

# The Messenger



Unity Church in Albany • 21 King Avenue • Albany NY 12206 • 518-453-3603

## “You are the light of the world.”

By Rev. James Fuller



IN JOHN 8:12 JESUS SAYS, “I am the light of the world.” When speaking to the crowd during the Sermon on the Mount he also says “You are the light of the world.” (Mt. 5:14) What might it mean to be the light of the world? How can we tell when we have achieved “luminescence”?

In his book *The Third Jesus*, Dr. Chopra notes that Jesus sets a standard that often seems beyond human reach. Most of us can't imagine what it might be like to take no thought for tomorrow or to be the light for the world that we see on the nightly news. Most of us are just focused on getting through February and March, and perhaps hoping that spring will come early this year. In short we are so caught up in our lives, our difficulties and our interests that there is little room for the “new life” that the Jesus of the scriptures speaks of. And yet Jesus tells us that the only way to reach what he calls the Father (or Papa) is the way he is showing us. Does that mean that we will all be stuck in an earthly limbo for eternity? I don't believe so, and I don't think Jesus believed that either.

I invite you to contemplate what it might mean to be what he called “the light of the world.” A light is something that shines and shares its radiance with everything around it. In Jesus' time there were two kinds of lights. There were small oil lamps that people used for lighting their homes. While these were not par-

ticularly bright they would make a huge difference in a dark house with few windows. There was also fire light, but this was much less common. Wood was scarce and most cooking was done with brush or dung for fuel. The people of Jesus' time could not even imagine the brilliance of the lights that we take for granted today.

The Bible offers one additional description of light which we might call radiance. Moses speaks of it when he describes a bush that seemed to be on fire, yet wasn't consumed by the fire. Later Moses is described as having to cover his face after an encounter with God because he was radiantly aglow. The apostle Paul experiences inner light that temporarily blinds and also transforms him. During the Pentecost following Jesus' resurrection, his disciples are seen to have flames (light?) above their heads. The Gospel of Matthew also describes Peter, James and John seeing Jesus “shining like the sun, his clothing dazzling white.” What do these references mean? Were these metaphors or physical experiences?

Metaphysically speaking light represents inspired spiritual understanding, an inner illumination of the mind. While our human eyes can only see the very narrow range of light that science calls “visible light,” there is something in us that is able to sense inner illumination. Painters and illustrators often depicted this as halos or auras surrounding people. Some people question whether halos or spiritual light is actually seen or if this is simply a trick of the eye. While I don't usually see halos or auras, and in have little interest in doing so, I have been very surprised

# Food Pantry Ministry

IN THIS TIME OF ECONOMIC STRESS, many families will be turning toward their neighborhood food pantries for assistance.

You can support your neighbors by placing nonperishable goods in the collection basket in our Bradford Street Lobby.

Since food stamps can only be used to purchase food there is always a need for toilet tissue, diapers, feminine hygiene items and cleaning supplies.

Please consider picking up a few extra items to donate on your next trip to the store. And thanks to Sue Herlands (783-0443) for being our new food pantry angel.

## Food Pantry Reminder List

*(clip and carry this list with you when you shop)*

**These items are especially needed because they are not covered by food stamps.**

### Infant Care:

- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Bathroom Items:

- Toilet paper
- Tissues
- Bar Soap
- Razors
- Shaving Cream
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Shampoo
- Band-aids
- First aid antiseptics
- Feminine products
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Kitchen:

- Dish soap
- Sponges
- Paper Towels
- Window cleaner
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Laundry:

- Detergent
- Fabric Softener
- Bleach
- Dryer Sheets
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Other:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



*The Youth education class created this tree to illustrate the lesson "Who is my family?" It holds the names of the childrens' family, the teachers, members of the church, Rev. Jim, pets and others. We're all related as members of God's Family.*

## Youth Education is Going STRONG!!

*By John Frederick*

YOUTH EDUCATION IS GOING STRONG! Classes have been meeting every Sunday during the 11:00 service since September. We have a wonderful group of dedicated teachers led by Ginger Tomaselli, including June O'Toole, Gary Allaco and Bethany Gonyea.

The students have been exploring basic Unity Principles using a Unity-based curriculum. Topics have included Diversity (How are we alike? How are we different?) Family (Who is my family?). We also want to thank Cathy Watrobski and Dale Caron who have done service to Youth Education this fall and winter.

Everyone will want to make sure they bring their children on the 5th Sunday in March (March 29th) and the 5th Sunday in May (May 31st). Reverend Jim is going to help Youth Education by making the 5th Sunday services a *Celebration of our Children...and the Child in Us All!* See you there.

# Light —

*Continued from Page 1*

on a several occasions when I experienced glowing light surrounding people. I once saw light around a woman who was giving a lecture at a professional conference. She was passionately describing her therapy work with groups of women who had experienced abuse. As she talked about her work and the healing that her clients were experiencing, she literally began to radiate a strong golden light. No one around me seemed to notice. A spiritual teacher I met told me about speaking to a group of people when the entire audience vanished from his sight and was replaced by one beautiful radiant light. How separate are we in reality?

If we hear that a person “lights up the room” when they enter, we usually don’t take this in a literal sense. It usually means that something in that person’s presence is sensed by the others in the room. Sometimes this seems to shift the energy of the room in a positive, peaceful or hopeful way. Could this be an experience of inner light being sensed but unseen? I would imagine that most people’s experience of Jesus was something like this, sensing rather than seeing his light. Most of the time we depend on our human eyes; not yet having developed what Jesus speaks of when he refers to “those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.” But he implies that we do have the capacity to develop these, to be able to see and hear beyond the limits of our human organs. And he tells us that we are like him, we are lights unto the world.



We are encouraged not to hide our light but to share it and to let it shine. Could making the choice to share a smile or a positive attitude be a first step in learning to let your inner light shine? Could choosing to love the people you live or work around not only light up your mind but theirs as well? Could cheerfully lending a hand change someone’s life, maybe even yours? While these may not seem like spiritual practices, each is actually a very powerful practice for sharing light and also for learning to sense it.

The light of the world is not something unique to Jesus. It’s not unique to any person. It lives in each of us. Sometimes we cover it over or just ignore it, distracting ourselves. We tell ourselves that other things are more important, or perhaps more interesting. We plan to learn about being the light of the world later, once other things settle down. What we don’t understand is that those other things never settle down, at least not for long, and so the light in us goes unseen and unshared. Failing to share your light and failing to learn to see the light in others can make for a long dark cold winter.

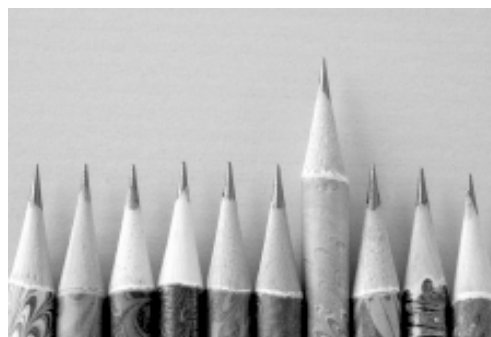
Why wait for something outside of you to brighten up your life? You are the light of the world. You can discover this by sharing your light in simple ways. As you let your light shine, it will teach you to sense and perhaps even see, the inner radiance in those around you.

*May the same Christ light that illuminated the mind of Jesus illuminate your mind. May it shine away all doubt and pain. May it reveal to you a world of light and joy. You are the light of the world. Amen.*

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# Finding Our Spiritual Home —

— 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 —

# CALENDAR

## Subtle Energy Biofeedback Workshop

**With Biofeedback Specialist, Bethany Gonyea  
Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup> from 1:30 – 3:30 PM**

Bethany Gonyea has used biofeedback to heal her own body and to help others heal. In this workshop, through biofeedback demonstrations and experimentation, you will learn how to become aware of your own subtle energy landscape. You will learn where your chi is depleted, how it feels when your spirit leaves your body, and how these concepts relate to emotional issues such as depression, addictions, and health challenges.

**Suggested Love Offering \$25**

## “Ambition to Meaning: Finding Your Life’s Purpose”



**Friday February 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM  
Special Movie Screening  
featuring Dr. Wayne Dyer  
On the big screens in the church  
sanctuary**

Through the intertwined stories of an overachieving businessman, a mother of two seeking her own expression in the world, and a director trying to make a name for himself; this entertaining film not only inspires but also teaches us how to create a life of meaning and purpose.

**Suggested Love Offering: Adults \$7, Seniors & Kids \$5**

## Book Club Discussion Lunch

**Sunday February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1:15 PM**

**Discussion of Deepak Chopra’s, *The Third Jesus***

Facilitated by Rev. Jim Fuller. Location TBA

## Unity Church Annual Meeting and Trustee Election

**Sunday March 1<sup>st</sup> at 12:30 PM**

The meeting is open to everyone; however, only members may vote for or serve as trustees.

## Unity Coffee House Open Mike Night



**Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 to 10:00 PM**

Admission is Free – Love Offerings are appreciated

**See story on Page 7.**

## Free Scrapbooking Class

**Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> 1:15-3:30 PM.**

Would you like to get those photos out of shoeboxes and into albums where they can be displayed and enjoyed? Would you like an outlet to play and be creative? Let me teach you how to preserve your memories and celebrate your relationships. Supplies are included and you will walk away with two beautiful pages. Please reserve your seat to ensure enough supplies. Contact Lisa Morrell at 766-7601 to sign up.

# CALENDAR



## **Pre-Easter Class** **Life, Death, Jesus and Easter:** **Spiritual Preparation**

**Wednesdays: March 18 through April 1**  
**7:15 – 8:15 PM (following 6:30 prayer & meditation)**

Lecture, discussion, contemplation for Easter. Facilitated by Rev. Jim Fuller

## **Understanding the** **Old Testament**

**Sundays 1:30 – 2:30 PM (ongoing class)**

The “Old Testament” and the nation of Israel are the foundation for both Judaism and Christianity. Centuries of confusing mythology have arisen concerning the origins and meaning of these writings. Yet if we are to understand the teachings of Jesus we must begin by understanding his Judaic and Hebrew roots.

This class is led by Rev. Phil Flint, a retired minister and university professor with many years of experience educating ministers at major seminaries. Many ministers look at the Bible through the lenses of the theology of their particular denomination. Rev. Phil has a passion for teaching about the origins, culture, and evolution of the Bible. If you want to know what most well educated ministers know but are often hesitant to speak about, this class is for you.

Reverend Phil also facilitates an ongoing Bible discussion group, Sunday mornings from 10:00 – 10:45 AM.

## **Friday Movie Nights Return**

**Starting March 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**Films and times TBA**  
**Free and open to the public**



## **Ongoing Groups** **Mind-Body Fitness**

- **Monday Yoga with Debra Foss: 5:00 – 6:30 PM**
- **Saturday Pilates with Kay Fuller: 9:00 – 10:00 AM**
- **Saturday Yoga with Kay Fuller: 10:15 – 11:15 AM**

*Check our bulletin boards for details*

## **A Course In Miracles** **Study Groups**

- **Sundays at 7:00 PM in the church library**
- **Mondays at 7:00 PM in Delmar (453-3603)**

*Find more study groups online at:*  
*[www.miraclecenter.org](http://www.miraclecenter.org)*

# Spotlight on Service

By John Daubney

## Jackie Hawkins

*When Jackie enters a room her, graceful presence, sparkling eyes, and uninhibited friendliness and laughter can literally wake up any gathering of people. Her commitment and willingness to serve as a board member or even as an usher or platform assistant are just the latest steps on Jackie's lifetime path of caring about people, loving them, and in her words, "not being shy about showing that I care." Her passion for service is an extension of how she has lived her life. Jackie presently serves as President of the Board of Trustees.*



"RAISED IN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST TRADITION, my indoctrination about God, sin, heaven and hell shaped my early thinking. However, even at an early age I have always sensed the divinity within me that has nudged, spoken ever so softly, yet persistently. This incongruence between the religious beliefs I was being taught and the internal conversations with Spirit left me somewhat confused. I struggled to believe that God could be both loving and vengeful. It just didn't make sense to me. Truth within was saying that God is good, period.

About fifteen or twenty years ago, I was introduced to Daily Word. Within the pages of this little booklet, were glorious words of Truth, inspiration, love, compassion and everything that I needed or wanted for my daily bread. I felt redeemed! The more I read the stories from people who were going through similar or more difficult trials than mine, the more confirmation I received that what I'd been hearing within me was universal. Just a few years later, I learned from a friend that there was a Unity church in Albany. I began attending services while maintaining my membership with an area Baptist church.

Soon, I realized that I could no longer live an incongruent spiritual life, and began attending Unity exclusively. I enrolled in several classes given at Unity in Albany and found each to be exactly what I was seeking. I applied the teachings and my life was enhanced with each application of the lessons. I learned the true meaning of tithing, and began to tithe regularly at Unity years before I became a member. Because of Unity, meditation and prayer, as well as tithing have enhanced my life beyond measure.

The work I am currently involved in as board president at Unity Church in Albany brings me great joy as I express the ideas that are brought forth from God's substance within me. I am sustained by my faith and the wisdom of Spirit that have guided me through many human and spiritual trials over the course of my life. The opportunity to be of service in the church in the ways that I am are actually in keeping with the models of service that I was shown growing up throughout my youth. My first role models were my parents. My father was a Baptist minister and my mother was the director of music at the churches where my father was senior minister in Longview, Texas and Lansing, Michigan.

In a sense, giving service in the church and also in the broader community is in my DNA. Quite frankly, I am defined by the service I give and at the core of that service is love. I truly do not know any other way to live my life. I thrive on the good that is brought forth when an idea from within me reaches fruition and results in many people and families being blessed. Throughout my adult life I have learned that the more I give in service to others, the more my life is enhanced. Living a life of authenticity through service is what I believe my life purpose is, and at the core of that service is love."

*"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."*

— Albert Schweitzer, humanitarian, philosopher, writer, from a speech given to a college graduation class

# Hospitality Ministry

By Jacqueline Hawkins

*“We honor the essence of harmony, peace and love that dwells within us all.”*

THROUGH SERVING at either the 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. Sunday Services, The Usher supports the flow of God’s love within the walls of our serene sanctuary. One of the primary goals for the usher component of the Hospitality Ministry is to hold peacefulness within ourselves; by doing so we can help bring calm and a sense of serenity to any situation that might arise during church services.

Ushers greet each person who walks through the doors of our church. They assist with seating, as well as smile warmly, as the first encounter for each eager soul who comes to meditate, pray and worship. Some of the tools ushers use in their sacred labor are “The Welcoming Packet”, “The Blue Velvet Bag” and “The Bulletin”. Each of these tools supports one element of the order of service that The Usher facilitates.

Without our ushers, congregants would not be greeted; meditation and prayer would be interrupted; newcomers would not be welcomed; bulletins would not be stuffed, stacked and distributed; blue velvet bags would not be passed, filled and blessed and most importantly a sense of calm, serenity and peace would be lost within the walls of our sanctuary.

In recognition and honor of the sacred labor represented by this essential component of our Sunday Worship Services we offer this blessing and invite congregants who are seeking ways to serve our church to consider serving in this ministry: *“We love you, we bless you, we appreciate you and we behold the Christ in you”*



## Coffee House•Open Mike Night

Saturday, March 7th • 7:30 – 10:00 pm

Sign-ups until 7:15 pm

COME ONE, COME ALL! Enjoy a night of fun, entertainment, good friends, and a chance to share your talents if you choose. Whether you sing, play an instrument, can tell a good story, share some poetry, make others laugh or possess other gifts, this is your chance to share that side of yourself with others. If you are not ready for that, but would like to encourage others, and have an enjoyable night with friendly folks at Unity, please join us.

We will begin the night with a Drumming Circle. If you are interested, please bring a percussion instrument if you have one. There will be a limited amount of drums available. This is great fun as well as a wonderful way to connect with each other. Absolutely no drumming experience is needed to participate.

Refreshments will be available. A free will offering of \$5.00 is suggested, with all proceeds going to the church. For information see Gary Allocco, Steve Holmes or John Daubney.

For more info contact John at [jdaub@peoplepc.com](mailto:jdaub@peoplepc.com)



### “I Have Learned So Much”

*A poem by Hafiz (14<sup>th</sup> century Sufi Poet)*

*I have learned so much from God  
That I can no longer call myself  
A Christian, a Hindu, a Muslim  
A Buddhist, a Jew.*

*The Truth has shared so much of Itself  
with me  
That I can no longer call myself  
A man, a woman, an angel  
Or even pure soul.*

*Love has befriended Hafiz so completely  
It has turned to ash and freed me  
Of every concept and image  
My mind has ever known.*



**Unity Church in Albany**  
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**Albany, NY 12206**

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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

## Worship Schedule

Services at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Nursery care is available at the 11 a.m. service

### Board of Trustees

President .... Jacquelyn Hawkins ('09)... 393-1627  
 Vice Pres. ... John Frederick ('10) ..... 486-5689  
 Secretary .... Heather Diddel ('11) ..... 475-9604  
 Treasurer .... Don Raux ('09) ..... 877-5928  
 Trustee ..... Bonnie Kriss ('10) ..... 373-2135  
 Trustee ..... Pamela Coles ('11) ..... 937-4257



## Unity Newsletter

Articles for the April/May edition of the newsletter can be submitted to Denise Klein at [katzr3@nycap.rr.com](mailto:katzr3@nycap.rr.com) by Sunday, March 22nd. Your news articles, spiritual thoughts, poetry, photos, humor or suggestions are always welcomed.