

A Fascinating Short History of the UCC Ministry, 1941 to 2020:

1. The Reverend Louise Beatty of First Unity in St. Pete started Unity study group in downtown Clearwater in 1941 in living rooms, offices, and a funeral parlor.
2. Louise called The Reverend Mary Powell, her fellow student with Charles Fillmore, cofounder of Unity School in K.C. to lead the group; Unity-Clearwater moved to a small church building on Turner Street and incorporated as a Church in 1958.
3. After The Reverend Howard Bradford was called to minister here, the present building on Nursery Road was completed in 1971. (That year, Leddy and Randy Schmelig graduated from the University of Missouri in St. Louis; at 22, he was the youngest student minister accepted at Unity School; she served on the Editorial Staff of **Unity** magazine and both worked at Silent Unity; he was ordained in 1974 and invited to minister at Unity of Mt. Carmel in Bettendorf; he was called to minister at Unity Christ Church of St. Petersburg in 1979 when their son, Dieter, was about 7 months old. (Randy had also been chosen by Unity of Syracuse, where Dell deChant was in the congregation. As Dell called his mother, Ruby, that day to tell her he would follow wherever Randy chose to minister he did move to St. Pete. Randy and Leddy conducted the wedding ceremony for Dell and Marilyn deChant about 1984; they live in Port Richey.
4. After Howard's retirement here, Mary assisted his successor, The Reverend Nicholas Griffin, until Nick was called into leadership at Unity of Delray Beach in 1981; Leddy and Randy were elected in February, 1981, by the congregation at our Church. (Leddy had become a Licensed Unity Teacher in 1980; she was licensed as a Unity Minister by exception in 1981 and ordained by the Association of Unity Churches at Unity Village in 1982). Gwen Cohenour (our longtime Minister Emeritus) was a member of UCC and a Licensed Unity Teacher at that time.
5. Leddy and Randy Schmelig were elected as Co-Ministers here by the membership in February, 1981. (Dell deChant had joined Unity Christ in St. Pete as Youth Ministry teacher; 7 year old Dieter was usually his only student. Dell had studied **Lessons in Truth** with The Reverend Mary Powell). Dell served as Assistant, then Associate Minister here. Leddy conducted the wedding ceremony for Randy and Faye Schmelig in May of 1985; they were inspired to found Unity of Palm Harbor in 1986. Dell, along with Leddy's parents, conducted the wedding ceremony for Leddy and Russ Hammock here in December, 1985.
6. Dell was ordained by exception by the Association of Unity Churches in 1989 and served here for nearly 20 years; during that time he became the Chair of the Dept. of Religious Studies at USF in Tampa (where he continues to serve), a well-known teacher, scholar, and author in his field. Judy Tafelski and her daughters began to attend here about 1987; she had earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychology at USF. Dell had earned his Bachelor's degree at Tampa College and his Master's degree with highest honors from USF. Levi Hammock was born in 1990. Judy (and later Leddy), earned their Masters Degrees in Theological Letters from the Emma Curtis Hopkins Theological Seminary. (Leddy earned her Doctor of Ministry at Meadville-Lombard Theological School in 2013.)
7. Dell deChant and a few other dedicated Truth students from UCC formed the Unity-Progressive Council, a reaffirmation of traditional Unity faith, in 1989--the Centennial Year of the Unity Movement. Early members included Leddy and Russ Hammock,

Rob Hammock, Gwen Cohenour, Dieter Randolph, Judy Tafelski, Jane Spicer (who made peaceful transition in 2020), and about a hundred others, as well as Ira Carnes. Leddy, Gwen, Dieter, Rob, Judy, and a few others were trained as U-PC Certified Instructors. The Council called for the founding of the Unity-Progressive Theological Seminary in 1992. The first graduating class (1995) included both Rob Hammock and Dieter Randolph, who were ordained along with Dell and Leddy by the U-PC that year. Dell, Leddy, Dieter, Rob, Judy (and later, Ann Luce and Robin Hankins) fulfilled the seminary requirements to become Advanced Certified U-PC Instructors. (Both Dieter and Rob had earned their Associates Degrees from the SPC.) Both Dell and later Gwen, were among those who served as Dean of U-PTS (later renamed the Emma Curtis Hopkins Theological School; Leddy served as Chair of Pastoral Studies for two decades; most faculty positions were filled by USF instructors. The seminary program closed due to the renovation process of our building after an electrical fire in 2003). (Gwen and Jane Spicer had organized our Church lending library and also the theological library of the U-PC / U-PTS.)

Both Dieter Randolph and Robert Hammock were appointed as Associate Ministers here at UCC in 1995. In 2009, Leddy requested approval for the formal ordination by U-PC of all remaining active Advanced Certified Instructors of U-PC who had not yet been ordained by the Unity-Progressive Council: Judy Tafelski, Gwen Cohenour, Robin Hankins, and Ann Luce and all four were appointed as Associate Ministers for UCC by our Sr. Minister (as was The Rev. Magie Cook, Life Coach, ordained at Renaissance Unity, Michigan. (Robin, Ann, and Gwen--who in her retirement was installed as "Minister Emeritus" for UCC--have since made transition).

The Reverend Randy Schmelig retired from distinguished service of twenty-one years of leadership at First Unity Church in St. Louis, Missouri, where he and his late wife, Faye, were dearly loved. He now lives in their home in Palm Harbor. At the Annual Meeting on February 23, 2020, The Reverend Randy Schmelig accepted the unanimous invitation of our Ministry Team, Board of Directors, and active voting membership, to accept the title of our Minister Emeritus.

Due to the Corona Virus, UCC ceased in-person gatherings and began to present the ministry by Zoom and other online communication as of March, 2020. Our small staff has maintained the building and our Zoom Team has continued to present the ministry online. A new mixing console for the Peace Cottage was installed early in the year; the air conditioning unit for the café had to be replaced; the office suite a/c must soon be replaced as must the water heater. The Board is reviewing approval and funding of re-lining the facility's galvanized plumbing pipes to address rusty water; our Youth Wing is being reorganized; plans are being considered for creating a pass-through for more efficient café service and expanded fellowship – all in preparation for returning to our Church Home in when the time is right. Our Annual Meeting of 2021 marks the 40th anniversary of the installation of Sr. Minister, Leddy Hammock. Together, we have come through forty years by faith and, through it all, *we are still UCC Strong!*