



# The Messenger

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



By Rev. Jim Fuller

## Into “The Fall”

AS OF SEPTEMBER 22<sup>nd</sup> we have officially entered into the fall. I look forward to the fall. For me it's a time for beginning to slow down a bit from the business of summer. There's still time for weekend trips, appreciating the beauty of fall colors and savoring cooler evenings. Ultimately it's a time for me to prepare for the move into the deeper quiet that winter will bring.

In theological terms entering into “the fall” has a distinctly different connotation. Since Biblical times prophets and writers have often referred to humankind as “fallen.” In the Old Testament this usually meant having fallen away from listening to or trusting in God. Whether distracted or self-absorbed we often tend to put other relationships first (perhaps second and third) and our relationships with God or Spirit a bit farther down the list. As the Bible shifts into the New Testament we see the idea of a fallen humanity both evolving and gaining in strength. Try as we might the writers note, it seems we continue to get distracted and to forget.

Fast forward a few centuries post-Jesus and we find the idea of the fall evolving into the religious doctrines that we are all familiar with today. We are told that because Adam “fell” away from God humanity is not only inherently fallen as a race but we as individuals have also inherited Adam's “original sin.” The combining of these ideas becomes entrenched into Christian doctrine through the writings of St Augustine. Interestingly this sin-fall theology appears to have been a way for Augustine to dodge some personal responsibility for earlier parts of his own life.

Writing his book “Confessions” clearly led Augustine to look for explanations as to why he had behaved so poorly, both inwardly and outwardly. The fall of Adam and the

idea of original sin provided the perfect excuse. Augustine decided that he had inherited what we might think of as “bad spiritual genes” from Adam, and so had everyone else. This teaching also tied right into the idea of a cosmic battle between good and evil, God and a devil; another popular Christian theme of that time. Through repetition over centuries these ideas eventually became cornerstones for most modern day Christian theologies.

When Unity co-founders Charles and Myrtle Fillmore considered the fall of humankind they chose to support a different interpretation. The Fillmores interpreted “the fall” as a fall into what they called sense-consciousness; a sort of becoming hypnotized by the world of things and appearances that our physical senses show us. They taught that like all of God's creation, including Adam, we have always remained perfect and innocent. They held that this is our true identity both within time and beyond. But they noted that most people have become so caught up in the world of perceptions and appearances that they have “fallen” not into sin, but into a unconsciousness. And that unconsciousness leads us to “fall” into the fearful belief that we are physical animals dependent on a physical resources and human cunning rather than timeless beings of great power and spirit.

I often imagine it this way. Sometimes we go to the movies to enjoy a bit of make-believe. We watch images of light and color move on the screen before us. We listen to recorded voices, sounds and even music to enhance our experience. We watch the images on the screen so that we can “fall” into the illusion. If we didn't get caught up in the illusion of the film we would probably comment that it wasn't a very good movie. As



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# Unity Book Club *The Gifts of Imperfection* by Brené Brown

(September-October selection)

**Discussion with Rev Jim 10/27 at 1:00 PM**

In *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Brené Brown, a leading expert on shame, authenticity, and belonging, shares ten guideposts on the power of Wholehearted living—a way of engaging with the world from a place of worthiness.

Each day we face a barrage of images and messages from society and the media telling us who, what, and how we should be. We are led to believe that if we could only look perfect and lead perfect lives, we'd no longer feel inadequate. So most



of us perform, please, and perfect, all the while thinking, "What if I can't keep all of these balls in the air? Why isn't everyone else working harder and living up to my expectations? What will people think if I fail or give up? When can I stop proving myself?"

In her ten guideposts, Brown engages our minds, hearts, and spirits as she explores how we can cultivate the courage, compassion, and connection to wake up in the morning and think, "No matter what gets done and how much is left undone, I am enough," and to go to bed at night thinking, "Yes, I am sometimes afraid, but I am also brave. And, yes, I am imperfect and vulnerable, but that doesn't change the truth that I am worthy of love and belonging."

You can watch a great 20 minute talk by Brené on YouTube, just search for "Brené Brown TED".

The November-December book club reading will be Brené Brown's book *Daring Greatly*.

## 2013 Board of Trustees

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## Would You Like Join Unity Church?

If you love what we teach, we would love to have you become an official member of Unity Church. You are not required to withdraw your membership from other churches in order to join Unity. Our purpose is to advance spiritual consciousness not to convert.

To become a member we ask that you attend worship services regularly for at least six months, read a short booklet on Unity and participate in a six-week membership class. Our fall membership class will be presented on Sundays from 12:30 – 2:00 PM starting in mid-October. Look for class sign ups in our Bradford Street Lobby starting in September. We also ask that you purchase and read the booklet *Unity, A Quest for Truth* by Eric Butterworth prior to attending the membership class. This booklet is available in our bookstore. If you have questions about membership or the class, please call or speak with Reverend Jim.

## Evening Services Go Weekly

The 6:00 pm Multi-Faith Music (and Meditation) Service has become a weekly feature at Unity Church. The desire for an evening service has been moving through Unity Church for many years. Average attendance at these services is now 40.

Our Sunday evening Multi-Faith Music is more than just singing and prayer; it also includes guided meditation, times of silence, and readings and reflections from various sacred writings. While it was inspired by kirtan and sacred singing of the East, the services also include chants in English, gospel style songs and a Unity original or two. Please tell your friends, especially those who feel spiritually called but still have an aversion to traditional "church." Sunday evenings at Unity offer a relaxed of music and meditation which seeks to honor all paths to the Divine.

## Unity Board Meetings

The board of trustees of Unity Church meets monthly, usually on the third Thursday. These meetings last about two hours and are open to congregants. You are welcome to come to the meetings as an observer or you can request to be added to the agenda if you would like to offer comments or suggestions. To get on the agenda please contact our board president Dottie Frament (dframent@gmail.com / 346-7940) at least five days prior to the meeting. To attend as an observer, just show up. We meet in the library starting at 6:00 PM. Minutes from recent meetings and copies of financial statements are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.

## Into “The Fall” continued

we watch the images on the screen move and change we experience laughter, fear, joy, anger, empowerment or sadness. Each of the feelings and many of the ideas we see played out on the screen remain with us long after we leave the theater. We know this is not reality, yet each cinematic journey colors our view of our world and of ourselves.

Our life-journeys here on earth appear to be similar to going to the movies. We have the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of feelings and experiences in what seems to be a fixed and solid reality. We can become whomever we choose to imagine. We can make up stories and roles for the others around us. We can experience joy, sadness, anger and even aloneness. We can create, accumulate and possess many things. We can fall into whatever fantasy or drama we choose, interpret it however we like, and even temporarily lose ourselves.

This is how I see the “fall” into un-consciousness. Perhaps we entered into this world/movie to for a break from some other experience? Perhaps we wanted to be entertained or to learn about something? Whatever our reason for being here, it is important to remember that there is a door that leads out of the theater and back to Reality. We may or may not be ready to leave the theater yet. We may enjoy falling for one more comedy, one more fantasy or one more drama. But how long can we continue to be satisfied by unrealities that only offer a temporary high or low?

What is of ultimate importance for us all to remember is that a Greater Reality awaits us whenever we choose to seek it, and seek it alone. And we don’t need to go anywhere special to find this Reality. It is always right where we are, even in a darkened theater. Shift your view a bit in the theater and you will notice the light from the projector, the speakers on the wall, and the other moviegoers seated around you. Shift your awareness wherever you are in life and you will begin to sense the Greater Reality that is present around you.

It must have been challenging to fall into un-consciousness with Reality so close at hand. It must have taken real focus to ignore the inner nudges of a Reality so great that there is no spot where it is not present. Yet it is clear from our words and actions that we have fallen for the play of lights on the shimmering screen. But this is no fall from grace. Entering into it is no sin and produces no permanent or lasting consequences. And just like summer fades into fall and fall into the quiet of winter, this too will gently fade as we shift our attention. Turning away from the screen before us we can again begin to feel the pull of a Greater Reality. We can choose to make It the focus of our attention rather continuing “to fall” for the shifting images that dance before our eyes.

*May we sense the inner pull and allow ourselves to be gently led back to the Greater Reality that is our true home. Amen*

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# How often do you feel inspired?

For many people that question is an uncomfortable reminder of something that is lacking in their current life. For others it is an opportunity to recall recent or current sources of inspiration, and to sense the life-giving energy that inspiration connects them with. When inspiration feels lacking we may want read about leaders or teachers who live exemplary lives and respond to difficult events in positive or courageous ways. Or we may read about ordinary people who live their lives with courage, dedication, or kindness. Stories like these help us reconnect with the highest parts of our selves, parts that we often overlook. Spending time each week in the company of positive or inspiring people also helps us connect with our inner courage, faith and wisdom. Conversely, controlling the amount of time we spend with “non-inspiring” people can also help nurture our inspiration.

Being in the presence of deeply spiritual people or studying their ideas is another way to connect with inspiration. I can only assume that simply being in the presence of Jesus was an amazingly inspirational experience for his followers. We can find some of that same inspirational energy in the presence or ideas of today’s spiritual leaders and teachers. There is a saying that goes, “If you want to get warm, stand close to the fire.” Truer words were never written.

Each day we have many opportunities to inspire ourselves and to deepen our connection with the highest parts of our being. As we consciously make time to do this we find new levels of creativity and freedom in our lives. We also feel a greater sense of ease with others and new circles of friendship are formed. Ultimately as we dedicate ourselves to seeking greater inspiration, we eventually become sources of inspiration for others. Marianne Williamson presents the following thought in her book “A Return to Love.”

*“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God, your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us, it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.”*





# October & November

## FALL RETREAT with John Welshons (Ramananda)



*Unveiling the Inner Light of Love: Meditations and Explorations On Awakening Living Spirit in Everyday Life*

**Friday-Saturday  
October 4-5**

*(dinner Friday through dinner Saturday)*

Join the Unity Church in Albany community for this inspirational, deeply moving journey into the Heart of spiritual practice. This year our annual retreat will again be led by a beloved and integral part of our Unity community John Welshons (Ramananda).

Our retreat time together will include:

- *Dharma Talks and Reflections on Finding the Spiritual Lesson, and the Spiritual Light, in Every Moment*
- *Meditation, Chanting, and Sufi Dance*
- *Dialogues and Sharing About Our Most Challenging Issues*
- *How to Awaken Love and Joy in our Home, our Work, our Family*
- *How to Let Go of Painful Experiences and Memories From the Past*
- *Learning to Live More and More in the NOW*
- *Understanding Our True Identity as LOVE*

In addition, the opportunity to “retreat” from our daily lives and routines offers a very precious environment in which to deepen our spiritual awareness. We will benefit from quiet time and periods of sacred silence. We will also have ample opportunity to nurture old friendships, cultivate new ones, and expand our connection as a vibrant, healing, and loving spiritual community.

This year’s retreat will be held at the St Joseph Center on Route 155 in Latham. And good news this year the retreat will be a bit less expensive, only \$150 including private room and all meals. Overnight stay at the retreat center is required. Registration forms are available at the church.

**John Welshons (Ramananda)**

**Sunday, October 6th**

**John Welshons will speak at our 9:00 & 11:00 AM Services**

**Dharma Talk/ Workshop 1:00–4:00 PM**

Join John Welshons (Ramananda) for a wonderful afternoon of dharma talk, mindfulness meditation (Vipassana), quieting and cultivating inner peace. And yes, there will be time for questions and answers. Suggested workshop offering \$25

Private Heart-to-Heart consultations available October 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> (Monday & Tuesday.)

Email [johnwelshons@earthlink.net](mailto:johnwelshons@earthlink.net) for info or to schedule times.

JOHN E. WELSHONS (Ramananda) is a highly respected contemporary spiritual teacher who lectures and leads meditation courses throughout North America. He has been a practitioner of meditation and various forms of yoga for more than forty years. He has worked closely with spiritual luminaries, Ram Dass, and Stephen Levine, and trained - in 1976 - with Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. Ramananda has traveled extensively in India, and has spent time at the ashrams of Meher Baba and Neem Karoli Baba.

RAM DASS - “John Welshons is incredible! He is a wonderful teacher! When I read his book, *One Soul, One Love, One Heart*, I feel like it is coming out of my own heart.”

WAYNE DYER - “I have long admired and LOVED John’s work. He is a man who walks his talk and lives his passion. I am honored to be able to assist him in his work.”

### Share your thoughts

Articles for the December/January edition of the newsletter can be submitted to Denise Klein at [katzr3@nycap.rr.com](mailto:katzr3@nycap.rr.com) by Sunday, November 17th. Your news articles, spiritual thoughts, poetry, photos, humor or suggestions are always welcomed.

## Even Mystics Have Bills to Pay

**Wednesday class with Rev. Jim  
October 9<sup>th</sup> through December 11<sup>th</sup>  
(No class on Nov. 27 or Dec. 4)**

If "Prosperity Principles" both attract you and overwhelm you, this class is for you. This class is based on the book *Even Mystics Have Bills To Pay: Balancing Spiritual Life and Earthly Living*. It offers solid Unity based teachings in ways that are easily understood and progressively applied. While this can be called a "prosperity class" it won't center on getting rich. What it will help you achieve is a deeper awareness and consciousness of God, a getting in tune with the Universe.

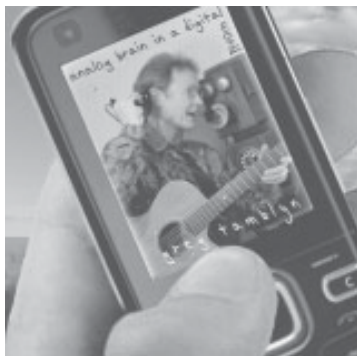


*Even Mystics Have Bills* offers both mysticism and practicality. The book is in four sections. The first establishes a spiritual foundation. The second section offers practical insights for implementing the fundamental practices in your family and in your workplace. In the third section, we're given insights into the world condition and how each of us can affect that condition. The final portion of the book is a 40 day guide to increasing your spiritual perception.

Books for this class are available in our bookstore.

## Greg Tamblyn returns Sunday October 20<sup>th</sup>

**Morning Services at 9:00 & 11:00 AM  
Evening Comedy Concert at 6:00 PM  
Concert admission \$12 (or 2 for \$20)**



If laughter is the best medicine and music is the universal language, singer/songwriter Greg Tamblyn has a license to heal anywhere in the world. Greg uses humorous personal stories and songs to reach his audiences. With songs like "The Shootout at the I'm OK, You're OK Corral,"

and "Type A-ness," his feel-good shows are heavy on

laughs. He sings about subjects ranging from modern relationships and cultural absurdities to forgiveness on the field of battle.

A brochure for Duke University Medical Center's "Integrating Mind, Body, and Spirit in Medical Practice" conference listed Greg Tamblyn as a member of the seminar's faculty. Where initials such as M.D. and Ph.D. follow the other presenter's names, the listing for Greg was followed by N.C.W., which stood for "No Credentials Whatsoever." He jokes that his primary learning came from the "school of life," and that he almost flunked out.

He was rated "Best Male Vocalist" in his hometown of Kansas City by The Squire Newspapers. As a professional songwriter in Nashville, he has appeared nationally on The Nashville Network, and had songs recorded by other artists from Canada to the Philippines. One of his own records, *It's Another Joyful Elvis Presley Christmas*, was named "Christmas Single of the Year" in Cashbox Magazine.

*"No Contest! This is the cleverest musical take on modern life. Your cheeks will hurt from laughter as your heart fills with empathy."* PJ Birosik, Yoga Journal

*"I love the messages you are spreading through your music. I'm sure you are Chicken Soup for a lot of souls out there in the world!"* Jack Canfield, co-author, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*

## Fall Clean Up Day

**Saturday, Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>**

**11:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

Our church custodian does a great job of keeping Unity Church clean and presentable. But we all know that every now and then there is



a need to scout out cob webs, remove hidden dust, and really scrub down kitchens and other areas. Please help us as we dust, wash windows, clean kitchens and make our church home sparkle.



## Unity Coffee House

**Saturday, Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> @  
7:00 PM**

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.

# October & **N**ovember & Beyond



## Dharma Talk with Lama Samten

**Tuesday, October 29<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 PM**

**Suggested donation \$15**

Venerable Lama Samten was born in West Tibet in 1944. He fled his homeland with his brothers, sisters and parents in 1959 when the Communist Chinese invaded Tibet. His entire family of 13 members died crossing the Himalayas, only Lama Samten survived. He took his ordination in exile in India with the Very Venerable Khyabje Kalu Rinpoche and completed 10 years of solitary retreat under his guidance in the Karma Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

In 1980 Lama Samten was sent to New Zealand by HH 16<sup>th</sup> Gyalwa Karmapa and spent 24 years there developing the Buddha Dharma. He retired in 2004 and now teaches internationally, guiding his many students in their practice and taking them on pilgrimage to holy Buddhist places around the world. He is the author of many books on Dharma practice including *Living with Death and Dying* on the 6 Bardos. He was the creative force behind the 2004 Grammy Award winning music recording *Sacred Tibetan Chant – the monks of Sherab Ling* and has recorded a series of his own chanting CDs entitled *Sounds of Liberation*.

## Pot Luck Lunch

**Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup> @ 12:30 PM**

Bring a dish to share, catch up with old friends and make some new ones. Family and friends are always welcome at our pot luck lunches. No need to sign up in advance.

## Body Dialogue Workshop with Deborah Foss

**Sunday, November 24<sup>th</sup> @ 1:00 PM**

How many times have you heard the answers are inside? Would you like to learn specific techniques to access that wisdom beyond your conscious mind? Get unstuck? Find clarity? Let your soul speak? In this experiential workshop, you will learn simple do-it-yourself healing techniques that can bring mind, body and spirit together to find peace, understanding and direction. This is an opportunity to awaken to your intuitive nature, become grounded in your knowing and more confident about the present moment and your future. Satisfy your spirit's longing to be known and learn to assist others.

The Body Dialogue methodology is a blend of techniques derived from Eugene Gendlin (Focusing), Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks (*At the Speed of Life*) and John Welwood (*Ordinary Magic: Everyday Life as a Spiritual Practice*). Experience with meditation is helpful but not required.

Deb Foss has a passion for sharing healing methods from a variety of spiritual and psychological traditions, including Yoga, Buddhist meditation, Psychosynthesis and Gestalt therapy. Her warm, engaging style makes learning accessible and fun. She has over 20 years of experience as a Kripalu certified facilitator, yoga teacher and bodyworker. Contact [deb.foss@verizon.net](mailto:deb.foss@verizon.net) or 785-4131 for more info. Cost \$20

## Thanksgiving Lunch

**Thursday,  
November 28<sup>th</sup>  
1:00-5:00 PM**

Reverend Jim and Kay invite you to join them for lunch on Thanksgiving Day. This covered dish banquet is open to everyone. Won't you join us as we celebrate Thanksgiving

and spend time with our church family?





## December Dates:

### Unity Church Christmas Party:

December 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM

No tickets, no reservations - everyone welcome!

### Christmas Eve Candlelight

**Service:** December 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM

### Christmas Day Potluck Lunch

Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 – 5:00 PM

### New Year's Eve Burning Bowl Service

December 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 PM

## In this season of plenty, remember to give and give thanks!

Thanks in advance for your generous donation to the food pantry. Items most needed are not necessarily food items, but all donations are appreciated.

### 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.

## Bookstore News and Call for Volunteers!

Have you picked up a book at our bookstore that you really enjoyed? Would you like to share it with others about it? We now have book comment cards available for you to share your opinion with fellow Unity seekers. The yellow cards are located on the middle bookcase where books for sale are displayed. Please grab one and jot down your thoughts. The completed cards can be taped to the shelf near the book for others to view.



The bookstore is open and available for your use on Sunday mornings. Books can be purchased even when volunteers are not present. Just leave payment (check or cash) in the mailbox on the left as you leave the bookstore. There is typically a volunteer to assist you with cash, check, debit or credit card purchases after the 11 a.m. service. We are also expanding our volunteer contingent with the goal of having someone in the bookstore between the services as well. *If you would like to join our bookstore team, please let Deb Singer know or speak to a bookstore volunteer.* Our current volunteers are Lois Crommelin, John Reith, Glyne Griffith, Leslie Coffaro, Kathleen Fisk and John Frederick. Volunteering as little as an hour a month at the bookstore is a fun and easy way to meet people in our community. And we sure would appreciate adding you to our team!

Our lending library is also available and books may be checked out for 3 weeks. Please put your name and due date on the card in the book and leave it on the desk should there be no bookstore volunteer present. And, please, *please* return any borrowed materials that you may find in your home or vehicle. We would love to get them back on the shelves and into circulation.

After the New Year, we will be holding our Unity Bookstore Used Book Sale so stay tuned for dates and details! In the meantime, start scouring your home for books that you no longer want or need that might just pique another person's interest. As we do at the New Year's Eve Burning Bowl service, there is nothing more cleansing than clearing out the old and making room for the new in our hearts and in our homes!

As Fall/Winter classes gear up, we look forward to stocking materials for your convenience. See you at the *Unity Church in Albany Bookstore!*

Deb Singer • debsing17@yahoo.com • 286-9990



**Unity Church in Albany**  
**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](mailto:unityalbany@yahoo.com)  
 Web page: [www.unitychurchinalbany.org](http://www.unitychurchinalbany.org)

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

## You Are Welcome Here

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!*



## Our Worship Schedule

Sunday Morning with services at  
 9:00 & 11:00 a.m. &  
 Music & Meditation Service  
 every Sunday at 6:00 p.m.  
 Youth Education classes at 11:00 a.m.  
 Nursery Care available at 11:00 a.m.



**TO ALL MY PUMPKIN FRIENDS!**  
 Being a good person is like being a pumpkin. God lifts you up, takes you in, and washes all the dirt off of you. He opens you up, touches you deep inside and scoops out all of the yucky stuff — including the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc. Then He carves you a bright new smiling face and puts His light inside of you to shine for all the world to see.