samuel 18.3

I give thanks for the power of love in my life. Amen.

4 – *One Love*

“Your love for me was amazing, surpassing the love a wife has for her husband.” 2 Samuel 1.26

There is one Power: *God*. There is one Presence: *God*. There is one Love: *God*. Just as David and Jonathan shared a powerful love, we can know that whenever love is present in our lives, we are experiencing the power of *God*; thanks be to *God*!

5 – *God Comes to the Rescue*

“God comes to the rescue.” 2 Samuel 4.9

God is the All-in-all, so God is always present to renew hope or restore courage or inspire with good ideas.

Holy Helper, I trust you to come to the rescue when I am in need. Amen.

6 – *I Can Do Big Things*

“God is with you so you can do big things.” 2 Samuel 7.3

God is with me so I can do big things! And I will, starting today.

7 – *Grieving Process*

“Now that he’s dead...he can’t return to me.” 2 Samuel 12.23

David grieved the loss of his young son. Grief is a healing process. It is how we manage the pain of loss and move toward joy again. I affirm that grief leads us back to joy.

8 – Persistence

“They started to cross the river, and by sunrise were on the other side.”
2 Samuel 17.22

**Even when there are sizable obstacles, if I will just keep moving forward, I will eventually reach my goal and destination.
For the gift of persistence, thanks be to God.**

9 – So Strong

“God stabilizes me and keeps me from stumbling.” 2 Samuel 22.37

**God is All Power, and God-in-me is more than equal to any challenge. I am strong with divine Strength that sustains me always.
And so it is.**

10 – Inner Warmth

“King David felt very cold.” 1 Kings 1.4

When life seems harsh, lonely, cold, or frightening, I remember that within me is the Light of Life, and nothing will ever dim it or keep its warmth from blessing me.

11 – Law of Attraction

“The divine Law can help you succeed.” 1 Kings 2.3

The divine Law, or Law of Attraction, is that *what we think about habitually we bring about eventually, or, where attention goes, energy flows.* The Law says that what I consistently visualize, focus on, and have strong feelings about will tend to show up in some way in my experience. If I misuse this Law, it can work against me. But if I use it properly, it will help me live a life of joy and achievement.

May I use the Law of Life wisely and well, to bless myself, my loved ones, and my world. Amen.

12 – The Unlimited Source

“Ravens brought Elijah food.” 1 Kings 17.6

My good can come to me from unexpected places. God is the Source of my supply and my Source is unlimited. The Source flows through many channels, and my good is sure to find me. Alleluia!

13 – Focus on the Good

“God answered Elijah’s prayer, and the boy for whom he prayed was restored.” 1 Kings 17.22

Even when things look hopeless, there may yet be something good that can happen. As I focus on the Good, blessings will be made manifest. And so it is.

14 – Take Care of Yourself
“Get up and eat!” 1 Kings 19.5

When struggles get us down, we may forget to take care of ourselves, but the difficult times are when we especially need self-care. When times are good and when they are challenging, I will remember to love myself, to eat well, get rest, exercise, pray, and spend time with encouraging people. No matter what is happening around or even to me, I will choose to get up and move forward in the name of all that is holy. Amen.

15 – A Miracle Mindset

“Elisha wondered, ‘Will God, through me, work miracles as God did through Elijah?’ Elisha then parted the river and walked across.”
2 Kings 2.14

Some have broadened their view to see possibilities others couldn’t. If they did it, I can do it. I am developing a miracle mindset. And so it is.

16 – Leave the Bad Stuff Behind

“Naaman went down to the dirty water, immersed himself seven times, and was completely cured.” 2 Kings 5.14

Elisha told Naaman that healing was possible if he’d do his part. Naaman went to the Jordan River (representing the flow of all thinking, positive and negative), and bobbed up and down in it seven times (the number of perfection), and as a result, he was cured. The stream of collective thinking contains hope and fear, peace and anxiety, abundance and scarcity, and from that mix we want to emerge whole, free, and full of life. And we can. Naaman went into the dirty water, but he came out clean. When we leave our fears, regrets, and pessimism behind, we come out clean, hopeful, joyous, full of life. In the stream of collected thinking, there is good and bad; but in my individual consciousness, I am choosing only the good, and as a result, I am blessed. And so it is.

17 – It Will Be Alright

“God helped Hezekiah, and so Hezekiah enjoyed a great deal of success.” 2 Kings 18.7

With your help, God, everything I do will turn out well. Amen.

18 – Trusting the Infinite

“Bless me and keep me safe.” 1 Chronicles 4.9

Jabez prayed for divine blessings, and the bible says his prayer was answered.

Goddess/God, Infinite One, I trust you to provide for my every need, and I declare that you always will. Amen.

19 – Breakthrough

“David believed he defeated his enemies because God helped him break through their opposing forces.” 1 Chronicles 14.11

When the economy, the lab report, or worse, my own attitude seems to be a mighty force intent on keeping me down, that’s when I need a breakthrough.

Dear God, when I feel like breaking down, lift up my spirit and help me believe that a breakthrough is possible – it always is. Amen.

20 – More Opportunities

“David prayed, ‘God, you’ve done so much for me and my loved ones, and still, you promise to do even more!’” 1 Chronicles 17.16-17

Life has offered me so many opportunities, more even than I have taken. And still, I know there are many more to come.

God help me make the most of the opportunities before me, and all for the good. Amen.

21- The Gift of Peace

“I will give Solomon peace.” 1 Chronicles 22.9

The storms of life can’t disturb me if I have peace within.

Sometimes, if I have enough peace, I can even impart peace to the storm. Peace is possible! Amen.

22 – Have Confidence

“Be confident. Don’t give in to fear. Don’t let yourself be discouraged.” 1 Chronicles 28.20

I accept the peace of God. I allow myself to be filled with joy. I am a person of indomitable hope. I believe in myself and in the light of God within me. And so it is.

23 – Divine Love Never Ends

“Divine Love never ends.” 2 Chronicles 7.3

God is love and that love is eternal and omnipresent. Wherever I am, God is, and wherever God is, infinite possibilities exist. And so it is.

24 – God’s Got This

“Don’t be afraid of being outnumbered. The battle isn’t yours; it’s God’s.”
2 Chronicles 20.15

God give me the grace and the courage to do what is right and good, even when it isn’t easy or when there is opposition to it. May I always operate in integrity, and as I do the right for right reasons, I will leave the results to you. I will plant the seeds and let you grow the garden. That is a plan that cannot fail. Amen.

25 – Celebrating Something Good

“Everyone was worshipping!” 2 Chronicles 29.28

May everyone I meet today feel the presence of hope and joy within them, and may they be glad for the presence of these gifts, whether or not they call the source of the gifts “God.” Amen.

26 – Daily Communion

“...every morning and evening they worshiped their God.” Ezra 3.3

Throughout the day I intend to turn within and commune with the holy Spirit within me. Amen.

27 – Abundance

“...You have shown us great kindness, O God.” Ezra 9.8

The Universe is grand, opulent, abundant, and giving. I give thanks for all that Life offers me. I know that more good is on the way. And so it is.

28 – Joy Gives Strength

“Divine joy is our strength.” Nehemiah 8.10

**Joy builds me up and energizes me.
Thank you, God, for the gift of joy. Fill me to overflowing with it.
Amen.**

30 – Do Some Good

“May the good that I do yield good results.” Nehemiah 13.31

I wish to do good for the sake of doing good, and still I know that what we sow, we reap. As I do good, may that good return to me ten-fold, and from my increased blessings, may I do even more good! Amen.

31 – *I Am Where I Am to Do Something Worthwhile*

“It could be that you were made Queen for such a time as this!”

Esther 4.14

Wherever I find myself today, I know that I can do something worthwhile. Amen.

LIVE IN THE NOW
Rev Dr Durrell Watkins

The wise sage Lao Tzu taught, “A good traveler has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving.”

One of my favorite names for the Divine is “I Am.” I Am-ness, or Is-ness is the name and nature of Life! We have been socialized to plan ahead, and of course, it is good to have a vision for achieving something in particular, but we needn’t “get somewhere” to be good enough. I often hear people wondering when they will “arrive” at a certain place in their career, not realizing or enjoying all that they have already achieved. People will fret about when their healing will take place, while overlooking all the ways that healing has occurred already. People will long for love, but not notice all the love that is pouring into their lives every day. We may have an idea of what we would like the future to look like, but let’s remember to live in the NOW.

Right now I Am blessed! Right now I Am loved! Right now I Am capable! Right now I Am wise and wonderful! This is true for each of us. The I Am that I am is divine; what could be better than that?

Spiritual Heroes for April

April 4: Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)—Apostle of freedom and renewer of society. Martin earned first a Bachelor’s degree from Morehouse College, then a Master’s degree from Crozier Divinity School, and finally a Ph.D. in Theology from Boston University. Later he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. He was the spiritual leader of the modern Civil Rights movement. Inspired by the example of Gandhi, he led a campaign of nonviolent resistance to racial segregation, racism and poverty. He is best remembered for his famous “I Have a Dream” speech given at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. He was repeatedly jailed and in 1968 he was assassinated in Memphis, TN.

April 7: Ernest Holmes (1887-1960) – Founder of Religious Science. Holmes was an influential figure in the New Thought movement. After studying philosophy and world religions independently, working with his brother who was a Congregational minister, and becoming ordained in the Divine Science movement, Holmes wrote *The Science of Mind* and later started the Religious Science Church.

Fenwicke Holmes (1883-????) - earned a B.A. from Colby College and attended Hartford Seminary and was ordained a Congregationalist minister. In addition to assisting his brother (Ernest Holmes) in the Science of Mind movement, he also served as the pastor of a Divine Science church. He was helpful in spreading New Thought philosophy in Japan through his collaboration with Seicho-No-Ie's founder, Masaharu Taniguchi. Fenwicke's books include: *Being & Becoming* (1925), *The Law of Mind in Action* (1926), and *The Truth About Matter* (1944).

April 8: Sidhartha Gautama, the Buddha (circa 560 – 480 BCE) – *Buddha* means “Awakened.” He was born in what is today Nepal and he died in India. The Buddha is said to have had a dramatic experience whereby he became “awake” (or enlightened), and then set about teaching others how they, too, could learn to live as fully awake beings. Many Buddhists speak of the “Buddha Nature” that is latent within all of us; as we achieve enlightenment (or awakening), we express that Buddha Nature. The Buddha is regarded as the model, or supreme Buddha, but others have been thought to achieve enlightenment. Compare this to the belief that some have that Jesus demonstrates the Christ Principle that is latent within all people. The Buddha taught that suffering is caused by ignorance. Attachment and craving are symptoms of ignorance. By learning the Truth (and practicing what we learn), we can change our thoughts and attitudes, that is, we can control our cravings and thereby limit suffering. Buddha taught and practiced meditation and gave an 8-fold righteous path to follow, which included right understanding, right thinking, right speech, and right action.

April 9: Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)—Theologian and martyr. Bonhoeffer was deeply committed to the ideals of Christian community. He helped organize resistance to the Nazi takeover of German churches. When the Confessing Church movement was snuffed out he was imprisoned for his participation in the plot to kill Hitler. Influenced by the Social Gospel movement in America, he later wrote in prison of the need for a “religionless Christianity.” His writings have been a major influence on Christian Ethics in our time.

James Dillet Freeman (1912-2003) – the “Poet Laureate” of the Unity School of Christianity. He composed the prayer: The Light of God surrounds us; the love of God enfolds us. The power of God protects us; the presence of God watches over us. Wherever we are, God is!” Not only is that prayer used in the Sunshine Cathedral liturgy (and in worship services elsewhere), it was taken to the moon in 1969!

April 10: Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955)—Mystic and scientist. A French Jesuit priest, Teilhard was both one of the most creative

theological minds of the 20th century and an immanent scientist. He did extensive work in geology and paleontology in China, helping to discover the remains of "Peking Man." He sought to develop a synthesis of science and religion, integrating the theory of evolution with a cosmic vision of Christ at the heart of the cosmos. His writings, seminal to the development of Process Theology, were suppressed by the Vatican during his lifetime.

Kahlil Gibran (1883 – 1931) - was born in Ottoman Syria (now Lebanon) and was the grandson of a Maronite Catholic priest. The Gibran family moved from the Middle East to Boston (USA) where he flourished as a poet, artist, and philosopher. He later studied in Paris and lived in NYC where he wrote and painted. His most famous work is *The Prophet*. His writings were very popular in the counter-cultural movement of the 1960s. Here are some of his inspiring words: "All that spirits desire, spirits attain", "An eye for an eye, and the whole world would be blind", "Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror", "Faith is a knowledge within the heart, beyond the reach of proof", and "I existed from all eternity and, behold, I am here; and I shall exist till the end of time, for my being has no end."

April 23: Cesar Chavez (1927-1993)—Farmworker. Raised in a family of Mexican-American migrant workers, Chavez transformed a local labor struggle into a moral cause that challenged the conscience of the nation. He was committed to absolute nonviolence, and was supported by many religious leaders. Inspired by a priest who gave him a passion for justice, and a community activist who taught him how to organize, he became the driving force in founding the United Farmworkers Union.

April 25: St. Mark the Evangelist—Evangelist. The writer of the oldest gospel in our canon. Mark's gospel was written around 70 CE.

April 27: Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1882) - American essayist, philosopher, poet, and leader of the Transcendentalist movement in the early 19th century. His teachings directly influenced the growing New Thought movement of the mid 1800s.

April 28: Oskar Schindler (1908-1974)—"Righteous Gentile." Here is an example of a person who is remembered not for *being* holy (living a religious or virtuous life), but rather for being used by God in *doing* something holy. Schindler was a German industrialist who made a fortune on the labor of Jews in his factory. Although raised as a Catholic, he was not religious. For reasons which have never been clear, and at great personal risk, he used his power and influence to save the lives of 1,100 men, women, and children during WW2. At the end of the war he was impoverished. Today he is buried in Jerusalem at Yad Vashem (Holocaust Memorial) among the "Righteous Gentiles."

APRIL

Job - Psalms

Infinite Goodness,

I deny that there is any power other than you. There is nothing to block, hinder, or oppose the blessings you have to give. And I affirm that since you are All-in-all and you are All Good, the Good I can imagine and believe I deserve is already mine to experience. Holy One, let my good be made manifest in abundance! Thank you, thank you, thank you, unlimited Source! Amen.



Photo by Robert Griffin
Easter Altar, Sunshine Cathedral, 2013 (Ft. Lauderdale, FL)

1 – Restoration is on the Way

“I have no energy left.” Job 17.7

When I’m tired, when I think I have no energy left, I can remember life IS energy. The spirit of Life is always flowing through me and expressing as me. I have more strength than I may think. Restoration is on the way!

2 – Sacred Value

“My redeemer is alive.” Job 19.25

**When something is redeemed, its value is affirmed. Every time I affirm my sacred value, I am experiencing redemption!
I affirm and give thanks for my sacred value. Amen.**

3 – *Seeing God in Me*

“In my body I can see divinity.” Job 19.26

God in me, when I look at my life, my body, my relationships, my dreams, my aspirations, my talents, my emotions, my sexuality...when I am looking at myself I am looking at you revealing yourself through me. And so it is that I am blessed. Amen.

4 - *Listen*

“At least listen to me. That’s all the consolation I need.” Job 21.2

Job’s friends blamed him for his misery, but being judged didn’t make him feel better. Job actually was able to tell them what he needed from them: a listening ear. When a friend needs comfort, what I can offer is a sympathetic, non-judgmental, listening ear, a hug, a silent prayer. And when I need help, I will remember that I can ask for it.

5 – *Better Days*

“I miss the good old days.” Job 29.2

The past is past. It can be remembered; we can learn from it, but we should never long to repeat it. The “good old days” might not have been quite as good as we remember, and even if they were, life can be even better now. We must go forward, never back. Rather than missing the good old days, let’s create even better days from now on.

I affirm that the future has infinite possibilities! There are blessings for me today and always. Amen.

6 – *Thankful for Hope*

“I have had experiences that I don’t entirely understand.” Job 42.3

I may not always comprehend how optimism actually helps my life unfold in happier and more fulfilling ways, but I trust that it can, it has, and it often does. Hope isn’t magical, but it is powerful and I choose to be a person of hope.

I give thanks for the power of hope. Amen.

7 – *Joyful Living*

“The divine Law is our joy.” Psalm 1

The divine Law works for me as I cooperate with it. As I think positively, intentionally, and expectantly, my life becomes more and more joyous. Amen.

8 – Refuge in God

“Happy are all who take refuge in God.” Psalm 2

I am in God and God is in me; and so it is that I rejoice as I declare that all is well.

9 – A Divine Shield

“God, you are a shield around me.” Psalm 3

Your power and presence surround me, God, and in this knowledge I take great comfort and assurance. Amen.

10 – God Hears

“God always hears me.” Psalm 4

Omnipresence, you know my thoughts, my needs, and you respond to my words and intentions. And so it is that my prayers are powerful. Thank you! Amen.

11 – I Am Guided

“Guide me...” Psalm 5

I give thanks for divine guidance today. It is available always. Amen.

12 – God Cares

“God cares when I am sad.” Psalm 6

Infinite Compassion, everlasting Love, it is never your will that any should suffer. I know that you can help me lift my head when times are difficult. I know that you are more fully expressed when I am safe, happy, well, and prosperous. Help me now to live abundantly. Amen.

13 - Justice

“Let there be justice.” Psalm 7

All people deserve dignity, equal opportunity, and fair treatment. I believe in and pray for justice for all.

14 – Divine Me

“God has made us divine.” Psalm 8

There is one Substance in life, and I am made from It. Just as a wave isn't the entire ocean, but is an experience of the ocean and is in essence the same as the whole ocean, I am in, of, and like God. You, God, have made me divine. Humbly, I express hope and gratitude. Amen.

15 – Temple & Throne

“The Holy One is in the Temple. The Holy One’s Throne is in heaven.”
Psalm 11

My body is the Spirit’s Temple. My mind is the Seat of Power of the Divine in my life. I will remember this empowering Truth today. Amen.

16 – We Always Have God

“Help me, God! Who else do I have?” Psalm 12

Sometimes it may seem as if we are alone with no one to help, but that isn’t really true, because God is the Source and Substance of All Life. The Omnipresence is the one Reality, the one Power. This universal Power is always with me, flowing through me, expressing as me. This Power is my constant help, and I am thankful for and to it!

17 – How Long?

“How long?!” Psalm 13

The prayer of impatience: *How long?!*

When the financial challenge lingers, when the illness seems to resist treatment, when the depression isn’t easily lifted, when relationships go sour or so-called enemies seem to come out of the woodwork, we tend to pray the prayer of impatience: *How long?!* Thank you, God, for responding to the prayer of impatience with abundant kindness. You are present in our pain, and you whisper healing ideas into our hearts. The solution may take longer than we would like, but good things can come from the long wait. Blessings are on the way. Amen.

18 – Trusting God

“Keep me safe, God.” Psalm 16

I trust you, God, to lead, guide, and direct me in the ways of safety, happiness, prosperity, and well-being. Thank you, God. And so it is.

19 – The Glory of God

“The sky shows divine glory.” Psalm 19

When I look at the beauty of nature, I see divine glory. I am part of nature. When I see myself as God sees me, I see God’s glory and I gladly praise the divine presence in my life.

20 – Accepting Good

“May God grant the good desires of your heart.” Psalm 21

We are meant to experience Good in our lives. I am willing to embrace my Good now.

21 – God is Always Near

“My God, why have you abandoned me?...Oh yeah, God has not forgotten me! God has never turned away from me. God does hear me when I cry out. I will praise God.” Psalm 22

Even when I don’t feel the divine Presence, it is always near; indeed, I can never be separated from It. Divine Life is my life and as I remember this, I am made glad!

22 – The Good I Seek is Seeking Me

“Good is seeking me out every day of my life and I am in the divine Presence forever.” Psalm 23

I wish to be blessed and today, I remember that blessings are actually seeking me! The Good I desire is mine to have and I accept it now. And so it is.

23 – God is...

“God is my light and my safety.” Psalm 27

God is light and wholeness, perfection and love, life and joy, peace and power, and what God is, I Am! Alleluia!

24 – Mistakes Happen

“I admit my mistakes.” Psalm 32

I haven’t always lived up to my potential, but every moment is new. I learn from my mistakes and I grow. I am demonstrating my innate goodness more and more each day. And so it is.

25 – Praying for & About Enemies

“Those who don’t like me are very unkind to me.” Psalm 56

Why do some people seem mean or bitter? Am I projecting my own issues onto them? Have I unintentionally provoked them? Are they hurt from previous experiences and are now acting out of their pain or fear? I may never really know, but I can take the matter into the Silence, into the light of prayer. Somehow, my prayers will bring some measure of healing to them and me.

Lord of Life, Mother of Hope, those I call enemies you call your children. Please minister healing love to your children – to all of us. Amen.

26 – *Blessings Throughout Life*

“Do not forget me as I age.” Psalm 71

Childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, the senior years...every time of life has its learning opportunities and apparent challenges. Every age also offers blessings and opportunities to experience love, hope, and joy.

At every stage of life, may I love my life and live it to the fullest. Amen.

27 – *Allow Newness*

“Dare to sing a new song!” Psalm 96

God of eternal newness, give me the grace to release the past to the past and to accept the blessings that Today is offering me; and with the power of the mind you have given me, may I create a beautiful, joyous, abundant future. Amen.

28 – *Celebrating Life*

“Shout joyfully!” Psalm 100

Thank you, God, for the gift of joy, for the ability to enjoy and celebrate life. Amen.

29 – *Gratitude Attracts More to be Grateful About*

“Be grateful.” Psalm 118

The more I find to be grateful about, the more there is to be grateful about! The attitude of gratitude is a miracle working attitude. I give thanks for the blessings in my life, and for blessings still to come.

30 – *Spiritual Community*

“It’s so good when like-minded people form a community.” Psalm 133

I affirm blessings for the worshiping community where I am spiritually nourished.

“God is you.... Notice that we did not say that you are God. We said, *God is you*. Ice is water. All ice is water, but not all water is ice.... Whatever your life is, it is God. The life in us is God Life. The wisdom in us is God Intelligence, and the love in us is God Love. We are created as an idea in God Mind, and our purpose in life is to out-picture this idea in expression.” William R. Parker

THE HEALING POWER OF JOY

Rev Dr Durrell Watkins

Norman Cousins, the *Saturday Evening Post* editor of more than 30 years, was a committed optimist. He said, "Optimism doesn't wait on facts. It deals with prospects. Pessimism is a waste of time."

Cousins was diagnosed with a severe form of arthritis, but he developed his own treatment for the condition. He treated his dis-ease with joy! He watched funny films and surrounded himself with humorous people. He even chose to laugh for no reason sometimes. Basically, he laughed at his diagnosis!

Metaphysicians are healers, and I love the idea that one of the tools in our spiritual toolkit is laughter. The Apostle Paul called joy one of the "fruits of the Spirit." He also encouraged people to "rejoice always!"

When we consider that we are one with God, that Life has no end, and that we have the power to choose our thoughts which shape our attitudes which influence how we experience life, then joy comes naturally. And when we have joy, we are experiencing life more abundantly.

I believe that joy is possible no matter what. I believe in joy that no circumstance or situation can take away.

Sunshine Cathedral March – April Lectionary

March 6

Wisdom of Norman Vincent Peale

"Start each day by affirming peaceful, contented and happy attitudes and your days will tend to be pleasant and successful."

Wisdom of Soren Kierkegaard

"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."

Isaiah 43.18-21 (The Message)

"Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new. It's bursting out! Don't you see it? There it is! I'm making a road through the desert, rivers in the badlands. Wild animals will say 'Thank you!' —the coyotes and the buzzards— Because I provided water in the desert, rivers through the sun-baked earth, [and] drinking water for the people..."

March 13

The Wisdom of Victor Frankl

"Everything can be taken from one but one thing: the last of human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

The Wisdom of William James

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his [or her] life by altering his [or her] attitudes”.

Luke 15.8-10 (The Message)

“Imagine a woman who has ten coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and scour the house, looking in every nook and cranny until she finds it? And when she finds it you can be sure she'll call her friends and neighbors: 'Celebrate with me! I found my lost coin!' Count on it—that's the kind of party God's angels throw every time one lost soul turns to God.”

Palm Sunday, March 20

The Wisdom of Plutarch

“What we achieve inwardly will change outer reality.”

The Wisdom of Kurt Vonnegut

“Trust a crowd to look at the wrong end of a miracle every time.”

John 12.12-15 (The Message)

“The...huge crowd that had arrived for the Feast heard that Jesus was entering Jerusalem. They broke off palm branches and went out to meet him. And they cheered: 'Hosanna! Blessed is [the one] who comes in God's name!...' Jesus got a young donkey and rode it, just as the Scripture has it: 'No fear, Daughter Zion: See how your [leader] comes, riding a donkey's colt.'”

Maundy Thursday (March 24)

John 13.4-5

“[Jesus] got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing.”

Easter Sunday, March 27

The Wisdom of Phillips Brooks

“Death is strong but Life is stronger.”

The Wisdom of Alice Freeman Palmer

“I remember it is Easter morn, and life and love and peace are all new born.”

The Wisdom of Martin Luther

“The promise of the resurrection is written not in books alone, but in every leaf in spring-time.”

Luke 24.1-6 (The Living Bible)

“Very early on Sunday morning [the women] took ointments to the tomb—and found that the huge stone covering the entrance had been

rolled aside. So they went in—but the Lord Jesus' body was gone. They stood there puzzled, trying to think what could have happened to it. Suddenly two men appeared before them, clothed in shining robes...Then the men asked, "Why are you looking in a tomb for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He has come back to life again!"

April 3rd

The Wisdom of Ralph Waldo Emerson

"...the Highest dwells with us...there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so there is no bar or wall in the soul where we, the effect, cease, and God, the cause, begins...There is deep power in which we exist and whose beatitude is accessible to us...Within us is the soul of the whole, the wise silence, the universal beauty...the eternal One.

John 20.19-22 (The Message, adapted)

... the disciples had gathered together, but, fearful of the Religious authorities, had locked all the doors in the house. Jesus entered, stood among them, and said, "Peace to you." Then he showed them his hands and side. The disciples, seeing the Teacher with their own eyes, were exuberant. Jesus repeated his greeting: "Peace to you. Just as I was sent, I send you." Then he took a deep breath and breathed on them. "Receive the holy Spirit," he said.

April 10th

The Wisdom of Goethe

"Correction does much, but encouragement does more."

The Wisdom of Roy Eugene Davis, a disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda

"Most people work hard for their money; they exchange time and effort for the money they earn. Are you making wise use of your money (life) or are you wasting it? Are you working merely to provided for your body or are you spending a portion of your money (your life) to help others, to spread the message of enlightenment, so that at least part of your life is lived for the good of humankind?"

John 21.1-6 (The Message)

... Jesus appeared again to the disciples, this time at the Tiberias Sea (the Sea of Galilee). This is how he did it: Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed "Twin"), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the brothers Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. Simon Peter announced, "I'm going fishing." The rest of them replied, "We're going with you." They went out and got in the boat. They caught nothing that night. When the sun came up, Jesus was standing on the beach, but they didn't recognize him. Jesus spoke to them: "Good morning! Did you catch anything for breakfast?" They answered, "No." He said, "Throw the net off the right side of the boat and see what happens." They did what

he said. All of a sudden there were so many fish in it, they weren't strong enough to pull it in.

April 17th

Wisdom of Ralph W. Trine

"All life is from an inner center outward. As within, so without. As we think we become...The great value of God as taught by Jesus is that God dwells in us. It is truly Emmanuel – God with us...There is a mystic force that transcends any power of the intellect or of the body, that becomes manifest or operative in the life of [human-beings] when their divine Self-realization, their God-consciousness, becomes awakened and permeates their entire being...We can bring our minds into rapport, into such harmony and connection with the infinite divine Life and Power, that it speaks in us, directs us, and therefore acts through us as our own very selves."

John 10.22-27 (The Message, adapted)

They were celebrating Hanukkah just then in Jerusalem. It was winter. Jesus was strolling in the Temple across Solomon's Porch. The religious authorities, circling him, said, "How long are you going to keep us guessing? If you're the Messiah, tell us straight out." Jesus answered, "I told you, but you don't believe. Everything I have done has been [divinely] authorized...actions that speak louder than words. ...My sheep recognize my voice. I know them, and they follow me."

April 24th

The Wisdom of Ernest Holmes

"We believe in God as the Infinite Spirit permeating everything."

The Wisdom of Fannie James

"That which is omnipresent fills ALL space. That which fills all space cannot be limited to form, but must contain all form within itself and be the substance of all form. Omnipresence shows that all things live and move within it; that their true Being has neither beginning nor end of days, and cannot be limited by either time, space, or conditions. ...God omnipresent means God everywhere present, as the principle and source of all."

Acts 11.1-5, 11-18 (The Message, adapted)

The news traveled fast and in no time the leaders and friends back in Jerusalem heard about it—heard that...“outsiders” were now “in.” When Peter got back to Jerusalem, some of his old associates, concerned about circumcision, called him on the carpet: “What do you think you’re doing rubbing shoulders with that crowd, eating what is prohibited and ruining our good name?”

So Peter, starting from the beginning, laid it out for them step-by-step: “Recently I was in the town of Joppa praying.

“Suddenly, three men showed up at the house where I was staying, sent from Caesarea to get me. The Spirit told me to go with them, no questions asked. So I went with them, I and six friends, to the man who had sent for me. He told us how he had seen an angel right in his own house, real as his next-door neighbor, saying, ‘Send to Joppa and get Simon, the one they call Peter. He’ll tell you something that will save your life—in fact, you and everyone you care for.’

“So I started in, talking. Before I’d spoken half a dozen sentences, the holy Spirit fell on them just as She did on us the first time. I remembered Jesus’ words: ‘John baptized with water; you will be baptized with the holy Spirit.’ So I ask you: If God gave the same exact gift to them as to us when we believed in [Jesus as God’s Anointed], how could I object to God?”

Hearing it all laid out like that, they quieted down. And then, as it sank in, they started praising God. “It’s really happened! God has broken through to the other nations, opened them up to Life!”



Sunshine Cathedral Annual Leadership Academy

Saturday March 5th - 10 am - 3 pm

Exciting Dates at Sunshine Cathedral

March 5th: Annual Leadership Academy (The Soul of Leadership) ~ \$10

March 12th: St. Patrick's Dinner at 6 pm (\$15).
Includes Corned beef & cabbage, bread, dessert, and beverage (Green Beer is an option!)

March 12th: Selma to Montgomery Revisited (with Mandy Carter & Rev Dr Robert Griffin) ~ 7 pm, FREE.

March 20th: Palm Sunday (worship at 9 am & 10:30 am)

March 24th: Maundy Thursday Hand-Washing/Communion Service at 7 pm

March 25th: Good Friday Musical Tenebrae Service at 7 pm

March 27th: Easter Sunday 3 worship services at special times ~ 8 am, 9:30 am, & 11 am)

April 4th: "Living As Easter People" course begins (4 week course, \$20)

July 27th – 30th: Divine Science International Biennial Conference at Sunshine Cathedral



The graphic features a dark background with the text "holy week" in a white, elegant script font, with "SERVICE SCHEDULE" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. To the right of the text is a photograph of two lit candles. The background of the entire graphic is a solid purple color.

Maundy Thursday
March 24th - 7 pm
Hand-Washing & Communion Service

Good Friday
March 25th - 7 pm
Musical Tenebrae Service

Easter Sunday Service Times
March 27th
8 am, 9:30 am, 11 am



What Kind of Church is Sunshine Cathedral? A Different Kind!

Sunshine Cathedral is currently affiliated with Metropolitan Community Churches and is also affiliated with the **Divine Science Federation International** (Divine Science is the oldest of the New Thought schools of thought; New Thought emphasizes the power of positive thinking, the unity of all life, and the omnipresence of God).

Additionally, Sunshine Cathedral is an affiliate of the **Global Justice Institute**, an independent ministry housed at MCC New York that focuses on social justice throughout the world. Sunshine Cathedral also participates in the pension plan of the **American Baptist Churches USA** (which is also

used by the **International Council of Community Churches**), and Sunshine Cathedral is in the process of applying for affiliation with the **Progressive Christian Alliance** (and other ecumenical organizations). In the past, Sunshine Cathedral has held affiliations with The Center for Progressive Christianity and the International New Thought Alliance.

Sunshine Cathedral's staff ministers hold licenses and ordinations from MCC, Interfaith organizations, Divine Science, the Assemblies of God, a Baptist denomination, and Centers for Spiritual Living. *The Samaritan Institute at Sunshine Cathedral* is the religious education program for the Sunshine Cathedral, the diaconal training school for Sunshine Cathedral members who wish to pursue ministry as a deacon, and it is also a **ministerial training school for the Divine Science Federation International!**

Sunshine Cathedral members and friends come from New Thought, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Unitarian Universalist, Jewish, Muslim, and Humanistic traditions. So, while Sunshine Cathedral began as a Metropolitan Community Church, it has become *so much more!* Sunshine Cathedral is "a different kind of church!"

*"Sunshine Cathedral is a different kind of church
where the past is past and the future has infinite possibilities!"*

Sunshine Cathedral's Spiritual Principles

1. *God is omnipresent ("There's not a spot where God is not").*
2. *All people have sacred value.*
3. *Love makes a family and Mutuality makes a relationship holy.*
4. *Our habitual thoughts matter ("Thoughts held habitually manifest eventually; "Change your thinking & change your world").*
5. *Beliefs are well-rehearsed opinions and can be changed.*

March 27th: Easter Sunday
3 worship services at special times ~
8 am, 9:30 am, & 11 am

St. Patrick's Dinner (5 days early)



St. Patrick's Day Dinner
Hosted by the Board of Directors
Saturday March 12th - 6 pm
Includes: Corned beef and cabbage, bread,
dessert and beverage (green beer too)
Tickets - \$15.00
Available on Sundays after services.