



The Messenger

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

Looking For A Messiah



By Rev. Jim Fuller

CHRISTMAS IS THE TIME we celebrate the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christian messiah. It's also the time many Christians look forward to the day when Jesus will return and set the world right. People of the Jewish faith are still awaiting the birth of their messiah. According to their tradition first Elijah will return heralding the coming, and then the messiah will return restoring Israel to its place of glory. I recently learned that some Buddhists are also expecting a messiah. Ancient Pail texts speak not only of the historical Buddha, but also of Maitreya, the Buddha to come. For some Buddhists Maitreya has become a messiah figure, one whose return is expected to bring peace and harmony to the world. It seems like everyone is looking for a messiah. *Why are these messiahs so hesitant to show up? Can't they see that we need their help?*

In earliest writings of the Old Testament there are no references to a messiah. The concept of a messiah developed later in Judaism. Even as it developed there was no clear consensus on just what the messiah would do. Fast forward several hundreds of years to the followers of Jesus, a group of Jews. They desperately wanted Jesus to be the Jewish messiah, the one who would straighten out their complex and troubling world. When they compiled their gospels some took great liberties reinterpreting Old Testament passages, often forcing messianic references onto verses

that had nothing to do with a messiah. The Apostle Paul was so convinced that Jesus was the messiah and that his physical return was imminent; he urged his followers not to challenge the current social order because Jesus would be back soon to straighten things out for them. Unfortunately Paul was mistaken, as were the disciples who expected Jesus' physical return. Today with no apparent messiahs on the horizon we may look toward others to save us or heal our world. We may look toward political or social leaders. We may search for perfect bosses, parents or partners to save us from the troubles of our day-to-day lives.

Unity reminds us that right now, we are individualized expressions of God. Just like Jesus whose birth we celebrate at Christmas, we are eternal spiritual beings. As such we are creating and experiencing our lives here. Individually and collectively we are the messiahs that we and the world have been waiting for. We are the ones with the power to anchor divine order and blessing in our world. And we are the ones with the power to transcend all apparent limitations including birth and death. We will not do this through force of will or magic powers, but by connecting with the Spirit within and allowing it to live through us. If our spiritual understanding is still immature this may seem like a distant dream. We may be like the infant Jesus, not yet able to walk or speak on his own. However, if we are willing to persist in our spiritual ma-

*The prophet
Isaiah writes
of a child . . .*

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The President's Corner

By John Frederick



OUR UNITY CHURCH is governed by a Board of Directors, 6 members selected on a rotating basis for 3 year terms at the church's annual meeting held on the first Sunday in March. Members may serve 2 consecutive terms before they must rotate off of the Board.

Board candidates are selected by the Nominating Committee, formed each year at this time, consisting of Rev. Jim, a congregation member selected by a vote at the last annual meeting and a Board member selected by the Board. They select a fourth person who serves as Chair of the Committee. Another way Board candidates are selected is by nominations from the floor at the annual meeting.

Using a thoughtful and centering prayer process, each Board Member decides which of the 6 ministries he or she would like to be the liason for: Building and Grounds, Finance, In-reach/Out-reach, Special Events, Spiritual Education or Worship Service. Also using prayer and divine guidance, the Board members and Reverend Jim collectively select their officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Each "Ministry Team" is made up of congregants who feel called to give of their time and talent in particular ways to serve, such as: ushering, offering flowers for the Sunday service, providing hospitality (aka food!) for after the service, teaching Youth Education, working in the Bookstore, helping with maintenance and repairs, working in the garden, serving on the Unity Cares Committee, helping to organize the annual Christmas Party or Spiritual Retreat, singing in the 4th Sunday Singers, counting the offering after services (aka "Tellers").

The list of each Board Member and their Ministry is in the church bulletin each week. If you feel some call to service, please contact the appropriate Board Member.

And finally.....Thank YOU! for all that you do for Unity Church in Albany.

5th Sunday Service: Celebration of Our Youth

Every 5th Sunday of the month, Youth Education classes stay in the sanctuary for the service. Reverend Jim has set aside these Sunday's to offer a special message for children, and the Inner Child within each of us. Plan on coming to these services and bringing the children in your life: family, friends, relatives, neighbors, and join in the Spirit of Light, Life, Love and Laughter as we Celebrate our Youth!

- November 30, 2009
- January 31, 2010
- May 30, 2010
- August 29, 2010
- October 31, 2010

Pet Blessing



ON A WARM, MOIST October Saturday, 7 dogs, one very confident cat and their human companions made their way to Unity Church for the annual Blessing of Our Animal Companions. The Pet Blessing is our way, through the memory of St. Francis of Assisi, of honoring God's gifts of Unconditional Love, Joy, Companionship and Friendship which are shown to us by His creatures. The way that animals live in the moment, the way they be exactly who they are created to be, the way they give because it is their very nature is remembered and celebrated in our short ceremony of Blessing. Thanks to Rev. Jim for his continued service and support and to Roger Mock for his gift of music, it was a special day for all who attended.

Food Pantry Holiday Needs!

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, in addition to food items for the pantry, Unity Church will be “adopting” a family once again. Diapers and Target gift cards are also needed to help during the winter season. As always, thank you in advance for your generosity!

If you are looking for another way to help our local pantry, volunteers are always welcome to pick up food from local restaurants, help with unloading the trucks at the pantry, or volunteering at the thrift shop.

If you have time during the week, and feel the desire to help our food pantry in another capacity, please contact Diane T. at 280-4311 for more details.

Happy Holidays!

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:

- _____
- _____

Looking For A Messiah continued—

turing we will connect with more and more of the Presence and in doing so bring more and more of God’s presence and power into our world.

The prophet Isaiah writes of a child who would soon be born and named Emmanuel (or Immanuel.) Emmanuel means God with us. Isaiah’s Emmanuel prophecy was given as a warning of impending social events in the time of Isaiah, not as a prediction of a future messiah.

It was the disciple Matthew who imagined Isaiah’s Emmanuel as a prophecy of a coming messiah who might save him and his people from their oppressors. Seizing upon this idea he incorporated the Emmanuel reference into his story of the birth of Jesus. From those two biblical references we sing the Christmas refrain: O’ Come O’ Come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel. If we sing this as a prayer for some external messiah to show up and save us we may be disappointed.

Yes, Jesus and others are present in spirit to support us in our spiritual growth and development, but so far throughout all of recorded history no external messiah has ever showed up and saved any nation or religious group from itself. If however we sing O’ Come O’ Come Emmanuel as a prayer to the presence of God within us (the true meaning of Emmanuel) perhaps we will experience the miraculous revelation that God is with us, now. God is, as the poet Tennyson wrote, “closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet.” As we learn to sense the Emmanuel presence in this very personal way we begin to find the peace, protection and power that bless and save both our world and our selves. O’ Come O’ Come Emmanuel, into my mind and my life today.

May we all seek and find the true messiah this Christmas. And, in our finding may we experience the peace and joy that this very special season promises. Amen.

Board of Trustees

- President. ... John Frederick ('10) 486-5689
- Vice Pres. ... Heather Diddel ('11) 475-9604
- Treasurer Pamela Coles ('11) 937-4257
- Secretary Bonnie Kriss ('10) 373-2135
- Trustee Bill Hewson ('12) 686-7990
- Trustee Diane Teutschman ('12) 280-4311

Anticipation

Jesus and A Course In Miracles

**A “mini class” with Rev. Jim
December 2 - 16 at 7:15 PM**

In this three-week class Rev Jim will explore what the Course says about its authorship and also what it says about Jesus as a teacher and healer. The class will begin with a 60 minute video introduction to the Course on 12/2 and continue with readings and discussion on 12/9 & 16.

Eckhart Tolle and Unity

**A “mini class” with Rev. Jim
January 6 – 20 at 7:15 PM**

In the fall of 2008 Eckhart Tolle visited Unity Village and was interviewed for Unity FM by Rev. Mindy Audlin. That interview and answers to questions from the audience was turned into three 30-minute videos. On each of these Wednesdays we will watch one of the videos and then discuss it. For those who have read *The Power of Now* or *A New Earth* this will be a helpful follow up. For those who have not, it is a great introduction to Eckhart’s work.

Winter Class: “What Are You?”

**Wednesdays, February 10 through April 7
(9 weeks)**

Imelda Octavia Shanklin was a Unity minister and writer in the early 1900’s. Imelda was trained and ordained by Charles and Myrtle Filmore, Unity’s co-founders. She worked for Myrtle Filmore from 1909 until 1925. In that year she was appointed editor in chief for all Unity publications. Her book *What Are You?* was first published in 1929. Written in a clear and understandable style, each page is filled with powerful ideas and teachings. Join Reverend Jim as he reexamines this New Thought classic.

New Quest Study Group starting in January

Are you looking for a way to better understand and integrate Unity’s Teachings?

If so, this study group is for you!

The Quest is a 48-week series of lessons that explore Unity teachings and your own spiritual beliefs. Each lesson includes a reading on one key idea and questions/exercises to help you integrate it into your life. The weekly study group is your opportunity to discuss the readings and share your discoveries with others studying the Quest.

This study group will meet on either Monday or Thursday evenings. (Participants will select the day and time.) The first meeting will be an introduction and orientation to the Quest. If you are interested in participating, please sign up in our Bradford Street Lobby. Quest books (a two-volume set) are available in our bookstore. For further information please speak with Rev. Jim.

Church Christmas Party

Saturday, December 5th at 7:00 PM

Join your Unity friends for an evening of fellowship, songs and fun. Everyone is invited, so feel free to bring family and friends. Light refreshments will be provided.

Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service

December 24th at 5:30 PM

Rekindle the Christ light in your heart this Christmas. Join Reverend Jim and our Unity musicians as we sing and celebrate the birth of Christ Consciousness into our world. We have scheduled our service at 5:30 PM so that you can participate and still have the evening free for family and friends. Join us as we

listen to the Christmas story, share prayers, songs, and light our Christmas candles together. What a wonderful gift to give the Christ child in you!



Christmas Day Luncheon

December 25th from 1:00 – 5:00 PM

Reverend Jim and Kay invite you to join them for a pot luck lunch and time of fellowship on Christmas Day. There is no advance sign-up for this lunch. So come early and enjoy lunch or just drop by to say hello. We will sing a few carols, share stories and perhaps even enjoy a short film. As always you are welcome to bring friends or family. Christmas is a wonderful time to gather and celebrate, won't you join us?

New Years' Eve

“Burning Bowl” Service

December 31st at 5:30 PM

Clear out the closets of your mind and make room for the life you desire. Open your imagination and heart to the blessings that God offers you. This is our traditional ritual of releasing to the burning bowl those things that we choose to let go of and writing our letter to God stating our vision for the coming year. We will sing, pray and step forward into a New Year filled with wonderful possibilities for all. This service is open to everyone.

Unity Book Club

**Reading for November – December 2009:
“Life After Life” by Dr. Raymond Moody.**

**Book Discussion with Reverend Jim:
Sunday, December 20th at 12:45 PM**

\$mall Business Fair

January 17, 2010

DO YOU HAVE A SMALL BUSINESS that you would like to promote within our church community? Although it may be difficult to consider what you might be doing on an early winter Sunday, please consider sharing your business interests with your church community.

If you have a small business to tell us about and/or are interested in helping to organize this event, please contact Bonnie Kriss, tel 373-2135 or tedandbonkriss@hotmail.com. \$mall Business Fair

Celebration



Great food and warm smiles made our October 18th potluck the place to be!

Spotlight on Service

By John Daubney

Pamela Coles



Since coming to Unity, Pamela has challenged herself to leave her comfort zone and to express herself through her love and her God-given gifts. Her quiet ways have given way to reveal a beautiful soul who is a true student of Unity teaching, someone who goes out of her way to be of service, and helps others feel at home in our

church. Her subtle sense of humor and disarming smile make her a joy to be around.

"I FOUND A JOURNAL ENTRY that I wrote in March of 2001, in which I asked God to help me. At the time I was tired and feeling empty and hopeless. I remember not long after that feeling as if I was going to die. I was very scared. I spoke to a co-worker about how I was feeling and she told me that there was more than one way you could die and maybe I was dying in a different way. Her words calmed me, but I still felt death coming. Not long after that conversation I received an e-mail at work from a friend and it was a letter from God. It wasn't one of those usual chain e-mails that tell you to send it to 10 other people. I was the only recipient and as I read it I started to cry. I felt God's love and his presence, and I felt something in me beginning to change. Then I thought I needed to find a church home so when I died my kids could have my service in a church. At the same time I was afraid of church because of my religious upbringing. A few months after 9/11 a friend approached me and asked if I would join her in searching for a church. I said 'sure, why not.'

A few days later she came to me and said she had found Unity Church of Albany. So, we came here the next Sunday which was in early January of 2002. Dennis Ryan was conducting the Service and I don't recall what he was saying but whatever it was it touched me and tears rolled down my face. I knew I was home!

I became a member while Paula was our interim pastor. I remember the day she anointed me and the other new members as a day I will never forget. By the time Jim Fuller became the Minister I was the chairperson for the Ushers but it had taken its toll on me, so I left Unity for a little over a year. During that time away I read the bible all the way through and I started feeling an urge to find out more about what Jesus was really trying to tell us. So I came back to Unity, but this time with a thirst for knowledge. *The Quest* and *A Course in Miracles* were the answer and little by little I built-up my beliefs, and gathered in and began emptying my "bags of luggage." My little child was able to let go of her "story" and my relationship with Mother-Father God, The Universe, and the Beloved, just took off.

Now, as I look back, I realize that I did die; the Pamela I use to be before March 2001, no longer existed. I now know I am not alone, my life has purpose, and I know, being a child of God, that all is well. I also realized that one of my purposes was to be here at Unity like Dennis Ryan was there that day for me. So when I was asked to run for the Board of Directors almost two years ago, my answer was yes. I find it a true joy and an honor to serve some of the best stuff in the world today.

The various ways I have served in Unity are: as chairperson of the Ushers and now I usher whenever I'm needed; I've served on the Garden Committee, the planning committee for the Unity Cares Committee, and last year helped to set up for the church Christmas party.

I am also now in the second year of my three year term on the board of Trustees. In my first year I was a Trustee in charge of Building and Grounds. This year I am serving as the Treasurer. Actually to be honest someone has always asked me to be involved and I have just always said yes. It has just felt right for me.

Being of service has helped me come out of my shell and I've gotten to know other people. I am actually a loner and somewhat shy, but not as shy as I use to be.

Service has also taught me there are more than two ways to look at things, and what really has surprised me is that I find that I have more in common with people than I thought. Service has showed me that I have a lot more to give than I thought I did and I love knowing that."



shorts

- **Sound Training**...please see Diane T. if you are interested in running the sound equipment. Training date will be mutually agreed upon. A few more volunteers would be appreciated!
- **Are you interested in submitting your email address** for a church distribution list? Send it to minimom45@aol.com or see Diane T. This is a helpful way to get news to all congregants.
- **Ellen Elting** is compiling pictures of Unity Church events for a scrapbook. Send pictures to Ellen.
- **Volunteers in the Bookstore are needed!** Please contact Geri Ann at 445-1180 or Rev. Jim at 453-3603. Your help would be very appreciated.

Our bookstore is open after the 11 am Sunday service and volunteers are there to assist you. There is also a lending library - books are lent out for 3 week period. You can place special orders and donate your used metaphysical/new thought books to the library for others to enjoy. If you can not find a particular book, daily word, CD, or special card, please ask for our assistance. We now take credit cards for your convenience.

Oh what fun it is to write!

Articles for the February/March edition of the newsletter can be submitted to Denise Klein at katzr3@nycap.rr.com by Sunday, January 17th.

Your news articles, spiritual thoughts, poetry, photos, humor or suggestions are always welcomed.

Church Building Improvement

SOME UPGRADES TO OUR CHURCH cannot readily be seen, such as the recent installation of a moisture barrier in the crawl space under the annex.



This much needed improvement is the work of our own Rich Regan, who donated both his labor and the material for the job.

We know Rich keeps very busy with his family business, Northeast Pest Control Inc., but he made time to do this job and we all are very thankful to Rich for his generosity.

Unity Church Cares

THANK YOU to everyone that has signed up to volunteer for our new *UnityChurchCares* ministry. This information is located in the Bradford Street Lobby. As our list of helpers expands, so will our capacity to help others in need.

Have you noticed our new, pink mailbox mounted on the wall? This is for our "heartfelt" request cards that may be filled out and placed in confidence in our mailbox. A committee member will check the mailbox regularly, and help link volunteers to those in need of a card, a phone call, or a visit. Email requests may be entered into our account at unitychurchcares@yahoo.com. We now have a phone request line as well; listen for the voice mail option to press 14 to leave a confidential request.

At this time, the primary need is for transportation to and from church. If you live in the area of Niskayuna, Delmar, Lake George, Rensselaer, or Troy, there are church friends that would appreciate a ride to Sunday service. Please see Diane T. for more details.

In the meantime, training is available for volunteers who wish to visit others.

If anyone hears of a reason to send a card or make a call for support or congratulations, remember *Unity Church Cares*.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

WORSHIP SCHEDULE.

Services at 9:00 & 11:00 AM
Childcare at the 11 am service

Finding your 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 — *Welcome Home!*