



The Messenger

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

Tombs of Our Own Making

AFTER THE SABBATH, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. Suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, his clothing white as snow. The guards at the tomb shook in fear of him and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said." (*Matthew 28:1-5*)

A tomb is a chamber sealed off and separated from the rest of the world. Its purpose is to keep what lies inside, that which is dead, from being disturbed. But some tombs are inhabited by the living, not by the dead. Many of us live in tombs of our own making. These are in effect tiny shrines dedicated to our perceptions of how things are, secured to keep our beliefs safe from the light of day and undisturbed by outside thoughts. We construct these tombs with bits of thought we collect over lifetimes, thoughts borrowed from others, thoughts we make up for ourselves. Some of these thoughts may have been vital and alive but once we cement them into the walls of our tiny separate "kingdom" they quickly lose whatever life they once had. We often seal our tombs with stones marked "and that is just the way it is". We place guards by our tombs to make sure that not one of these stones is disturbed, not even by God.

If we are religious people then some parts of our tomb may be built of religious or spiritual thoughts. Thoughts of what must be done or what must never be done in order to please the gods of our imagination. Some build tombs of with thoughts failure and unworthiness, beliefs that past failures now make them unworthy of love or suc-

cess. Most tombs contain sad bits of belief about of loss, death and grief; and of how and when it is acceptable or unacceptable to die and pass on. And each tomb is sealed with a final stone, a strong belief designed to guard the door and keep the tomb safe. The stone might be marked with the idea that because painful and difficult things happened to me I am destined to always suffer and be alone. Another tomb might be sealed with the belief that because I once caused injury, pain or loss I am unworthy of experiencing acceptance or community. Sometimes it's just an old familiar stone marked, nobody from my family or town ever gets to be very happy for very long... "and that is just the way it is." These stones are designed to protect all the other bits of belief that make up the structure of this tomb we have built around our self.

Easter (Passover) was the time Jesus chose to challenge our collective misbelief of about life and death. Each of the tombs we have become trapped in contains many bits of belief about what it means to be born, to live, and to die. These misbeliefs about death may come from religious traditions. They may come from family or friends or "experts". Each gets set into a special place in our little tomb where we can admire it and remain loyal to its dictates. Often these "final beliefs" are used to seal ourselves into our chamber. No one in their right mind would dare challenge our painful stories about grieving and dying, no one except perhaps Jesus.

But instead of challenging the beliefs of others Jesus chose to teach that these misbeliefs about death were hollow and empty by demonstrating that they had no power over him. He did that by publically rolling away the stone that said "other people",



By Rev. Jim Fuller



Unity Church Prosperity

By Dottie Frament – Treasurer and
John Frederick – Prosperity Ministry

Unity Church in Albany is PROSPEROUS! That is a fact, in Spirit, in Truth and in evidence everywhere you look.

We have an abundance of volunteers who participate with Joy and bring our programs to life. Sunday services are vibrant and spiritually enriching. We have outstanding music and inspiring sermons, urging us to higher levels of consciousness. We welcome newcomers every week and honor our long-time members for their service. We have opportunities for spiritual growth through our workshops, classes and our annual retreat. We have an abundance of nourishing food, friends, family and fun!

Early this year, our “Prosperity Ministry” team met in prayerful meditation to expand our vision for 2012. With the October 2010 “Visioning for Unity Church” as a springboard, an abundance of ideas flowed forth.

These were presented to the Board of Directors:

- Support for people to become Licensed Unity Teachers;
- Trips to Unity Village;
- Increasing our congregation’s diversity;
- Increasing our numbers of young people;
- Having a continual visioning process and increasing our “We” consciousness – in the church and in the world around us;
- Integrating visioning into more the everyday activities of the church;
- Sacred Feminine and Sacred Masculine groups;

We also set an Income Goal of \$200,000 to \$225,000 for 2012.

We affirm that this vision, or something higher, is manifesting now, for the good of all. The Spirit of God is working in and through us all, and we are prospered in ALL WAYS.

The Next Newsletter —

Articles for the June/July edition of the newsletter can be submitted to Denise Klein at katzr3@nycap.rr.com by Sunday, May 20th. Your news articles, spiritual thoughts, poetry, photos, humor or suggestions are always welcomed.

Unity Church Cares

THANK YOU to everyone that has signed up to volunteer for our new *UnityChurchCares* ministry. Many of you have stepped in to help, and your generosity of spirit is so appreciated! Fliers are located in the Bradford Street lobby, explaining the purpose and mission of this new ministry. If you feel called to volunteer in some way, there is a yellow folder with a sign up sheet for your contact information. We will add you to the growing list, and call if and when the need arises. 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.

Any questions or concerns regarding *UnityChurchCares* may be directed to Diane T. at 280-4311.

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

Food Pantry

During all months of the year we continue to give for the benefit others. Thank you for your generous donation!



Week #1

WOMEN’S WEEK! Needed are feminine pads, tampons, washes, shampoo, conditioner, tooth brushes & toothpaste, deodorants & soap.

Week #2

MEN’S WEEK! Needed are shaving creme, razors, deodorants, shampoo & soap, toothbrushes & toothpaste.

Week #3

BABY WEEK! Disposable diapers, baby wipes, lotions & shampoos.

Week #4

HOUSEHOLD WEEK! Toilet Paper, laundry soap, paper towels, household cleansers.

Tombs of Our Own Making —

Romans or Jews, had the power to harm or kill him. One of our most strongly protected beliefs is that “other people” are somehow ultimately responsible for what happens to us; our births, our lives, our deaths. We may affirm that we are co-creators of our life-experience. We may pardon others by telling ourselves that they didn’t know better or couldn’t help themselves. But notice how much of this thought system is still built on top of the idea that, “it’s mostly because of them”. I believe that when Jesus said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do” he was experiencing a *revelation* that, regardless of what they may have appeared to do to him, or even what they thought they were doing to him, *they* were in fact doing nothing. If this were not true they would have remained guilty and the forgiveness that he offered would have been hollow and unjustified.

Ultimately it is the “angel of the Lord” - an inner revelation from God to us - that rolls away the stones we have used to seal our tiny tomb and lets in the light of clear understanding that shows us the kind and healing truth about all the things we have tried to keep in darkness. Jesus demonstrated, in a very public way, that no person, event or thought system could entomb him. His Easter message was that what God has created whole and alive and free, remains so for all time. We can help prepare for this experience in our own lives by refusing to add any more stones of negative or limiting belief to the tombs or walls we have built. We can stop rolling up fiercely marked stones in front of our doorways, stones that proclaim damaged, defective or dead... keep away. And we can trust that regardless of what others may seem to have done to us or tried to do to us, the clear light of God can help us see *both* them and ourselves as whole, innocent and fully forgiven. As we practice trusting the Light of God rather than the safety of our own tomb, our “shrine to suffering”; we will gently awaken to the light of day and find that “the angel of the Lord” has rolled away the last dark stone that once kept us trapped in a tiny tomb of our own making.

May we bravely release even our most dearly held allegiances to sadness and death into the hands of our Creator; knowing that by the hand of Love, we are resurrected into wholeness and peace. Amen

2012 Board of Trustees

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Being an Overcomer

By Rev. Dr. Paulette Hogan

When I began my journey in search of Truth, I was told the purpose of my difficulties was for me to overcome them. They were detours in my spiritual growth. I understood this, and I agreed with it.

A day came in my life when I was faced with a monumental challenge involving my health. I had received a highly unfavorable diagnosis from my doctor. As I began to feel hopeless and call upon God for an answer, I remembered something I had read by a Unity writer. She said when she asked how to overcome anything, the answer she received was to “come up over” it.

She wrote, “A wonderful realization came to me. To come up over a problem means to come over to something else. It means to come over to the truth that, in the mind of God, there is only good.”

It was in that moment I knew God was committed to holding my hand as I made that leap up over the dark place of this disease back to the light of truth that it is God in whom I live and move and have my being.

I now refer to myself as an *overcomer*—not a survivor, an overcomer.

If we believe we are truly one with the spirit of God, we must believe that Spirit within us is ready always to be drawn into active service. However great the undertaking, you will be successful if you call forth the dynamic powers that are yours to command and make yourself an open channel for the expression of good.

When you keep your focus on the Christ Light and follow a divine path, all your mental, physical and spiritual efforts yield only good to you and to the world. It is important to acknowledge and cooperate with the wise, all-knowing mind of God in all you think, say and do.

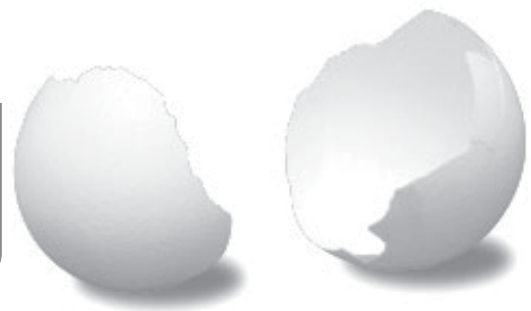
It is up to us to stop placing limitations upon ourselves, to stop measuring ourselves by past abilities or experiences or by our family ancestors. Step out on the illumined path of Truth and prove what you are—what you can do and be—through Christ Consciousness.

Article reprinted with permission from:

<http://www.unity.org/resources/articles/being-overcomer>



April to May



Maundy Thursday Worship Service

April 5th at 7:00PM

Foot Washing & Communion-in-Prayer

Join us for a simple service with a big impact. The service focuses on the metaphysical/symbolic meaning of Maundy Thursday. Everyone is welcome to participate in foot washing, or hand washing if you prefer. Communion-in-Prayer is done inwardly with spirit and prayer rather than wine and bread. Guests are welcome.

Fearless Living: Embracing Conflict & Creating Peace

Wednesday class with Reverend Jim

April 18 – May 23 at 7:15 PM

No one is against you, not even your own life. This is absolute Truth. You may not believe it now. You may have a lifetime of evidence to the contrary. But the entire Universe is *for* you. And that means you can experience both your wholeness and your worthiness in any moment, in any circumstance. This class is based on the book “The I of the Storm: Embracing Conflict, Creating Peace” by Unity minister Gary Simmons. Because of the compact nature of the class, with only five meetings, we encourage you to read the first few chapters before the first class.

“From Jesus to Christ”

Sunday Film Series

April 15 & 29 and May 6 & 20 at 12:45 PM

“From Jesus to Christ” is a PBS Frontline series with four one-hour episodes that chronicle how Christianity evolved from a Jesus led movement within Judaism into a separate and eventually competing religion. It offers excellent insights into the confusing and often conflicting teachings of various New Testament writers. It will help you understand how Jesus’ followers and their followers understood Jesus and how our Bible was created. The presenters are all respected main stream Bible scholars. This is not a metaphysical look at the scriptures but one based on historical scholarship. It can be helpful in un-learning some of the myths we have been taught about Jesus, Christianity and the New Testament.



Town Meeting

Sunday, April 22nd 12:45-1:45

Town Meetings are your opportunity to learn more about what’s happening at Unity Church, ask questions of our minister and board, and to offer your suggestions or comments. The purpose of Town Meetings is to promote good communication within our church community and keep in touch with the energy and direction of the group. Town Meetings are open to everyone who attends Unity Church.



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

Body Dialogue Workshop with Deborah Foss

Sunday, April 29th at 1:00-2:30 PM

What you need to know is deep inside you, beyond your conscious mind. In this experiential workshop, you will learn healing techniques that can bring mind, body and spirit together to reclaim your inner wisdom. Begin to untangle the dilemmas of your physical, emotional and spiritual lives. Awaken to your intuitive nature, become grounded in your knowing and more confident about the present moment and your future. (cost \$15)

Deborah Foss is a Kripalu certified Facilitator, Yoga Teacher and Massage Therapist with over 20 years of experience. She is also the Staff Development Specialist for the Arc of Rensselaer County. You may also recognize her as an usher, photographer or teller from Unity Church. Contact deb.foss@verizon.net for more info.

Piano & Voice Recital with Judy Avitabile and Friends

**Saturday, May 5th at 1:00
PM (free)**

This will be a mix of solo piano music and vocal music. Judy will be joined by Jean Leonard, soprano, and Dave Scheiber, baritone. The music will include: Mozart, Chopin, Victor Herbert, Frank Loesser, and Rodgers and Hammerstein. It will also include music by an SCCC student.



The Writing Trance - Elevating your writing to the next level

Sunday, May 6th at 12:45 PM

***This seminar is offered free of charge,
but advance email registration is
required.***

Register with Stephen Leslie at: gofigure2006@verizon.net

This two-hour seminar will teach the practical steps towards allowing the unconscious to come forward in your writing. Safe and proven methods of entering into a state of deep concentration will be practiced and experienced. The basis for this seminar are the writing techniques of Pulitzer Prize winning author Robert Olen Butler'. This seminar is useful for those who are involved in any creative art. It is recommended that each participant read "From Where You Dream" by Robert Olen Butler prior to the seminar, if possible.

The Instructor - Stephen W. Leslie - has been practicing meditation for 39 years. He spent 19 years studying yoga meditation with a swami from the Himalayan Mountains. He has been a psychotherapist for eleven years and for the last two years has been a hospice chaplain. Stephen's poems have been published by Contemporary Haibun Online, The Red River Review, Alpha Press, The Himalayan Journal, Ink Sweat & Tears, World Haiku Review and Three Line Poems. He has also been published by The Paper Wasp (Australia) and won the silver medal in poetry in an international competition in Japan in 2011. The Sun will be publishing one of his pieces in August, 2012. Stephen has a B.A from the University of Maryland, a Master of Science from Johns Hopkins and a Master of Science from Loyola College.

to June.....

"Who Pulls the Puppets Strings?" with Dr Jon Mundy

Sunday, June 3rd at 12:15 PM

Suggested donation: \$20.00 - \$30.00 (no one turned away)

This workshop is all about the body, the ego, the decision maker and the dreaming of the world. It's based on the

Teaching of *A Course in Miracles*.

Jon Mundy met Dr. Helen Schucman and Dr. William Thetford in 1973. They, along with Dr. Ken Wapnick introduced him to *A Course in Miracles* over a year before its publication. Helen served as Jon's counselor and guide until she became ill in 1980.



Jon (Rev. Dr. Jon Mundy, Th.M.) is an author, lecturer; minister,

since 1985, the publisher of *Miracles Magazine* www.miraclesmagazine.org, and Executive Director of All Faiths Seminary International, in NYC. He is Co-founder in 1981 along with Rabbi Joseph Gelberman of the New Seminary for the training of Interfaith Ministers and in 1989 the Co-founder along with Rev. Dr. Diane Berke of Interfaith Fellowship with services in Cami Hall across from Carnegie Hall, in New York City.

He is the author of 9 books including his newest book, *Living A Course in Miracles*, published by Sterling Ethos, of NYC, a division of Barnes and Noble. His writing include *What Is Mysticism?*, *Missouri Mystic*, *Awaken to Your Own Call: A Comprehensive Introduction to A Course in Miracles*, *Listening to Your Inner Guide*, *The Ten Laws of Happiness*, *Money and Jesus*, *Search for the Center*, and *Learning to Die*.

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Listen to Sunday Services & Music

You can now listen to or download our Sunday messages on our website. Just go to www.unitychurchinalbany.org and click on "listen". New talks are added weekly. Also visit our website's "music" page for the latest *tunes*.

more events in June. . . . and beyond!

“The Yoga of Letting Go”

Workshop with John Welshons

Sunday, June 10th , 12:15 PM – 3:15 PM

*Suggested donation: \$25.00 - \$35.00
(no one turned away)*



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*.

John will also offer private consultations on June 9th & 11th. These sessions last 2 hours and cost \$125. To schedule private session email John at: johnwelshons@earthlink.net.

Mark your calendar to join John Welshons at our Fall Retreat, on October 5-6. The theme will be: “One Soul, One Love, One Heart: Meditations and Reflections on Inner Peace and Peace in Our World.”

The retreat will be held at the Dominican Retreat Center in Niskayuna. Your registration of \$175 includes all meals, a private room, and all retreat activities. Look for more details in our next newsletter and registration forms in May.

Love! Love! Love! -

Deepening your Understanding of Rumi’s Mystical Poetry with Peter Rogen

Sunday, June 17th

10:00 AM worship service & 12:15 PM

workshop

The morning talk will give a broad overview of Rumi’s world view of love as the strongest unifying force in the universe and offer several verses that reflect accordingly.

In the afternoon program, in addition to amplifying the morning talk, members will be asked to join with Peter in reading many of the poems aloud and briefly discussing each one together. Mystical poetry was always meant to be read aloud as well as silently in order to help the reader “embody” the spirit of the poem.



Follow Your Yellow Brick Road:

Awakening Courage, Compassion and Inner Knowing for the Journey Home



Sunday, June 24th 12:15-2:45

with Coach Cary Bayer

In this highly interactive workshop, *Follow your Yellow Brick Road and Zen Teachings of Oz* author Cary Bayer helps you gain momentum on your inner journey to Enlightenment. Moreover, it offers a “Yellow Brick Road”-a series of daily inner exercises inspired by *The Wizard of Oz*-that returns you to your true “home,” your Higher Self, or inner Spirit within.

The workshop awakens valuable qualities for your inner journey: courage, desperately sought by the Cowardly Lion; compassion, which the Tin Man sought; and wisdom, the Scarecrow’s longing. It helps you realize that no wizard or guru has all the answers to *your* quest; but with the *facilitation* of a Good Witch (Therapist, Guru or Coach), *you* can find those answers as you find your way home to peace. These essential qualities are awakened through interactive processes that include one-on-one verbal dyads and journaling. You’ll gain a much clearer understanding of where you are on your journey, and what areas you need to work on to speed up your progress. In a delightful and fun way, this workshop provides tools to help make the dreams that you dare to dream come true.

Your “investment” - \$25

Church in the Park

At John Boyd Thatcher State Park

Sunday July 8th

Services at 9:30 & 11:00 AM

Pot Luck Picnic at noon

Jackie Hawkins – guest speaker

Sundays, July 29th and August 5th

Elaine Silver in Concert

Saturday, August 11th at 7:00 PM

Sunday Service, August 12th at 10:00 AM

Victoria Moran

Sunday, August 19th

10:00 AM Service & 12:15 PM Workshop

Spotlight on Service

By John Daubney

Leslie Coffaro

Once in a great while, someone will urge us to become involved in an activity that uses talents of ours that we may not have been aware of. Sometimes we're the last to know what we are capable of. For Leslie, her acceptance of an invitation to run for the Board of Trustees has given her the opportunity to serve and to find more of what God has in store for her on her spiritual journey.

"I feel as though Unity Church has been drawing me in or that I had been walking toward it for years. I have always had a yearning to grow spiritually and had been searching for the right fit for a long time. I knew that ultimately spiritual growth is personal work, and I also knew that having great support helps, which leads me to how I came to Unity.

"Several years ago while spending a Saturday afternoon at Barnes and Noble, my husband, Joe, and I each decided to treat ourselves to a new spiritual book. While sitting at a table with a stack of books between us to decide which books spoke to us the most, Jim and Kay Fuller came by. Jim introduced himself as the Pastor of Unity Church. He noticed our books and I commented on the books in his arms that I had already read. Before you know it, Jim and Kay had invited us to church the next day, which happened to be the Church in the Park service. We played it safe and committed to attending the following Sunday...ease into it. We have been attending Unity ever since. That meeting was a great gift and I am sure it was not by chance.

"I was raised in a United Methodist Church – my mother's church - and we occasionally went to my father's church – a Catholic church - in the summer because the services fit into our beach time which was important at the time. My Dad told us he was ex-communicated (his words) from the Catholic Church for marrying outside of his faith despite being born and raised in the same church as his parents. He was very supportive of the CYO programs there, but never again took communion which I think became his choice as the years went on.

"For me, it did not feel right. I could not believe that God was not all inclusive and that anyone would be left behind. I also knew that God, the Great Mystery, would honor the many ways to the One. Regardless, church services to

me had felt like an obligation, and for the most part I seldom left feeling nurtured, embraced, or provided with thought provoking ideas. I knew there was more, knew it included everyone, and I knew in my heart that I was very much a part of the process as a co-creator.

"When I came to Unity I felt like I had come home. It was welcoming, all inclusive, loving, and I cannot say enough about the Sunday messages and music. That fall I began attending classes, workshops, and other events; I could not get enough. This community was giving so much to me that soon it was time for me

to start giving back by getting involved in service.



"I feel as though my service began by attending the Wednesday classes at Unity. The service was initially for myself, because it spiritually supported and encouraged my growth. This journey to know God is a personal one, but I knew I would take all the help I could get, which is just what Unity offers. Classes have helped me become more focused on the stillness that lies within me, and getting in touch with that Divine nature that lies in each and every one of us. It seemed that everyone who attended the classes was giving service by supporting everyone's growth process, individual as it may be. I highly recommend attending a Unity class if you are thinking of taking a step to become more involved. Start with a class, learn to grow and become more acquainted with everyone else. You will then feel a stirring in you to start giving back.

"Shortly thereafter I began working in the bookstore. It was within my comfort zone. I love books and reading, so it seemed natural for me. I like a quote that I heard earlier this week that talked about " Being carried like a feather on the breath of God." Maybe that is what I'm allowing to happen. By helping in the bookstore I got to know more people and do what I enjoyed. From there I started to alternate as an Usher.

"Being asked to serve on the Board of Trustees at Unity came as a real surprise to me! Diane Tuetschman did a great job of convincing me that it would be a wonderful experience for me. She was right; I decided to go for it and trust that it was all part of the process. I have just allowed myself to be carried along in this journey. What a wonderful experience and gift it has been. You can't imagine how fulfilling it is to work on the Board with such a supportive, gifted, and empowering group of people.

"So, if you are thinking of volunteering your time and talents to Unity, I highly recommend that you do so; it is the gift that keeps on giving.



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21 King Avenue
Albany, NY 12206

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Albany, NY
Permit No. 713

Phone: 518-453-3603

E-mail: unityalbany@yahoo.com

Web page: www.unitychurchinalbany.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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, lifestyles, 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!*



Summer Worship Schedule

Summer Worship Schedule
One Sunday Service at 10:00 AM
May 27th through September 2nd
(Memorial Day – Labor Day)