



The Messenger

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



By Rev. Jim Fuller

Jesus Was Born At Easter!

ACTUALLY THE BIBLE doesn't tell us what time of year it was when Mary gave birth to Jesus. By tradition we celebrate Jesus' birth on December 25th, the date of an earlier Roman holiday. So we may ask when was Jesus really born? And perhaps more interestingly, how many times

was he born? While I can't offer a definite answer to the first question, the answer to the second is three. Yes, I believe that Jesus was born three separate times while here on earth. I also believe that these three births represent states or stages of consciousness that we must be born into, if we are to follow Jesus as he ascends into "the heavens" of higher states of being.

Jesus' first birth took place when he was born into a body and entered into the dense world of physical form. We too have been born into bodies and into the world of form. For most of us life in a body is dominated by thoughts of staying safe, accumulating experiences or things, and perhaps becoming some-body. While this is perfectly acceptable and perhaps even why we incarnate; it significantly dims our awareness of our timeless spiritual nature. From our dimmed state of awareness we now wonder what it might be like to live as sacred or spiritual beings. Eventually we begin to employ spiritual and religious practices to connect more deeply with our sacred nature. As we do this we take steps toward a second birth. Some may choose to do this prior to their physical birth as Jesus appears to have done. Others will make the choice during their current lifetime. The key to this second birth is choice of purpose; physical and sensual or spiritual and self-aware.

I believe that Jesus' second birth took place at his

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baptism. Baptism by John the Baptist was an opportunity to symbolically release the past and emerge as a new person. During his baptism Jesus became profoundly aware of his spiritual nature and his connection with God. A Divine message was impressed upon his consciousness, "You are my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased." According to the gospels Jesus felt compelled to spend some time alone in the wilderness as this new state of awareness rubbed up against his former physical-sense consciousness. This inner process is symbolized by stories of his experience with temptations and angels. Eventually Jesus-the-man emerged from the wilderness as Jesus the Christ, the anointed, filled with the Spirit of God.

But even Jesus filled with the Spirit of God was still very much a part of physical world. He was a powerful prophet, teacher and healer, and still very much a man. Some followers called him a Son of God but he referred to himself as a son of man, a human being. Many expected him to act like a god or at least to summon the power of God to intervene on their behalf. Clearly that was not his agenda. Because our gospels are collections of Jesus' teachings and stories and not chronological histories, we don't know when Jesus realized that there was yet another birth for him to move through. Some passages imply that at times he felt hesitant about taking the next necessary step forward in his spiritual evolution.

Jesus' third birth took place at what we now think of as Easter, which for him was the time of Passover. We may think that living in a physical body and at the same time having God-awareness is the highest level to which one can aspire. For us it is the next step, but Jesus was aware of levels of consciousness and experience that went far beyond that. He explained to his followers that he

Continued on page 3

The President's Corner

By Heather Diddel

The Change of Seasons

PSSST...I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE --I LOVE snow and winter. Even now. Yes, even now. There's no accounting for taste, is there? I bet that deep down, though, some of you may secretly share my sense of appreciation for quietly lovely rhythms of nature in the northeast, even the winter time of greater darkness, hibernation and inward turning. But for Winter, we would have no Spring.

Having said that, I must admit that these early days of Spring melt my heart, even as they melt the last tenacious snow drifts. Soon, the first tender tendrils of spring flowers will emerge from the dark wet mud. Then, KA-BOOM! There will be a virtual eruption of renewed life --fully blossoming flowers and leafy trees, ever-lengthening daylight, warm temperatures. We will reclaim our outdoor lives and reconnect with that part of ourselves that delights in the songs of birds and warm, star-filled night skies.

Nature's rhythms of renewal and new growth is a powerful metaphor of what is possible in our lives, every moment. It reminds us that as we walk through the various seasons of our lives, personal or spiritual renewal, change and new growth is always possible. And unlike the plants and weather, we can choose when to let that shift to a new perspective or new pattern blossom.

The change of seasons, internal and external, can be a beautiful process. No matter how much we loved the prior season and might not yet be ready to see it go. The flow of life keeps carrying us forward, and going with that flow can bring so much more peace and joy than resisting it.

This time of the year is also a time of a "change of season" on the Board of Trustees. As many of you know, in March, Pamela Coles's and my first term on the Board ended, and both Diane Teutschman and Bill Hewson decided to step off the Board. These three wonderful people constituted half of the Board and had a deeply felt, positive impact --and will, I am certain, continue to do so whether they are on the Board or not. In fact, for many of us, there will be no discernible difference between their level of engagement with our community while on or off the Board. That's my idea of Really Good News.

This change of season has brought with it three wonderful new Board members --Dottie Frament, Lesley Coffaro, and John Reith --and (happily for me), a renewed term. Along with John Frederick and Sheila Healy, and Reverend Jim of course, we have an enthusiastic, inspiring team. Our vision for this upcoming year will, no doubt, include holding the spiritual consciousness of our church community, at the same time as we renew and deepen our own, and find life-affirming ways to serve our community. We will look within ourselves and you, our community, to see what wants to grow. I can't wait to see what seeds get planted and what bursts into bloom.



Collecting Gently Used Books, Music and Videos for April Sale!

****Donate: March 13th - 30th****

Please donate any gently used books on: Spirituality, Gardening, Novels, Children's books, or CDs, and DVDs, etc., between March 13th & March 30th.

Book donations should be brought to the Unity Bookstore.

****Browse & Buy: ****
Sunday, April 3rd through
Sunday April 10th



Listen to Sunday Services

You can now download MP3's of Sunday messages from our church website.

Just go to www.unitychurchinalbany.org and click on "listen". New talks are added every few weeks.

Jesus Was Born At Easter! cont.

would be leaving them, but not gone from them; that they could and would continue to connect with him even after he entered into the next phase of life.

Jesus would have known that his teachings and actions in the Temple during Passover would lead to his execution. He may not have known when but the result was inevitable. I believe that for him this was simply a choice to release his dense physical body in a way that could serve to teach others. Jesus left his body quietly, consciously, without defense or resistance, and without judgment or condemnation of those who executed him. His time in the tomb (think womb) and the rolling away of stone (dense physical matter) symbolize his birth into higher realms of being. After this third birth Jesus was free from the limitations of solid form and of time. He demonstrated this as he continued to appear to his followers and to others, some in apparently solid form and others as an inner voice or inspiration. He continues to do this today.

If we believe that the human body and life in the world of time and form is the highest state of being possible, we miss Jesus' final message and his lasting gift to us. If we are willing to consider the possibility that, as lovely as life here can be, there is a *more* that we have yet to experience, and that the *more* is even more lovely and freeing; we begin to prepare for our own next birth. Whether this is the second birth into the awareness that we are God's "beloved child" awake and aware while still living in a body, or the third birth of releasing our attachment to bodies and time the process is the same. We open our consciousness to the inner voice of Christ and of God, and as we express our desire to experience greater states of awareness and freedom God responds by walking us through the process, just like a midwife.

We are not asked to make dramatic demonstrations as Jesus did, that was his unique contribution as a master-teacher and trailblazer. We are simply asked to first consider and then to trust that there is a greater potential within us than simply to be born into one physical body only to die in order to be born into a body again. Jesus offered us the example of all three births during one short lifetime. In spirit he continues to invite us to follow him, to rise up from the dimmed awareness and heavy density of our first birth into the freedom and expansiveness of the second and third.

May we welcome the spirit of our "elder brother" Jesus as he inspires and encourages us to step toward our next birth, and toward greater freedom and life. Amen



Calendar Events "Farther Out"

"Circulation Day" (a cash-free yard sale)
Saturday, June 11th 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Workshop with Cary Bayer
Sunday, June 26th at noon

Phil "Shiva" Jones

Sunday, July 3rd

Sunday Service at 10AM
Afternoon Workshop at 12:00

Church in the Park

Sunday July 10th

Services at 9:30 & 11:00 AM
At John Boyd Thatcher State Park

Guest Speaker - Rev Sonya Milton
Sunday July 31st – 10:00 AM

Guest Speaker - Victoria Moran
Sunday, August 14th – 10:00 AM

Victoria will offer a workshop at noon

Unity Church Retreat

October 28-29

(Dinner Friday - Dinner Saturday)

Retreat leader: Barbara Wisnom

Location: Dominican Retreat Center, Niskayuna NY
\$175 includes registration fee, all meals, private room,
and a great retreat



Book Club reading for March-May

The Hidden Gospel by Neil Douglas-Klotz

In "The Hidden Gospel" we find Jesus' familiar sayings newly translated from Aramaic, the Middle Eastern language that he actually spoke. What emerges is a hopeful, nurturing, and very contemporary spiritual message. Each chapter includes meditative exercises and body prayers so that we may directly experience the life-changing spiritual practice of Jesus' original mystical tradition. Lunchtime discussion on this book will be Sunday May 29th

Used Book, CD & DVD Fundraiser

Sundays – April 3 & 10

All types of books and media at very low prices! See our ad on page 2 of this issue!

Musical Program of Piano & Flute

Sunday, April 3rd at 1:00 PM

Judy Avitabile on piano and Norman Thibodeau on flute. Free and open to the public.



Sing Along With Judy

Saturday, April 9th 7:30-9:30 PM

Join Judy and your Unity friends as they sing oldies, spirituals, camp songs, rounds, show tunes and more. The sing along is free and open to everyone. Refreshments will be provided. (Donations to the church are welcomed.)



Create Your Best Life:

Vision Boarding

April 10, 2011, at 1:00-4:00 PM

Vision Boarding is an effective tool for picturing your heart's desires and manifesting them in your life. What is it you want to create in your life right now? Whatever it is, Vision Boarding can help you receive it more quickly and easily. Ginger Tomaselli will also briefly cover tools that facilitate the creative process, like visualizing and affirming yourself having your desires, letting go of whatever is holding you back, expressing faith and gratitude in advance, and acting "As If!" Posterboard, markers, and several types of magazines to cut pictures from will be provided – bring your own pictures as well!



Soup, Salad & Cinema

Friday, April 15th

6:00-9:00 PM

*Light meal (soup & salad) 6:00PM
Cinema: "Young At Heart" 7:00PM*

Young At Heart is a documentary about a senior citizen's chorus from Northampton, MA who perform songs by James Brown, Coldplay, Sonic Youth, and other unexpected groups. It's amusing, tender and inspiring. Rated PG



Maundy Thursday Worship Service

April 21st at 7:00PM

Foot (or hand) Washing & Communion

The service focuses on the spiritual/symbolic message of Maundy Thursday. Everyone is invited to participate in all parts of the service.

“Active Dreaming” with Robert Moss

Thursday, April 28th / 7:00-9:00 PM

Learn to live as an active dreamer 24/7. Learn to read signs from the world around you, *choosing* where you will put your energy and attention, stepping beyond self-limiting beliefs and constantly testing the bounds of possibility. Learn to find and live your bigger life story, and to help others get out of their boxes and live from the heart.

Your guide for this path of natural magic is Robert Moss, creator of Active Dreaming and bestselling author of *Conscious Dreaming*, *Dreamgates* and *The Three “Only” Things*. Find Robert Moss Dreams on Facebook and visit www.mossdreams.com

\$25 in advance/\$30 at the door

The Four Agreements — The Essence of Toltec Wisdom

Sunday May 1st

Sunday talk at 11:00 AM

Workshop at 1:00 PM

Barry Schwartzbach first met Don Miguel Ruiz, author of *The Four Agreements*, at the Omega Institute over seven years ago. He has since studied with Don Miguel and other Master Toltec Teachers trained by him. Making regular pilgrimages to sacred sites in Mexico and Peru, and practicing the Four Agreements in his daily life, Barry has established a deep connection with these teachings. Join him as he shares his discoveries and insights.

The Four Agreements — How to Make Toltec Wisdom Real in Your Life

With Barry Schwartzbach

Thursdays, May 5 – June 2, 6:30 – 8:30PM

The Toltec teachings of Don Miguel Ruiz, as presented in *The Four Agreements*, paint a vivid picture of how we create our own world based on our beliefs or “agreements”. These agreements, which we have often unconsciously accepted, can be based in fear. Once we make an agreement it becomes part of our belief system which triggers automatic responses to the world around us. If we can recognize these patterned responses, we can begin to change them and make conscious choices based in Love, not in Fear. Barry’s intention for this class is to introduce concepts and techniques that enable one to move along one’s own path to self-discovery.

Unity Coffee House

Saturday, May 7th 7:00 – 10:00 PM

This is an open mic night with music, poetry, humor and more. Sign in by 6:45 to share your talents, or just come at 7:00 and enjoy the show. Admission is only \$5, and includes refreshments.

Concert with Roger Mock & Mark Shepard

Saturday, May 21, 7:30 PM

Roger and Mark will each perform a set of songs, undoubtedly accompanying one another on some of them. Roger is itching to repeat some songs he’s only done once or twice at services and share more songs from his extensive repertoire. Mark, who recently moved to the area and joined our congregation, is one highly prolific songwriter. Come and hear some of his great self-penned songs!

Admission: \$10 or whatever you can share.

“The Role of Meditation in Spiritual Life”

Sunday, May 22nd at 1:15

John Welshons (“Ramananda”) is a highly respected contemporary spiritual teacher who lectures and leads meditation courses throughout North America. He has been a practitioner of *vipassana* (mindfulness) meditation and various forms of yoga for more than forty years. He has also traveled and studied extensively in India. He is a gifted counselor and teacher who has worked closely with Ram Dass and Stephen Levine and trained with Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. He is the author of *One Soul, One Love, One Heart: The Sacred Path to Healing All Relationships*, *Awakening from Grief: Finding the Way Back to Joy* and *When Prayers Aren’t Answered*.



Unity Book Club

Sunday May 29th, lunchtime

Reverend Jim will lead a lunchtime discussion on “*The Hidden Gospel*” by Neil Douglas-Klotz.

Discussion will take place at Professor Java’s on Wolf Road. (good coffee & food – vegan/vegetarian options)

Spotlight on Service

By John Daubney

Denise Klein



Every two months I receive a copy of The Messenger, our Unity in Albany newsletter, which keeps me connected to our community and reminds me of my commitment to the Unity teachings that guide and inform my life. If you're like me I can sometimes take for granted the work

and skill that go into creating this newsletter; after all, each edition is so well done and arrives like clockwork. For Denise Klein, editor and publisher of The Messenger, this work is a labor of love and a great example of providing service through the work we love to do.

"I FIRST CAME TO UNITY around 2005, and it couldn't have been more different from my religious upbringing. I was raised in an old-style, Missouri Synod Lutheran church, in a Michigan community that was founded in the late 1700s. Two hundred years later, things were about the same. There was no laughing or clapping in church. Heck, there was barely any *smiling*, and hell and damnation were favorite topics. At 18, I left for the relative freedom of the Methodist Church, where people did shocking things like shake hands and greet each other, right in the middle of the service! Wow.

"Even though I had been a "wild and crazy" Methodist for 30 years before discovering Unity, it still took a little getting used to. (With no insult intended, it struck me that this church wasn't wrapped real tight, if you know what I mean.) And yet, I liked the fact that no one wore robes or vestments. I liked the way people jumped up to fill in an ushering spot, if no one else was there. I liked the collection basket at the door, full of items for the local food pantry. I liked the acceptance and the non-judgmental atmosphere, and the study of other sources and opinions about God, as well as the spirituality I discovered here.

"Slowly I found myself feeling at home at Unity, even though all I did for the first two years was attend church on Sunday. I felt like a dry sponge, with a lot of soaking-up to do before I was saturated enough to give something back. You could say that God was waiting to squeeze me into service!

"There are plenty of role models in my family who thought service to others was important, but because he lost his long battle with cancer in November of 2010, I'd like to

talk about my dad. My Dad was the perfect example of a man who simply served where he was needed, but rarely spoke of it and would have been embarrassed if anyone had tried to honor him. Only at his memorial service did I learn that he had helped raise money, and even turned his hand to rebuilding an antique organ in his church. When he was a full-time firefighter, he went around to classrooms every year during fire prevention week, teaching children what to do in case of a fire. When he retired, he became active in the lake association, and weekly drove a truck filled with weeds harvested from the lake to an organic farmer who used them as fertilizer. When a tornado touched down in his neighborhood, he made sure we were safe, and then left to go house to house, turning off the gas, moving debris, and making sure all his neighbors were safe and unharmed. He also ushered in the Lutheran Church. Read some Garrison Keeler if you don't know what a serious matter *that* was!

"My early involvement at Unity was limited to occasionally helping the tellers count the offering, or helping with hospitality. But in 2007, when the gentleman producing our newsletter decided to retire,—and since I earned a living as a graphic designer—producing an eight-page newsletter with practically no restrictions sounded like fun. After all, it was only every-other month, right?

"It was only later that I wondered what I had gotten myself into. Would I find myself resenting another deadline in my life? Would I start being sloppy and hurried, just to get it done? What I have learned by doing the newsletter is that no matter how tired I am at night, or how uncreative I feel, the newsletter brings its own energy. It's never a chore or an obligation! I look forward to each issue. Tackling the layout of each page, reading the articles, putting in bits of humor or graphics to make people think—this was exactly the spiritual exercise I needed, and this was the niche God wanted me to fill.

"Unity has taught me is that all service is good service. Although I'll never do anything as heroic as my Dad going into a burning building to rescue someone, I try to be mindful every day of the million little ways that God presents for me to give back to the world. Sometimes holding a door for someone, or picking up a scrap of paper, or letting someone pull out in front of me in traffic, is an opportunity to add some good energy into the world. I've also discovered that one of the most fun and gratifying ways to serve is not to know the outcome. Try it sometime—tuck a \$5 bill into a library book, donate blood, or knit baby items for a hospital nursery. I like to think of it as giving the universe some raw material to work with."

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. — Mohandas Gandhi



Helping Us Achieve our Spiritual Goals

Unity Church Cares

To understand another is one of life's richest blessings and to be understood by another is perhaps love's sweetest, most satisfying gift.

'Hemingway'

Unity Church Cares MISSION STATEMENT

Empowering the growth of Christ consciousness by supporting and nurturing our church commUNITY.

AS A CHURCH COMMUNITY, there are times in our lives when we may need help. Unity ChurchCares is a volunteer ministry to offer such service in times of need.

Do you need a ride to church? Are you having surgery and need a call for support? Short term care for the occasional set back in our lives is the goal of this committee.

We can be givers and receivers of this ministry. Would you like to volunteer to help another in some small way? Perhaps prepare a meal, help run errands, or transport to an appointment? These are just a few ways you can be of service to others in their time of need.

UnityChurchCares can be reached by phone at 453-3603 x14; by email@unitychurchcares@yahoo.com; or by placing a request card in the pink mailbox in the Bradford Street.Lobby.

A committee member will contact you as soon as possible.

Board of Trustees

President	Heather Diddel ('14)	475-9604
Vice Pres.	Sheila Healy ('13)	434-1517
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I Need Your Help!

By Mark Shepard

MY NAME IS MARK SHEPARD and I'm new here at Unity. I've really enjoyed the opportunity I've had to share some of my music with you all the last few weeks.

What you may not know is that for many years I was painfully shy and the target of continuous bullying throughout my school years.

Having overcome those challenges I am now being called to use my music and coaching and training abilities in Bullying Prevention Programs for Elementary, Middle and High School Students, Teachers and Parents.

If you are the parents of elementary, middle or high school age children I would like to ask for your help and your kid's help.

Here's why I need your help:

I am creating an online video course called "The Bully Proof Kid" and I need to show demonstration examples of several simple techniques that enable kids to empower themselves and bully proof themselves from the inside out.

My own kids are grown and the schools I do my presentations at have all kinds of red tape to wade through in getting video releases. I'm new in the area so I don't know a lot of families with kids yet who I could just informally ask.

My programs are very much in alignment with the principles of Unity and being able to show the concepts in my video course with real live kids would enable me to help countless others who are struggling with teasing, name calling, exclusion and bullying. I also have a few demos and tips for parents that I need to capture on video as well.

So if you have kids who are fine being on camera and would be willing to help me out with some simple role playing exercises, please call me at 203-804-1208 or email me at BullyFreeUs@gmail.com

Your kids will get the added benefit of learning some peaceful "bully busters" they'll be able to use for the rest of their lives.

For more information, my web site is
<http://BullyFree.us>

Thanks!



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Summer Worship

Schedule Reminder

**We hold one Sunday Service at
10:00 AM**

**May 29th (Memorial Day)
through September 4th (Labor Day)**



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!*

Put your pen to paper!

Articles for the June/July edition of the newsletter can be submitted to Denise Klein at katzr3@nycap.rr.com by Sunday, May 22nd. Your news articles, spiritual thoughts, poetry, photos, humor or suggestions are always welcomed.