

Churches

SANTA CRUZ CHURCH

5-4-13

Unity Temple moves to new home on Ocean Street

Sunday services start this week

By JENNIFER PITTMAN
newsroom@santacruzsentinel.com

SANTA CRUZ — After years of uncertainty, Unity Temple of Santa Cruz has uprooted itself from its home of nearly 60 years on Broadway and will hold Sunday services starting this week in rented space in the new Resource Center for Nonviolence on Ocean Street.

The church, which recently held a flea market to sell pews, lamps, folding chairs and kitchen items, has also leased a small business office nearby. It will also

be changing its name to Unity of Santa Cruz.

"I think it's going to be a fresh start for us in a place that has similar values to ours," said the Rev. Margaret Flick, who lives in San Francisco and has been the pastor since September. "I love this church and the sanctuary is beautiful, but from the very beginning I felt like it was time to move."

The church, which has an average Sunday congregation of about 50 people for its 7,020-square-foot main church building on less than an acre of land, has been

struggling financially for years. It owned the Broadway building until expansion and renovation plans fell apart in 2009 and it was forced to sell the land to avoid a costly foreclosure. The church has rented back the facility since then from hotel developers who bought the property. Unable to raise enough funds to pave the parking lot, the church has never been able to qualify for a permit to occupy its newly built youth center and offices.

"For the most part, people are ready to move on," said Michael Sansing, board president. "People are going through some grieving but it's a very positive move

for the church." It's "a little bit of a downer" to pull in to the dirt lot to park on Sundays. With the looming uncertainty behind them, the church and its board of directors can now focus on growing the congregation. Expenses will be greatly reduced.

"Well we're still struggling a little bit but we're better than we would be after the move," Sansing said.



FLICK

SEE UNITY ON C3

UNITY

Continued from C1

The congregation has been sorting through boxes of old records, choir songs from the 1950s and trying to find homes for folding chairs, a baby grand piano, a commercial stove and literature from the church lending library.

The spiritual focus has been on life balance and "being able to hold both the

joy and sorrow," Flick said. "It's my role to shepherd them through this."

She led a releasing ritual, an "unplanting" ceremony, on Sunday and said this week's message will focus on creating "a new story, a vision of passion and purpose."

"A church isn't really about a building," Flick said. "It's about a community, the love we have for each other and the bonds we have for each other as we come together to know God."

AT A GLANCE

UNITY OF SANTA CRUZ

BACKGROUND: The church was founded in Santa Cruz in 1928, moving to 407 Broadway in Santa Cruz in 1955. It is a member of the Association of Unity Churches, a global organization that is part of more than 100-year-old "New Thought" tradition.

NEW SUNDAY SERVICE LOCATION: Resource Center for Nonviolence, 612 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060. Effective May 5.

NEW BUSINESS OFFICE: 1414 Soquel Drive, Santa Cruz

CONTACT: 831-423-8553; <http://unitysantacruz.org>