



The Messenger

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

NEW for 2013! First Sunday Multi-Faith Music Services

BEGINNING IN JANUARY we will introduce an exciting new Sunday Evening Worship Service at Unity Church! These services will take place the first Sunday of each month from 6:00 – 7:00 PM. Patterned in part after the Kirtan gatherings of the Hindu and Sikh traditions, our new services will incorporate devotional music from various faith traditions as well as a strong helping of the positive, New Thought music we enjoy regularly on Sunday mornings.

Services will include meditative chanting, rousing Gospel songs, traditional and contemporary Kirtan, our own original Unity Albany songs and whatever else the Spirit leads us to share. Services will also include prayers, readings from various sacred writings and a time for meditation. And we will have typical Unity elements including the Daily Word and a brief message or reflection from Rev. Jim or a guest leader.

Our vision is to begin by holding monthly services through the summer and then to expand into a weekly format in the fall. If you know someone who is looking for a spiritual home but can't make it in on Sunday mornings, please tell them about this new service. If you are that someone please join us

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Which Gifts Will You Receive?

THERE IS A STORY about a man who has just arrived in heaven and is getting a tour of the grounds. At one point he spots a large warehouse which his guide is not including in the tour. When he asks about the building the guide says that it would be best if he didn't visit there. Eventually the man convinces his guide to show him what is inside that warehouse. Inside he encounters row after row of shelving, all filled with beautiful unopened gifts. Each row is marked with the name of a person. Running down the aisles he finds the row with his name on it, pulls down a box from his shelf, opens it and peering inside begins to weep. "That" says his guide "is why we don't like to stop here. This is where we save all the gifts that were offered to you but which you weren't willing to receive."

Throughout our lives we are offered many gifts. Some we accept and enjoy, allowing them to enrich and expand our lives. Others we decline, believing them to be of a value either too little or too large for us to accept. Many of the greatest gifts we will ever be offered could not be kept into boxes, small or large. Gifts like friendship, forgiveness, encouragement and caring can't be bought or boxed. But just like the gifts that we do purchase



By Rev. Jim Fuller

with money, these gifts must be received in order to be enjoyed. The same holds true for the many gifts we get from God, the Source that creates and sustains us. The point of the preceding story is that God, Spirit, Creation is continually offering us gifts, and not just material goodies. God offers us people and companionship, ideas and resources, awareness and the experience of life. But unless we open these boxes and receive these gifts, it will be as if Christmas had passed us by without so much as a single card or candy cane.

Here's a big secret about Christmas; all the things piled under the tree are junk. Yes they may be entertaining or even useful (nothing like a shiny new blender for the holidays!) but what really makes our hearts sing is the feeling that we have been remembered and loved. And if we want to feel that we must be willing to release our judgments and defenses and to unlock the doors of our hearts. You see the real warehouse isn't located in some dis-

Continued on page 3

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By John Frederick



Light is the visible metaphor for Spirit, and a powerful symbol of Christmas....the Star guiding the "Wise Men" to the manger. Christmas light is perfect; the Christ Spirit come to us at the darkest time of the year.

Isaiah (9:2) foretells this vision: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light..." In the beginning, in Genesis, God's first action is to

say, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.

A famous passage from the Lotus Sutra (3rd century CE) says, "The Buddha emitted a light from between his eyebrows....This light illumined the eastern direction, eighteen thousand Buddha lands...." The brilliance of the Buddha's light is often said to be indescribable.

Scientificly, light is a stream of photons visible to the physical eye. We see, in fact, not a person or object, but really the light bouncing off a person or object.

Spiritual "light" is something else entirely. It is that illumination of the mind that does not depend on physical vision, but on an awakening to the Truth. An explosion (or a gentle dawning) of awareness that what is "really Real and truly True" is sometimes an exact mirror opposite of what our human mind and senses "see" as factual.

We think we don't have enough :: We find we have all that we need and enough to share.

We think we are not worthy :: We find that we are worthy and fully capable.

We perceive difficulty, poverty and lack in the world :: We are aware of the beauty and joy and perfection in all of Creation.

We act and react out of dysfunction, old habits, self-destructive behaviors and traumatic experiences :: We heal our old wounds.....and those of our family....and find a wealth of friendships and relationships that are whole, healthy, supportive and joy-filled.

These and many other examples are ways that the light enters into our minds and our hearts and opens us up to the Gifts of the Spirit.

The sign of Christmas is a star, a light in darkness. See it not outside yourself but shining in the Heaven within and accept it as the sign the time of Christ has come. He comes demanding nothing. No sacrifice of any kind of anyone is asked by Him. ~ A Course in Miracles



YFM is a spiritual development program for our youth in from babies through High School. Children are divided into two groups with K-5 students in one room and 6-12 students in another. Trudy Ellis runs our Nursery. Our goal is to be able to have four classrooms with children more closely matched by age.

Our children work with a rotating team of teachers which include Ginger Hannah, June O'Toole, Penny Palagy, Gary Allocco, Jane Bloom, with support from Orisa Skipper and Ann Marie Burke. We were all very blessed to be able to participate in a Unity Worldwide Ministry sponsored training program held at the Unity Church in Worcester last month. We had great fun, made connections with fellow teachers from around the region and learned a lot! We came back filled with great ideas and activities for the children.

This past summer, the younger children created a garden in the yard on the side of the church under the guidance of June O'Toole. They learned the growing process from seed to fruit and the need for nurturance of all growing things. Their payoff was a beautiful and bountiful garden of flowers. Currently, our younger children are continuing with the *Celebrating Your God Self* curriculum by practicing positive family values and our teens are revisiting the five Basic Unity Principles. We have taken time out to celebrate Halloween and Thanksgiving and are about to start learning about Advent and the Christmas story.

Our program is a great place to be in service! Not only would we love to have more teachers and assistants, but we encourage any of the congregation with special gifts to share to consider joining us on a Sunday. Perhaps you are a knitter and would like to help us create baby afghans to send where needed. Or maybe you can do a music event, teach us Yoga, or share healthy eating ideas. Pretty much anything! You can talk to any of the teachers about your ideas. And feel free to stop by and visit anytime!

The Next Newsletter —

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

Multi-Faith Music Services, con't

as we create our Sunday evening congregation.

Our first Multi-Faith Music Service will be held on Sunday, January 6th. This is the traditional date of the Feast of Epiphany which celebrates the manifestation of the Christ in our world. The Manifestation of Christ will be our first theme as we move into this new chapter of our spiritual journey together.

Unity Church is a spiritual community that is committed to growing in new and dynamic ways. We have a vision. We have a theme. We have a commitment to serve and to inspire. We have talented leaders and great musicians. All we need now is you.

If you are a musician or singer who would like to participate in making these services happen, please speak with Roger Mock (765-2815) or Mark Shepard (203-804-1208).

Which Gifts Will You Receive? con't.

tant heaven; it's located inside your heart. And all the gifts that have ever been offered to you are still in there, just waiting for you to unlock the door and claim them. Seeing some may make you weep. It's humbling to realize that you have been rejecting and refusing so much good and so much love. But once you get past the initial shock of realizing what locking the door to your heart has cost you in the past, you then have the opportunity to look around with wonder at all that has been saved just for you. No true gift is ever lost. Every loving and wonderful thing that has ever been offered to you remains with you throughout all of time. Which ones will you take off the shelf, unwrap and experience this Christmas?

May you allow yourself to receive all the gifts of comfort, companionship, healing and joy that are already present in the storehouse of your heart. Amen.

Stepping Into a New Year

Our New Year begins January 1st. The Chinese New Year won't happen until February 10th. And you will need to wait until September 14th for the Jewish New Year. With so many dates to choose from how can we be sure when the New Year really begins? I believe that the New Year begins whenever a new God Idea comes into our mind and makes the year "new" for us. The prophet Isaiah heard this from God: "Do not remember former things, don't consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?" Release the old, remember it not, let go of the old stories and watch as something new springs into your life.

When was the last time a God idea "sprang forth" into your life? If God's new things, miracles large or small, aren't showing up in your life what might be going on? Let's not blame bad luck or assume that God is somehow withholding "grace" from us. Those sound more like human ideas than spiritual truths. Perhaps we are still defining ourselves or others by the past?

We all live under the Spiritual Law of Mind-Action. Whatever we believe to be so; is so for us. Believe "I am healthy and fortunate" and your creative mind says, "Yes you are!" Tell yourself "I am a victim of my past" and it says "Of course you are." Your thinking will even draw others to you who will agree with you, even if you are wrong. When we release the "things of the past" they lose power, begin to fade and eventually are no more. When we define ourselves or others based on what happened last week, last year, or long ago our New Year will remain a distant thing.

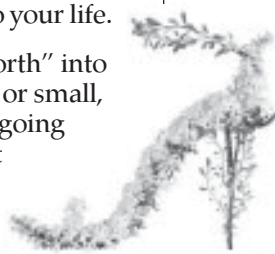
God created you holy, beautiful, powerful, wise and loving. If you are feeling dis-heartedened or tired perhaps it's

because you are arguing with God's loving idea of you or others. Keeping score on yourself or others is a very disheartening and very tiring thing. Over and over our Bible reminds us to get out of the past, to forgive, and to do so quickly. We are encouraged to hold only love, even for those who we perceive as enemies. The message is clear, get out of the past and let it go. A strong man we are told can only be robbed of his good if he is first bound. Binding yourself to the past, real or imagined, pleasant or difficult, robs you of any hope for a "new" year.

A Course In Miracles invites us to "make the New Year different, by making it all the same." No more trips to the past. Accept every person you know or even think of as your brother or sister. Remind yourself that God's spirit of good not only lives in them but is the very Truth of their being. And if you find yourself "considering former things", change your mind.

A rabbi once asked his students, "How can you tell when the night is over and the day has begun." One student answered, "When you see an animal in the distance and can tell if it is a donkey or a cow." Another said, "When you hold out two threads and can tell which is black and which is brown." "Good answers" said the rabbi, "but not my point." "You will know when the night is over and the day has begun when you are able to look at any other human being and see them as your brother or your sister. Until then it is still night for you."

Today may we release all former things, allow the night to end, and welcome the new day and New Year that is here for us. Amen.



CALENDAR

Church Christmas Party

Saturday, December 1st 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. This is a free event.



“Tales of Everyday Magic”

Sunday Film Series

December 2 & 16, January 13

Tales of Everyday Magic is an anthology of films based on the work of Hay House authors including Louise Hay, Wayne Dyer and Gregg Braden. The series explores magical moments in our everyday lives that align with Spirit and lead to our self-discovery and higher destiny. Copies of the 50 minute long films will be available for purchase following the showings.

All showing at 12:45 PM (free)

Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service

**Monday, December 24th
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 Pot Luck Lunch

Tuesday, December 25th, 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. We gather to prepare for the meal at 1:00 PM; the meal begins around 2:00. No reservation or sign up needed, just bring a dish to share and come on over. Family, friends and last minute drop-ins are always welcome. Christmas is a wonderful time to gather and celebrate, won't you join us?

Got Pain? Get Relief!

Simple Techniques to Prevent and Relieve Pain

Sunday, December 9th at 1:00 PM

Do you suffer from neck, shoulder or back pain? How about plantar fasciitis or TMJ? Learn and practice simple techniques that are amazingly effective. No spandex, yoga mats or weights required.

Ergonomic principles will be revealed and tested. Experience how a \$14 pillow can turn sitting and driving into a more pleasurable experience, how squeezing your shoulders blades together can lift your spirits, how resting a leg on a chair while standing can alleviate back pain. Consider this hour-long gift to your body.

Presenter: Deb Foss has a passion for sharing healing meth-



ods from a variety of disciplines, including Positional Therapy, Neuromuscular Massage, and physical therapy. She is a Kripalu certified facilitator, yoga teacher and bodyworker. Her warm, engaging style makes learning accessible and fun. You'll probably recognize her distinctive laugh.

Suggested donation: \$15

New Year's Eve Burning Bowl Service



Monday, December 31st, 5:30 PM

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

You Can Heal Your Life: The Movie

**Sunday, January 6th at 12:45 PM &
Saturday January 19th at 7:00 PM**

You Can Heal Your Life: The Movie is hosted by Louise Hay and offers an intimate look into her inspirational life story. It also includes a special segment devoted to helping you apply Louise's affirmations and groundbreaking wisdom to heal your own life and the challenges that you face today. The film includes a number of luminaries in the fields of self-help, philosophy, health, spirituality, and New Thought join Louise, who share their take on success, happiness, and the myriad ways in which people can heal their own lives. Appearances include: Wayne Dyer, Candace B. Pert, Gregg Braden, Mona Lisa Schulz, Christine Northrup, Doreen Virtue, and Esther Hicks (Teachings of Abraham). Free and open to the public.

Winter Class with Rev. Jim "You Can Heal Your Life" Wednesdays, January 9th through March 20th at 7:15PM



Louise Hay has one simple message to share: The body, like everything else in life, is a mirror of your inner thoughts and beliefs. Every cell within your body responds to every thought you think and every word you speak. This class will focus on healing through affirmative prayer and changing our inner patterns of thought using ideas from her best-selling book.

Please begin reading the book (at least the introduction and first few chapters) before attending the first class. Books (including audio books), affirmation cards and other materials are available in our bookstore.

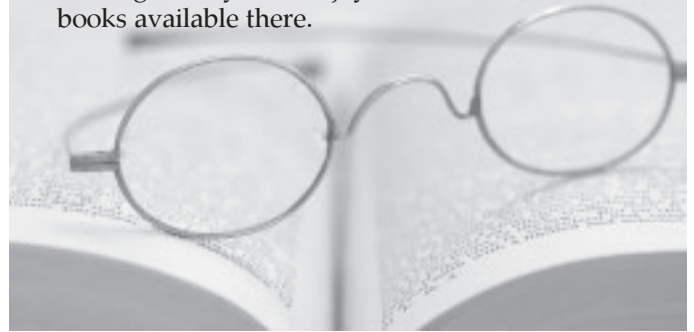
Coffee House

January 26th 7:00-9:45 PM

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

Unity Book Club News

The Unity Book Club is "on break" until after the New Year. The book club is dedicated to reading and discussing books by Unity and other New Thought writers. Look for book club updates at the church and in our February newsletter. Meanwhile we invite you to visit our bookstore and lending library and enjoy the wide selection of books available there.



★	Guest Speaker	★
Unity Minister, Rev Bill Heller		
Sunday, February 3rd		

Stay Fit / Get Fit at Unity

Yoga with Deborah Foss

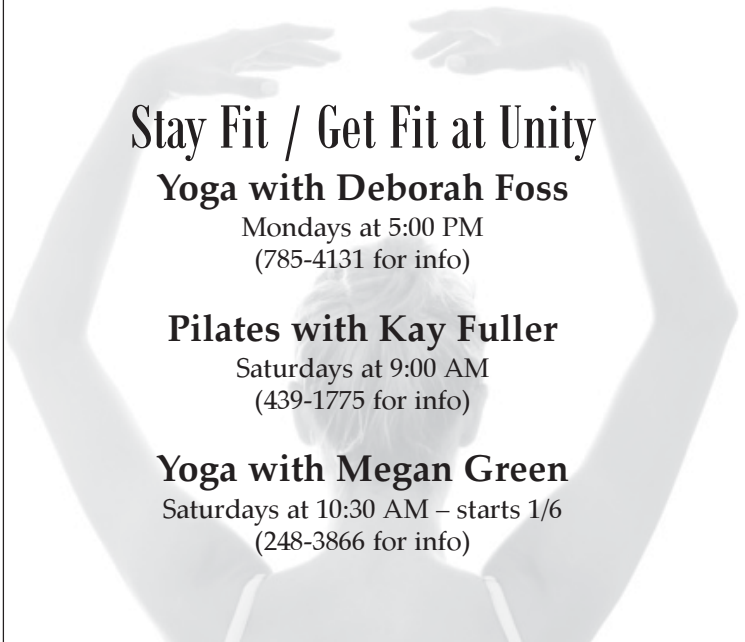
Mondays at 5:00 PM
(785-4131 for info)

Pilates with Kay Fuller

Saturdays at 9:00 AM
(439-1775 for info)

Yoga with Megan Green

Saturdays at 10:30 AM – starts 1/6
(248-3866 for info)



Join Reverend Jim & Kay for a “Field Trip” to Manhattan

Attend the annual Paul Winter “Winter Solstice Concert”

Saturday, December 15th at 2:00 PM
Cathedral of St John the Divine
1047 Amsterdam Av (at 111th St) NY
City

This year’s program is: “For the Love of Ensemble: A New Solstice Adventure”

Here’s what Paul Winter says about the program... Instrumental ensembles have been alluring to me since I was five years old, from the night my parents took me along to a dance, in my hometown of Altoona. They parked me on a chair behind the dance band, and I sat the whole evening transfixed by the drummer, and everything he was doing with his hands and feet; but also impressed by how happy all the people seemed to be when that music was played. I think the seed for my life-journey with music was planted that night.

This year is the 50th anniversary of my first professional band, The Paul Winter Sextet, which emerged in Chicago

during my years at Northwestern University, and went on to have some remarkable adventures in the two years of the band’s existence. Immersed this summer in our original recordings, I’ve realized the extent to which the Sextet has been the father of our Consort, and how our Solstice celebrations, over these past three decades, really evolved from the multi-cultural experiences of the Sextet in our grand six-month tour of Latin America in 1962, hearing traditional music in 23 countries. So I’ve been excited about the idea of “a meeting of the bands,” and having our reunited Sextet be special guests of the Consort during this year’s Winter Solstice Celebration. The Sextet will offer a suite of pieces from our original repertoire, and also join with the Consort in new music for the ensembles together. We hope you’ll join us for this adventure.

Here’s our plan... We will each purchase our own tickets for the 2:00 PM show on Saturday, December 15th, reserved seating or general admission. (www.solsticeconcert.com) Saturday morning we will carpool to the city (take the train or bus if you like) and meet at the cathedral entrance at 1:00 PM. You can also join us for lunch at Le Pain Quotidien, 2463 Broadway (at 91st St) at 11:30 AM and then walk (20 short blocks) or take the subway or a cab up to the cathedral. Those who want can also gather for coffee or dinner after the show. The performance is about two hours long and is a feast for senses and spirit.

The Unity Bookstore

The Bookstore Staff is available to assist you with purchases, book borrowing, credit card payments for books, Sunday service and Unity workshops. The library accepts, cash check, Visa or Master Card. Thank you for your patronage

Bookstore Volunteer Staff

First Sunday:

Leslie Caffaro

Second Sunday:

John Reith

Third Sunday:

Geri Ann Laiacona

Fourth Sunday:

Debbie Singer

Fifth Sunday:

Kathleen Fisk



Giving Close To Home with Far Reaching Results - The 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.

Spotlight on Service

By John Daubney

Nancy McClearn



We all have god-given abilities and gifts which no one can use in exactly the way that we do. When we become aware of these gifts and abilities, we can use them not only in our chosen careers or professions, but also in our volunteer work in the community and here at Unity if we choose. The activities we just love to engage in are a great way to give service. That way

service is a joy! Nancy sees the connection between her gifts and chosen profession and the kind of service she offers here at Unity.

"I first attended Unity in August 2002 with Randy. He had been attending for a while, and asked me to join him. He thought I would like the people, the spirit, and the music. So, when I attended that first Sunday, I did feel the warmth, and really liked the affirmations and the music. I commented to Randy that it was so much like what we do at work. "This is a mental health church," I said. In fact, I call Unity my *Mental Health Church*. I say Mental Health because when you come into this sacred space at Unity, you may be struggling with some thought or idea but in a short time you can shift into a healing and positive new space. So, mental Health is a continuous process of moving on and letting go in a manner that allows for connecting and embracing new thinking. I use a Virtues Model when working with children and this is similar to the beliefs in the 12 Powers of Man (by Charles Fillmore) and in Unity Principles. Any behavior issues that are addressed with children are reframed in the context of a new positive outcome. This helps the parent with knowing what to praise which then helps the child's behavior to be reinforced in a positive way.

"Working as a Mental Health Family Nurse Practitioner I have an opportunity each day to be a part of a healing journey for people of all ages. My Nurse Practitioner career began after joining Unity Church. I have worked as a Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist in a variety of settings over the past 40 years. Today I can truly say my work is my play. I am in a private practice, where my mission is to awaken and embrace the good and the beauty in all the people I encounter. Working with this mission in mind is very rewarding for me. I attend Unity so I can recharge my batteries and be at my best for being present with others.

"I grew up in a Christian Church. My father was a great role model for doing service. He volunteered in various ways until he died. He was doing God's work on a daily basis. My Dad could have been a street preacher. He taught me to be positive in any and all situations. Here at Unity all the board members are active and continually inspire me. I am also motivated by my peers at work who are really awesome *worker bees*.

"My service at Unity began with teaching the younger children in the Sunday school classes on a regular basis in 2004. I did that for a couple of years, then took a break when both my father and then my sister became ill. I am a sub now, but would like to teach more often when I retire. I love to arrange flowers, and serve on task forces and committees on an as-needed basis.

"I helped with Circulation Day and have also enjoyed helping out with Christmas parties, and being part of the Retreat team. I have offered Reflexology as a seminar for people to learn how to give a partner a relaxation foot treatment. I have done this workshop a few times. Everyone gives and receives, providing an immediate relaxation response. In the past I have offered Reiki treatments in a group format. Last year I presented a program called "Wrapping up 2011" and plan to offer "Wrapping up 2012" this year. This program addresses ways to manage the end of the year and its holiday challenges with a Spiritual/Physical/ and personal process for making choices to be as healthy as possible. The program runs for four weeks and includes 3 early morning workouts per week. We called our sessions the "Twelve Days of Christmas." Most everyone who was able to be present for the 12 sessions actually lost weight. We addressed the intentions for each day and celebrated each others' successes while we danced, moved our bodies, and journaled daily with an emphasis on gratitude. Also, laughter and encouragement from each other allowed us to experience a daily energy shift.

"I have also been a backup usher and helped with food preparation on Sundays and parties.

"When I hear of a particular need I offer support. I can sometimes lead and sometimes just jump in and help as part of a group. I love volunteering and being committed to change. As the quote from Antonio Porchini goes: "In a full heart there is room for everything and in an empty heart there is room for nothing." I gain more energy by offering myself in service at Unity. I think people who volunteer live longer and have greater life satisfaction.

You will be inspired by the gift of giving of yourself. The task will just flow. If you are considering getting involved in the children's programs I encourage you to just love them and all will fall in place.



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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 — *Welcome Home!*

2012 Board of Trustees

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**Sunday Services at
 9 & 11 a.m.**

**Childcare & Sunday School
 available at 11 a.m.**

**New Multi-Faith Music
 Service 1st Sunday of every
 month 6-7 p.m.**