

Karen Erickson

She rides a Harley Sportster and earned a Commercial Driver's License at Road Master Trucking School. She once worked for KLLM Transport, hauling 53-foot refrigerated trailers across the country. And ---decorated with miniature furniture of her own design---she once collected a whole room of Barbie dolls, all dressed in fashions she had sewn, herself!

The versatile and gifted Karen Erickson is known for her dynamic Unity stage presence and beautiful voice. "I have been living my dream through the Music Ministry," Karen said. "I have been blessed to be part of a great band, which I have always wanted to do, where I got to sing, that I need as much as breathing, and have been privileged to be able to praise God in a joyous way!"

Karen was first exposed to music at age five when her grandmother taught her to play ukulele and she began singing in the children's choir at Trinity Presbyterian Church. In 8th grade, she bought her first guitar, a 12-string, which she still has. In high school, she sang in the concert choir and "The Madrigals," participating in state competitions.

In the 1980s, Karen attended Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve services at Unity, along with her family. There came a year when Karen would come alone to a Unity burning bowl service. "I remember Leddy saying to me '*Happy New Life*,' and, at that point, I decided that here I could be part of a spiritual family," Karen recalls. "My favorite service," she says, "was our first Christmas in the Unity Tent. We had hot cider, a campfire, kettle corn, and it really felt like an old fashioned Christmas. Awesome!"

Karen's family moved to Florida from Wilkinsburg, PA, when she was only 6 months old. She graduated from Largo High School and received a vocal scholarship to Reinhardt College in Waleska, GA, later enlisting in the Air Force for a six-year stint. She was stationed at Chanute Air Force Base in Champaign, IL, a member of the missile mechanics school.

With top secret clearing from the Air Force, Karen came back to St. Petersburg and worked in Defense Mapping at Geonex Inc. for 16 years, earning her defense military mapping agency photo interpreter certification. She also studied at St. Petersburg College and for several years since 2000, was employed by the Pinellas County Health Department in the Medical Services Division at Pinellas Park.

Karen has performed in many musical theater productions and, for several years, performed operettas at local theater venues with the Gilbert and Sullivan Players. Now, she was a member of the fabulous Twilightz, a 50s and 60s rock and roll group formed with Mary Elliott, Tim Burnaman and David Wallace; Mike Abdishi later joined the group. The Unity Family loved the performances of the Twilightz, that shone so brightly at the Largo Botanical Gardens at Christmastime.

While employed as a transport driver, Karen traveled to Canada and all the US states except Hawaii. Her hobbies include computer games, watching *Glee*, and making her new home in the mountains cozy. Karen's son lives in Clearwater; Karen and her sister, Dory, will soon be moving up to North Carolina, to join Karen's daughter, son-in-law and two granddaughters. Two cats will complete their household. We know that Karen will be warmly welcomed to the music ministry of a New Thought church in her new neighborhood.

We'll get to see Karen on our UCC Zoom events and we look forward to her visits at our new Church home in days to come. One thing is for sure: wherever Karen is, there will always be wonderful, heartwarming music and her beautiful presence and her amazing voice will sing in all of our hearts forever.