



unity

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Unity Church in Albany • 21 King Avenue • Albany NY 12206 • 518-453-3603 www.unityalbany.org

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



December 31st is my 1 year anniversary. This year has gone by so fast! I am grateful to have been called to join you. All of you have been a blessing to me and the greatest Christmas gift to me.

With so many holidays from various faiths in December, I am one to wish people a Wonderful Holiday Season.” For this article, I wish you a “Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year”.

Yes, I wish us to remember the birth of the man who embodies the title of Christ, Jesus. Charles Fillmore states, “*Jesus is the name that represents an individual expression of the Christ idea.*” Jesus is our teacher, so that we too can embrace and embody the Truth of ourselves. We are The Christ. This is the magic of the Jesus story, and why he is considered the “Way-Shower.” He was born of this world as we all are. In this world, he spiritually evolved, as we all are here to do.

Unlike many in Unity who look to Christmas as the birth of the Christ presence within us, I believe it is a time to continue to open ourselves up to the Christ that is already alive

within us. It is a time for us to remember to continually give birth to new dimensions of our spiritual evolution into the manifestation of our full Christ selves. In this time of our history, we all need to remember who we are. We are all the Christ. Charles Fillmore metaphysically interprets Christ as the divine-idea [person]. Christ is the embodiment of all divine ideas...

So, let us look to ourselves as the one who will bring manifestations of the divine ideas of Love, Peace, Joy, and Faith. As one of Unity favorite hymns states, “*Let there be...and let it begin with me.*” Yes, let it begin with yourself. Stop looking outside of yourself for this manifestation.

My beloveds, you are the Divine Idea of God. Let us be Merry in this knowing and manifest a great new year. It is within us all to do. Just open yourself up to God’s Love, God’s Wisdom, God’s Strength... all the Goodness of God. It will be done. It is done!

“The more we keep seeing God’s love and abundance everywhere, the more we grow Christmas joys.”

~ Myrtle Fillmore

Mission Statement

The mission of Unity Church in Albany is to awaken to and embrace the Christ in all persons through prayer and service.

President's Corner

By Lois Crommelin

Season Up The Winter Season



I like to cook and bake during the "long" winter season of less daylight. I've been browsing through my vegetarian cookbooks to find new and different things to

try ... new flavors ... seasonings, if you will. We all can get into ruts, preparing the same foods over and over. Kind of like ourselves. We can get into ruts easily. Boring days, busy days, routines, habits, redundancy. And we can get downright lazy! Maybe it's time to learn something new about ourselves. The end of 2016 is rapidly approaching and the new year of 2017 is rolling in. That's always a time for reflection ... to take off the old and put on the new. So what does this all mean to you? To start again with a New Year's Resolution? Try a new class at Unity (there are several), try adding some cayenne pepper to an old recipe. How does that taste? Season up your Spiritual Life. Season up your crockpot.

There are many scriptures in the Old and New Testaments that allude to "taking off the old and putting on the new". Mostly about turning from your wicked ways and going about life in a clean moral way.

Ephesians 4:22-24 In reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside that old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new self, which is in the likeness of God that has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

Life's all a circle with no beginning and no end. What a holiday means to you and how you choose to celebrate it, is the very meaning of it.

I say that the time is at hand to examine our individual lives. Take that, which does not serve you, to the Burning Bowl. And then season up your "new" life.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to all of you who have been part of my Unity Circle of Friends. You have helped me grow and evolve, and my hope is that in some way I have helped you in the process. It's been a wonderful season together with our new Minister. This coming year there will be lots of exciting frontiers to explore. Please hold the Prosperity Consciousness of our church. What is your vision for our future? In what direction would you like our church family to take? *Expansion*. And what does that mean? Where do you see us in 5 years? In 10 years? We will be coming together soon for a Prosperity Meeting and a Visioning Meeting. Thank you all for holding our Church in prayer.

((HUGS)) *Lois*

This is my all time favorite quote of Charles Fillmore:

"God is a circle whose center is everywhere and circumference is nowhere."

Seasons Greetings.

How Sweet The Sound

By Rev. Roger Mock

God's in His Heaven

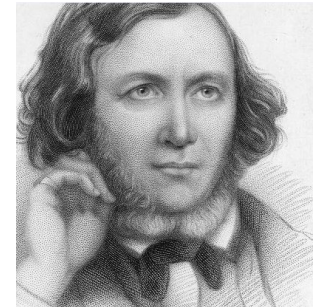


We're ten days into our post election world as I write. No matter who you may have voted for, you may feel as I do that the ground beneath our feet has shifted in a most startling and disconcerting way. I cannot recall a time in my life, except perhaps in the days and weeks after 9/11, when things felt quite this precarious; when the future seemed quite so uncertain and potentially ominous. It feels to me like the sudden atmospheric changes one feels before a significant shift in the weather that causes you to head indoors and check the media to see what's up. And like me you have likely been grasping for wisdom, strength and stability from whatever quarters you can find it.

You know what? This is a good thing. The truth is that we are always living with uncertainty, with ambiguity. And most of us most of the time are entertaining beliefs that everything's fine as long as we've got a weekend to look forward to and a week at the beach next July. We're habitually placing our faith in the ephemeral. We are continuously directing our attention away from the essential precariousness of being human with our little Felix the Cat Bag of Tricks - all of our forms of distraction and amusement.

So, though it's uncomfortable to be sure, our present political climate can be used as a tool to help us face up to our spurious, unfounded faith in what can never ultimately support us. It can help us dig deeper to recover what does indeed support us; clear away so much sand to find the bedrock. A while ago I heard someone recalling that in their early post-war childhood of the late 1940s, their family home had these words of

Robert Browning's emblazoned in brass on an archway: "God's in His heaven—all's right with the world." As America was being drawn into World War II, some members of the family suggested it be taken down; that it was no longer an appropriate sentiment. The grandmother remained adamant, however, that it remain where it was. She saw a truth in the words, a bedrock of sorts, beyond the sentimental "Hallmarky" surface.



Robert Browning

I find the same truth expressed with astonishing clarity in these words from *A Course in Miracles*. They are given at the very beginning of the book in its Introduction:

*The opposite of love is fear, but what is all-encompassing can have no opposite. This course can therefore be summed up very simply in this way: **Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.***

Our every experience in life, I believe, is meant to lead us to the realization of such truth. Our current political climate is no exception. You and I are expressions of what is eternal and unshakable. That Divine spark in us is the truth of who we are, unassailable within this human drama, a "bulwark never failing." As current events pull back the curtain on our seeming vulnerability, giving rise to anxious thoughts and fears, let it remind us that all encompassing Love is our refuge and true Home. All shall be well.

Love and light, *Roger*

Events Calendar

Looking for a Spiritual Community?

Join us at 1 of our 3 Sunday Services
9:00 am | 11:00 am | 6:00 pm
Summer (Memorial-Labor Day) ~
10 am | 6 pm

Ongoing

Prayer and Meditation

Wednesdays, 6:30 – 7:00 pm in the downstairs fellowship hall or in the sanctuary.

Sundays 10:15-10:45 am in the large upstairs classroom. Jerry Patel and friends offer Sunday morning meditations each week between morning services. The regular practice of meditation builds peace and calmness within and helps us strengthen our awareness of our connection with the Divine. Group meditation makes the process easier and helps us move more deeply into the meditation experience. **Please arrive before 10:15 am** as the doors will close to hold the silence for this sacred gathering.

Get Fit and Stay Centered

Mondays at 5:00 pm
Kripalu Yoga
Deborah Foss (944-9858 for info)

Tuesdays, 7:00 -8:30 pm
Kundalini Yoga
Amy Rosen

Kundalini yoga, also known as the yoga of awareness, is a fast and effective way to clear the mind, energize the body, and uplift the spirit. Discover practical ways to maneuver through life in a powerful and focused way. We'll use mantra, movement, breath, and meditation to give us a hands on experience of our highest selves, AND strengthen our nervous and glandular systems. Experience is not necessary nor is a flexible body requisite.



Mondays, 6:30-7:30 pm **Creating Heaven on Earth**

Jakob Spearfisher & Chris Johnson

The group follow the chapters of the book "The Four Agreements" and offers a chance for each person to relate to his or her personal challenges with maintaining these four agreements in their life.

Current Classes

Tuesdays 10:00-11:30 am **Tuesday Book Study Group**

The Transcendent Life by Jim Rosemergy

The Transcendent Life explores humility and the paradox it presents to humanity. Humility opens the door to a way of life and sustains it. "Something mystical has come alive ... for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:14). Please join us on Tuesdays! Contact Jane Bloom if you have questions at e-mail at janeb915@gmail.com or 802-430-4490.

Tuesdays, November 15—December 6, 6:30-8:30 pm

Healing Through Illness

Rev. John Frederick

We all experience illness or dis-ease at some point in our lives. It seems to be a part of the human condition. This 4 week workshop is designed to begin to explore illness as a path toward healing and spiritual awakening. Our personal beliefs and our collective human consciousness tell us they are real and powerful. Yet these beliefs can be overcome. Whatever the appearance of injury, illness, sickness or disease, there is a solution in Spirit. Suggested Love Offering: \$20
(no one will be turned away)

Please note: There will be no 9:00 am service on Christmas Day or on New Years Day. Also, there will be no 6:00 pm service on Christmas. However, the 6:00 pm service will resume on New Years Day.

Events Calendar *(cont'd)*

Upcoming

Sunday, December 4 Jessica Roemischer

Our dear friend, pianist Jessica Roemischer, returns to grace us with her soul-touching music and inspiring words.



Morning Services, 9:00 and 11:00 am

Jessica sets the tone for the Advent and Christmas seasons with her beautiful piano music, providing a tapestry of sound textures which evoke peace, serenity, joy and love.

Afternoon Workshop, 1:00 pm "New Beginnings"

An Experience of Memory and Music

Memory is associated with the past, with times gone by. What if our memories can free us, opening the way to the future? In an afternoon workshop with award-winning pianist and writer, Jessica Roemischer, we'll explore the power of memory and music to awaken our true selves and create new beginnings.

OneSong Service, 6:00 pm

Uniquely combining inspired piano music, spoken word and collaborative creativity, Jessica dissolves the boundary between performer and audience. She'll invoke the spirit of Advent with inimitable grace as she dialogues with those present, sharing humorous and uplifting stories.

Sunday, December 18th, 6:00 pm Joy Adler and the Souls of Evolution

Global Community Heartshare: Music & Meditation for the Winter Solstice and Peace On Earth!

We invite you to join Joy and her band, the *Souls of Evolution*, with special guests, in honoring the Winter Solstice. Join the Circle with song and celebration for the New Year with Love, Gratitude and Peace on Earth!

This is the final event of the year for Joy's **Global**



Commu-

nity Heartshare Series, which began on Earth Day 2016, and worked in tandem with people all over the globe to send prayers to the elements of Earth.

Saturday, December 17, 7:00-9:00 pm Church Christmas Party

Mark your calendars for our annual holiday celebration. Food, fellowship, singing and laughter. Families and children are welcome. You will not want to miss it!

Saturday, December 24, 5:30 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Join us as we listen to the Christmas story, share prayers, songs, and light our Christmas candles together!

Christmas Day Service, 11:00 am

We suspend our usual Sunday service schedule with one special joyous service. **Pot luck lunch** and fellowship immediately following the service!

Saturday, December 31, 5:30 pm Burning Bowl

Clear out the closets of your mind and make room for the life your soul desires! This is our traditional ritual of releasing to the burning bowl those things that no longer serve us and writing our letter to God claiming our vision of good for the coming year. We will sing, pray and step forward into a New Year filled with wonderful possibilities for all! wonderful possibilities for all!

New Year's Eve Party and fellowship to ring in the New Year immediately following the Burning Bowl Service!

Sunday, January 1, 11:00 am White Stone Ceremony

This day we set our intentions for the new year, focusing on who we are called to be in order to birth the emerging vision of our highest essence. With inner guidance we choose a word or name to embody that vision for the year. That name is written upon the white stone that we keep throughout the year.



Article of Interest

By Deb Foss

Journey to the Inner Center

Unity Fall Retreat led by Rev. Paulette Pipe

"I know her well and will offer a money back guarantee to anyone who is disappointed with Rev. Paulette Pipe's retreat," offered the visiting Rev. Jim Fuller in church the week before our annual retreat. Some congregants sighed relief at his endorsement and then became willing to enroll with this unknown presenter. I, on the other hand, had already enrolled. Having attended several Unity retreats led by a wide variety of presenters (including our beloved Patricia Hunt Perry last year), I came to cherish this time to connect on a deeper level with myself and my dear Unity friends. I was not disappointed.

I arrived Friday evening with joyful anticipation and also some trepidation. What would I learn about myself? How vulnerable and open was I willing to be? Would I be able to balance contemplation and silence with my tendency to socialize and play? Let go of my to-do list?

Rev. Pipe had me hooked from the start with her contagious enthusiasm and passion. Her deep voice, sparkling eyes and easy laughter put us all at ease. On Friday evening, we were invited into exercises designed to center, investigate and meditate. We then shared with each other from a place of deeper understanding and listening.

Saturday was a sweet mix of silence, music, mindful eating, movement, journaling, and coloring. Perhaps the most unexpectedly profound experience was the guided mudra meditation. Different energy centers were opened and new ways of feeling and seeing ensued. Our circle became a holier place.

Sue Oringel summed it up this way, "It felt so light-hearted while we were actually going very deep spiritually." For me, it was also that precious opportunity to know my Unity friends beyond the brief interchanges and hugs at church.

Special thanks to Retreat Organizer Extraordinaire, Geri Ann Laiacona! You rock!!!

If you are interested in more information about Rev. Pipe, please check out her website touchingthestillness.org.

Volunteer Job Fair

Thanks to all those who turned out for the Volunteer Job Fair on Sunday, October 23rd. The support and the love was flowing in abundance! 40 congregants expressed interest by signing up for 90 ministry positions! We are prosperous! Thanks also to Pamela Coles, Pam's grandchildren, Josephine Faruol, and Peggy Mow Kaufmann for their assistance in planning and set up.



Editor's Note: Feel free to submit photos, articles, prayers, and/or poems for publication to Bonnie Kriss, tedandbonkriss@hotmail.com. Deadline for submission is 1/20 for the February—March newsletter.

By John Daubney

Spotlight On Service



Jerry Petell

Like many of us, who came to Unity Church without knowing what to expect, Jerry Petell found a new and nurturing path to personal wholeness and a deep, spiritual connection with all of life. He also discovered that when he gave of himself in service to others, the rewards he experienced were so much more than the effort he expended. Thanks for jumping in Jerry!

I first came to Unity a few years ago and I thought I was going to the Unitarian Universal Church. After a few weeks, however, I said to my partner Kevin, "I think we're at the wrong church." Well, believing there are no coincidences, Unity Church was just where I needed to be. Unity is about recognizing the Oneness; our only separation is in our physical form. Energetically we are all one. It is this philosophy that Charles and Myrtle Fillmore proclaimed and that reinforced my belief that we are indeed healers and teachers of one Spirit. Unity is a place where people go to affirm that we are all one and where we recognize the power of prayer and meditation.

Jim and Kay Fuller were major influences and role models of service to me when I first came to Unity. I could tell that Jim put in a tremendous amount of effort in his talks to the congregation. He always spoke of giving back and volunteering at church functions and within the community as well.

His insight into metaphysical spirituality and philosophy truly resonated in my soul. Now Crystal Muldrow has carried that message and brought new ideas for service within the church community and the Albany community as well.

Rev. Crystal truly understands the power of meditation, prayer and service.

I remember that my first service experience at Unity was in helping Dotty and the volunteer "Christmas Elves" get the room ready for the Christmas party. It was a wonderful experience to get to know members of the congregation and to make new friends. I found that one way to feel connected to others is to reach out in service and feel that power of oneness. Volunteering at Unity lifts your spirit to new heights and will always bring a smile to you and others.

Sometime later, Jackie Hawkins, who had initiated the meditation group between Sunday services, asked me to lead the meditations after she had accepted a position for her own ministry. I gave it little thought and told her I would be honored to do so. I believe the Universe has greater plans for each one of us if we have an open heart. I love sharing my gifts of meditation and prayer. In my life, I use the spiritual tools of prayer and meditation to reawaken my communication with God. It has also reaffirmed the power of affirmations and prayers which bring our thoughts into greater alignment with God. This has taught me that knowledge of spiritual principles is not enough. I must actively incorporate them into my daily practices. When I do, I have the ability to choose what thoughts I will focus on throughout the day.

Being of service is one of the greatest joys I can experience. When I give to others I receive more than I give. This is so true for me. When I can be present and totally give unconditionally, the feeling I experience is utter joy. Research has shown that when one gives or serves others, the outcome or feeling is being happy. So, I say if you are feeling down..... go out and serve others. It will always bring a smile to you and to the ones you serve.

"The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope." - President Barak Obama



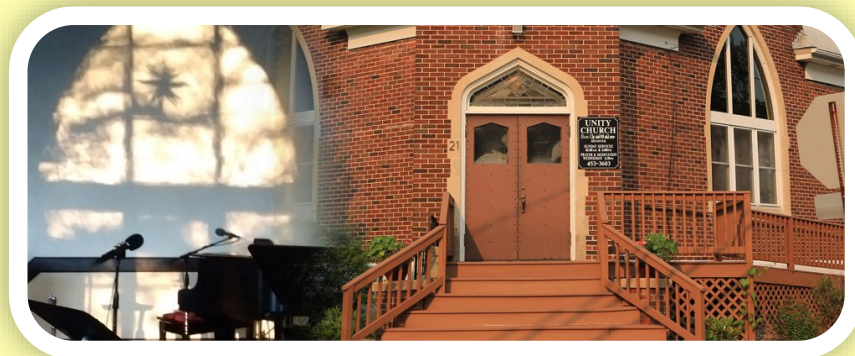
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.. a positive path for spiritual living



A place to worship, grow spiritually, feel loved and accepted— is no small matter. In our spiritual family, we know there are many paths that lead to God. We believe that Spirit led you here. Our desire is to share Christ's love with genuine heartfelt warmth. We are a gathering of all kinds of people with various backgrounds, life-styles, and life-stories. Growing together we worship, we serve, we laugh, we cry, we learn, and we reach out to our world with life-transforming truth. We aspire to live as Christ and be receptive to Spirit as it calls us to Life. Our name says it all; we are a Unity of believers celebrating and participating in inclusive worship. If you've been praying, searching and hoping for a place to belong, we say again—***Welcome Home!***

Sunday Worship Schedule

Sunday Mornings

at 9:00 am & 11:00 am

*Youth classes are available during the
11:00 am service*

Sunday Evening "OneSong" Service

at 6:00 pm each week

*Multi-faith service with music, meditation
and sacred chant*