

June 6, 2022

Rev. Helen Saunders



Rev. Helen Saunders was a native of Detroit, Michigan. She visited several denominational churches, including Baptist, Spiritualist, Methodist, and Catholic, before she began attending Christian Science classes and churches. It was in the twelve years with Christian Science that she experienced healings. On Easter Sunday, 1974, Rev. Helen accepted an invitation to attend West Side Unity Church, founded by Rev. Ruth Mosley. Rev. Helen told others that from the first time it felt like home.

She spent eight years as the church secretary and earned credentials as a licensed Unity teacher and counselor. In 1979, she enrolled in the newly-formed Unity Urban Ministerial School. She also earned an associate's degree in sociology from Wayne County Community College. In July 1982, Rev. Helen and seven classmates from UUMS entered Unity School of Religious Studies at Unity Village, Missouri. All of them, known as "The Detroit 8," were ordained by the Association of Unity Churches in 1983.

Instead of returning to Detroit, Rev. Helen relocated to Omaha, Nebraska, and within two weeks purchased a house and was gifted with furniture and a car. Armed with a grant from the Association of Unity Churches, she pioneered Christ-Love Unity Church. Rev. Helen held the first service on Sunday, August 21, 1983, and seven founding members were installed the following December. To acclimate themselves to the community, Rev. Helen and her daughter, Karen, volunteered with local nonprofit organizations, worked on community issues, tutored, and taught sewing classes for neighborhood youth.

The church began meeting in the Community Room of a local bank and later on the first floor of Rev. Helen's home. In August 1991, the eighth anniversary of Christ-Love Unity, the congregation dedicated its building at 1708 Clark Street. The church remained at that location until after Helen's transition on March 25, 1994.

Having spent many years with helping her mother run the church, Rev. Karen took over as spiritual leader sometime after her mother's death. Rev. Karen Saunders followed in her mother's footsteps. She graduated from UUMS in 2012 and was ordained by Unity Worldwide Ministries in 2013. In 2014, she was installed as the minister of Christ-Love Unity.

Rev. Helen Saunders was a true urban minister.

