



unity

April—May 2015
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Unity Church in Albany • 21 King Avenue • Albany NY 12206 • 518-453-3603 • www.unityalbany.org

Jesus Died Twice!



For Christians, Easter is the remembrance of the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Traditional Christianity teaches that through his dying, Jesus atoned for the sins of humanity; sins of the past and sins yet to come. I believe that Jesus would have been saddened by this interpretation of his final act. Being a Jew, Jesus would have considered human sacrifice as unacceptable under any circumstance. Human sacrifices were viewed as pagan rituals by the Hebrew people. And yet Jesus was crucified and did die at Easter (Passover actual-

ly). So what was this all about?

I believe that Jesus' death and resurrection were a central part of his final teaching about the eternal nature of life; about the fact that we are spiritual in nature and can't die. By consciously releasing his physical body, Jesus also opened a way for his transition from the dense realms of the physical back into the more spacious realms of spirit from which we all come. I am fairly certain that it was the disciples strong identification with their bodies as "themselves" that brought fear and confusion into the essentially simple but powerful teaching act of laying aside the body and returning to spirit. Bible scholar George Lamsa notes that in the Eastern Peshitta Bible written in the Aramaic language, Jesus' words on the cross are not "My God my God why have you forsaken me?" as they are usually translated from the Greek

texts but "My God my God for what a (great) purpose you have kept me!"

Traditional Christianity theology typically uses the Gospel of John, the last of the gospels to be written, as its starting point for creating its theology. It takes the "I am" language found there to impose a "Jesus as God" theology onto our gospels along with a theology of death as sacrifice. While John is beautifully written, it is not at all concerned with historical accuracy and was primarily written to argue against the messages of earlier and more historically based gospels. The Gospel of Mark is the earliest of our gospels and served as a model for the later gospels of Matthew and Luke. The Gospel of Thomas, an independent collection of Jesus teachings, stands somewhere in between. In Mark's gospel, there is no birth story and in the original ending, there are as yet no

(cont'd on pg 3)

Mission Statement

The mission of Unity Church in Albany is to awaken to and embrace the Christ in all persons through prayer and service.

A Letter from Rev. Jim

Dear Friends,

It is with some sadness and also great expectation that I share this letter with you. For some time I have been sensing that a change was coming into my life. I am now sufficiently clear about that change to share with you that I will be leaving Albany at the end of this summer. My last Sunday here will be September 13th. Serving as the minister for Unity in Albany for the past twelve years has been a true joy for me and I know that I will deeply miss our church community and each of you. I also know that when it's time to change and move forward it's time to change. We live in a universe that is constantly creating and recreating itself and we, who are a part of that great creation, are constantly evolving and changing along with it. Learning to notice and embrace the changes of our life as opportunities for increasing good is part of the wisdom we acquire as we move forward on our spiritual journey. So I move forward toward the good that awaits me and I know that the same is true for Unity Church.

In the early parts of my life, I tried to grab whatever good I could find and hang onto it. I was often frustrated and afraid when change entered into my life, especially when things had been going well. Eventually, I learned to trust into the unfolding movement of life "trusting my dharma" as they say in the east. My job just prior to entering ministry was the best I had ever had and I was blessed to work with a wonderful group of people for 15 years. In the mornings, I used to say to Kay that I was "going to play with my friends." So I was very surprised when I received the guidance to "quit my job and do my ministry." That transition required many changes in my life and called me to really step out in faith. What I found was that, as I stepped up to each new piece of my life-journey, everything I needed for that next part to unfold was provided for me. Kay and I sold our Charlotte home in one day. Money for seminary showed up. Later a seminary classmate talked me into applying to a church that was way far north of where I thought I would never live... Albany, NY. And even when the real estate markets here were "unfavorable" we found our perfect home and bought it in a day.

As I interviewed with the church here and toured the area, I was surprised to notice that something felt right both about the church which was going through some challenges at the time and also about the Albany area. My initial (ego) thought was to serve here for

several years and then move back closer to our children in North Carolina. While that thought helped me to move here, it was clearly not my highest thought. As I have served as minister here, I have found myself growing along with each of you and our church community. I can clearly recall walking in our neighborhood with Kay several years ago and asking ourselves, "Could this be where we stay for the rest of our lives?" It felt so perfect. But while all of creation is perfect, it is also constantly nudging us toward higher and higher levels of perfection and that often necessitates changes. As I sensed changes beginning to emerge once again, my thinking mind suggested that I wait a couple years until I turned 65, a good time to semi-retire. However, it has become increasingly clear to me that my time to move forward is now.



Over the next six months, it is my intention to help walk our church through the process of securing a new Unity minister. I have experience in that process both as a minister and also as a former Unity church president who led a Charlotte congregation through the process shortly before I entered seminary. As for Kay and my future,

we still see ourselves returning to North Carolina but only after taking some time for an adventure or two; perhaps living in San Diego for a year, perhaps somewhere else. I do intend to continue serving as a minister through guest speaking, offering classes or perhaps in some temporary ministry service. For the immediate future, I am sensing the need for some time away from full time ministry. And I am certain that the Universe has more for me to learn and do as I "trust my dharma" and consciously walk the journey of my life and my ministry.

I thank you for the abundant love and support you have given me over these past twelve years. It has been a true joy to be here with you and to witness what church can be when committed and loving people gather together to encourage and support one another. Please always remember a church is never about the minister; it is about the consciousness of the community, its collective love and dedication expressing itself. Unity in Albany is truly an outstanding example of what church can be when conscious and committed people come together to love and support and grow. Please know that you will always be in my heart and my heart will always be with you.

Peace and blessings,
Rev Jim Fuller

Jesus Died Twice!

post resurrection visits by Jesus simply the mystery of the empty tomb.

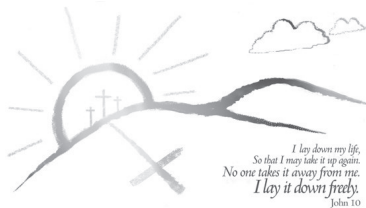
But how could a person, even a very spiritual person, arrive at such a high state of being that he or she could peacefully lay their body aside, especially when the manner of death seemed so brutal? It is in the simplicity of Mark that I believe we can begin to find the answer to that question. Mark opens with what I think of as the first death of Jesus, his dying to his body-identification sense of self. In the opening chapter of Mark, Jesus is participating in a purification ritual that we now call baptism. He is ceremonially releasing the things of the past so that he can open more fully to the presence of God. And as he comes up out of the water, he has a powerful spiritual experience that apparently doesn't leave him. He hears a voice (probably inner) proclaim "You are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased."

For me this marks the beginning of the death of Jesus the carpenter's son; the beginning of the end of the personality or ego part of Jesus. We are told that after this experience, he spends time alone in the wilderness struggling with and integrating this new spiritual self-identification.

When he emerges from those "40 days", he begins to speak and live not as a Jesus the man, but as Jesus God's son. "Who is my mother and who are my brothers? ... Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

By the time we encounter Jesus the prophet and teacher in our gospels, Jesus the carpenter's son has already died and been raised up to a higher (spiritual) level of consciousness. He is still living in a physical body but he is no longer defined by it or identified with it. From this higher state, he shared as much of this new "son of God" awareness as he could before it was his time to move forward and return to spirit. That return to spirit would require him to release his physical body but, since he no longer identified himself as a body, this would not be an overwhelmingly fearful task.

In A Course In Miracles, Jesus states that he intended to use the releasing of his body to teach his followers about both the spiritual nature of humanity and also the ultimate valuelessness of the physical body. While the body could be helpful for teaching and connecting with others, it was not something to be defended or grieved over. You may recall that during his trials, Jesus refused to defend himself. His response to those who performed the actual crucifixion



*I lay down my life,
So that I may take it up again.
No one takes it away from me.
I lay it down freely.
John 10*

was simply quiet forgiveness. Jesus knew that he was not his body and he used the crucifixion to teach this in a very poignant and powerful way. "My God my God for what a (great) purpose you have kept me!" Unfortunately, his followers, at least the ones who created our Christian theologies, failed to get that message.

At the end of the Gospel of Mark (the shorter or original ending), we are simply left with the mystery of the empty tomb. Where once there was a body now there is none. What are present are angels, spiritual messengers, confirming to his followers that they would continue to experience Jesus when they returned home to Galilee. This, we are told, freaked out Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome so much that they "fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." Later, stories tell us that his followers did continue to experience Jesus in his now spiritualized or resurrected state.



We, who still primarily think of ourselves as bodies (and perhaps in some secondary way as spiritual beings), often find Easter both beautiful and also disturbing. That, I presume, is because we have not yet experienced the first death that Jesus died, the death of the story of "me as my body and body-history." This dying was not something Jesus accomplished by reading books or thinking his way through it. This first dying was something that happened for him as he practiced his faith. The realization "you are my beloved son (daughter) with whom I am well pleased" is not something that we can humanly or intellectually force. But we can begin to lean into that thought and to use whatever spiritual practices have meaning for us to bring us into the places where this spiritual truth can arise for us in our minds. And as this new idea begins to shine within us, it will gently lead us to the place where our fears of physical death also will pass away. Once released from our old doubts and fears, we too will find ourselves resurrected, returned to the awareness of our true and timeless state of being. It is from that state of healed awareness that we too can begin to "resurrect" and ascend into God's kingdom of peace and good; the heaven of Christ and God.

May we gently surrender and lean into the love of our Creator so that we too may be released from our old fears of death and loss. May we be resurrected into the awareness and the experience of life without limit and without end. Amen

Dates to Note

Stay Fit / Get Centered at Unity

Yoga with Deborah Foss

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

Tai Chi with Jerry Petell

Mondays at 7:00p
(441-2418 for info)

Pilates with Kay Fuller

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



Unity, Miracles & More with Rev Jim Fuller

Wednesdays, April 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6, 13 @ 7:15p



Over the past twenty-five years, my spiritual life has been guided and strengthened by many spiritual teachings; central among these have been Unity and A Course In Miracles. In this class, I will share what

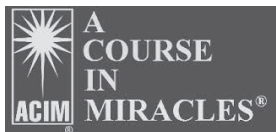
I see as some of the core teachings of Unity and the Course. While it is not too difficult to read the Course or Unity writings and gain an intellectual understanding of the thought systems they advocate, it is somewhat more challenging to engage them at the level where they begin to inwardly change, heal and awaken us. So while these classes will include comparisons and discussions, things for the intellect, they will also include exercises and prayers to help us bring the teachings to life in us.

You will not be asked to buy A Course In Miracles or any other books for this class.

(You can read the entire Course on line at no cost.)

Handouts will be provided each week with selected readings and exercises. Our first week will be a video introduction to the Course and Unity and the sharing of the first week's readings. The remaining weeks will take us even deeper into the heart of these powerful teachings. This class is free and is intended for people at all levels of spiritual interest and development.

I hope you will join me. Rev. Jim Fuller



Maundy Thursday Service

Foot Washing & Communion-in-Prayer

Thursday, April 2nd @ 7:00p

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 partici-

pate 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 always welcome.

Concert/Sound Healing Event

Shaman Mirror Medicine Tree:

A Journey of Spirit & Healing Through Sound with Rich Goodhart

Friday, April 10 @ 7:30p

A vibrantly magical Shamanic Sound Healing experience including world music invocations, healing sound meditations, deep shamanic transmissions and chant performed on a wide array of exotic and rare world instruments.



Featuring a sonic cleansing immersion in the vibrational field of a 32" WUHAN GONG and a collection of

amazing ANTIQUE HIMALAYAN BOWLS!

\$20 Registered and paid in advance. \$25 at the door. Register at Unity Church or call 518-453-3603.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Saturdays, starting April 11, 2nd Saturday/month @ 10:00a

Think of these prayer shawls as comforting hand-crafted prayers, ready to be presented to anyone who needs comfort, support or congratulations. Jane Bloom and friends will meet to knit or crochet prayer shawls on the second Saturday of each month from 10:00a until noon. The prayer shawls will be distributed through our Unity Church Cares Ministry. Bring a sandwich and enjoy a bit of social time along with the prayerful crafting. The group will meet in the church library. **The first meeting will be April 11th.**

Call or email Jane Bloom for more info: 802-430-4490, janeb915@gmail.com

Town Meeting

Sunday, April 12 @ 12:30p

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

Dates to Note (cont'd.)

Discussions on Spirituality for Today

Tuesdays, starting April 14th, 2nd & 4th Tuesdays
@ 9:30a

This daytime discussion group will explore contemporary writers: Unity, general New Thought and related spiritual teachings. The group will meet in the church library on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 9:30—11:00a. Licensed Unity Teacher, Jane Bloom will facilitate the group. Please join them **starting April 14th** for coffee, prayer and discussion. Their first reading will be "Finding Yourself In Transition" by Unity Minister and Seminary Instructor Robert Brumet; a great read for anyone dealing with changes.

Call or email Jane Bloom for more info: 802-430-4490, janeb915@gmail.com

Prosperity Team Meeting

Sunday, April 19 @ 12:30p

You are invited to join Rob Geyer and the Prosperity Team as they continue to explore the Prosperity Vision for Unity Church. Prosperity manifests itself in many forms:

as abundant volunteers, as abundant programs and opportunities, as abundant financial supply, as abundant good and spirit. And all prosperity has its origin in a consciousness of prosperity and abundance, in our minds. How might we hold a greater consciousness of prosperity so that good might more easily flow through our church community and the individual lives of those who attend? Please come to our meeting so that we can prayerfully explore this together.



Joy Adler and the Souls of Evolution ~ Music for Healing

Sunday, April 26 @ 6:00p



Singer, songwriter and sound healer **Joy Adler** and her band, **the Souls of Evolution**, will gift us with an evening of Music for Healing including kirtan chant and "Spirit through sound". This will be a special edition of our

weekly Multi-Faith Music Service.

Joy Adler has performed on stages all over the world. She has supported, mentored and trained thousands of

people through her writings, radio and cable television programs, educational lectures and seminars, and spiritual music concerts for a new era of consciousness. She has become an award-winning singer/songwriter and sound healer who integrates her experience with holistic health into "Music for Healing."

Joy Adler's voice has been called "soulful", yet she has an astonishing ability to sing almost any musical genre. Her own songs were created with unique honesty and frankness. The depth of her writing combined with her rich voice and expansive delivery rapidly moved Joy into a space of musical connection that could transport an audience.

With the Souls of Evolution, Joy has brought together a group of exceptionally intuitive master musicians including Elizabeth Woodbury Kasius, Mick Murdick, and Brian Melick. Together they weave a musical template of healing potentiality.

Free admission; love offerings appreciated.

"If you have never heard this woman sing, she has an ethereal and downright mystical healing power that will warm your heart and soul." Jeff Nania, music journalist for Albany's Metroland newsweekly.

Regarding Joy's gift of healing with sound, Shamanic healer Patricia White Buffalo has said:

"Joy is gifted with the ability to channel blazing light and power through her voice that touches the root of your soul and calls it forth."

Spring Cleanup Day

Saturday, May 2, 10a—2p

We need your help to make Unity Church bright and clean and dust free. Join us for one hour or a few as we wash windows, clean the kitchen, tidy gardens and make our church home inviting with a freshening up. Anyone can participate and prior cleaning experience is not required. Please join us!



Summer Worship Schedule

One Sunday Morning Service at 10:00a
May 24th through September 6th
(Memorial Day – Labor Day)

Sunday Evening Services at 6:00p
continue throughout the summer.



Roger's Take



A Multi-Faith Easter

The feast of Easter may not seem to lend itself to planning an interfaith service like I will be doing soon. But actually it does. You can begin by recognizing that the concept of the eternality of life finds expression in many, if not all, of our oldest spiritual traditions. Not only that, but the mythology of resurrection from the dead can be traced all the way back to the epic tale of Gilgamesh, our oldest recorded story.

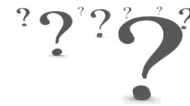
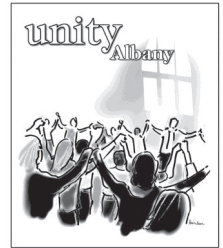
This idea has been in the collective mind of humankind from the beginning. Of course it has. Every prisoner longs for release from captivity. The human experience is to be held blindly captive to this cycle of birth and death. Blindly, because ultimately we have no idea if there is anything more than this. And yet there are stories, myths and rumors that offer a different vision, and most importantly there have been holy men and women in all our traditions who have seen beyond the veil and whose lives have been imbued with the miraculous. Like the glowing countenance of Moses as he descended from Mount Sinai, they witness to us of a deeper reality.

In the Buddhist tradition, there is the figure of the bodhisattva - one who has gone beyond the beyond and has become fully enlightened, yet who chooses to return to this world as a beacon for others. Many Buddhists see Jesus of Nazareth as a bodhisattva. Many Hindus, too, revere him as one of the greatest of saints.

For me, the story of Jesus' triumph over death seems like a seed of this idea of eternal life finally breaking through the soil of our collective mind and coming into full and glorious bloom—a pure white lily shining there in that Mind for everyone. I believe we are all affected by its radiance, whether or not we hold to any particular faith.

Unity Church Directory

Thanks to all who have been willing to be included in the newest version of the Unity Church Directory! Soon you will have a booklet with pictures, contact and personal information of your church family! Also, thanks to those that have worked diligently to complete this project, namely Cheri Warren and Roger Mock!



Did You Know

- ◆ You can request prayer by calling our church, 453-3603, ext 13 or at unityalbanyprayer@yahoo.com?
- ◆ You can request prayer 24/7 at Silent Unity by calling 1-800-NOW-PRAY (800-669-7729), or www.unity.org/prayer?
- ◆ You can request prayer by filling out a prayer request form and dropping it into the "Answer Box" in the Bradford St. Lobby?
- ◆ You can request to pray with one of our chaplains who are available after each service?
- ◆ You can connect to the Daily Word by calling 453-3603, ext 15?
- ◆ You can request temporary assistance, request a card or flowers be sent to a member who is ailing or experiencing a death in their family or having an important joyful event to celebrate, by calling our church at 453-3603 ext14 or at unitychurchcares@yahoo.com?
- ◆ You can participate in services, meditation, prayer, and classes if you are not a member of Unity Church in Albany?
- ◆ How to be in the know about what's going on at Unity and be part of it by attending Town Hall meetings, Annual Meetings, etc.?
- ◆ You can listen to or download Sunday talks on our website? Just go to www.unityalbany.org and click on "listen". New talks are added weekly. There are also great songs and links on the "music" page.
- ◆ That "Unity Church in Albany" is on Facebook? "Like" for weekly talks and posting from your Unity friends.

Spotlight on Service



Ann Marie Burke

By John Daubney

The passion that some people exhibit for the spiritual journey and for giving of themselves in service to others can often provide the nudge we need to get more deeply involved ourselves. So pay attention to those times when you are inspired, even a little bit, by the example that others show you. That's what happened to Anne Marie and was a big part of how she ended up settling in with us at Unity. Very soon she found a ministry that she could involve herself in, which made use of the gifts and experience that she possesses. She has been blessed ever since.

I found Unity by way of Patricia Hunt Perry. We were participants in the same meditation community. She frequently and gently provided me with nudges to attend a service at Unity. I was initially resistant, but eventually “gave in.” The first service I attended was in July 2012. From the moment I walked into the sanctuary, I felt something special. During the hour I was there, I don't think I ever stopped crying. The message... the music... the people... I felt like I had found a home.

A month later, there was a call for youth educators, and without hesitation I volunteered. In the past I had been a teacher of the deaf downstate and have always enjoyed working with children. Here at Unity, I now felt so accepted, and loved that I wanted to give back. The Unity principles and teachings were so deeply aligned with my own spirituality that it felt like the perfect fit for me. I am especially grateful to offer yoga, meditation and sign language to



the children. I feel it is important for them to find and know the God within themselves. Tapping deeply into their own body and mind lets them know that GOD is with them always...just a breath away!

Service is a wonderful way to practice Unity's spiritual teachings. Giving back is an offering of love for both the community and for myself. It allows me the opportunity to dig deep into who I am and how I want to show up in the world. There were times in my life when I was afraid to “put myself out there” for fear of being judged or criticized. Living that way felt lonely and deadening. As I grew in age, I grew in wisdom. I didn't want to continue down that same path, so I stretched my “courage muscles” and began volunteering my time here and there. When I found Unity, my heart opened in ways I had ONLY dreamed possible. People like Dottie Frament, Roger Mock, Bonnie Kriss and John Frederick set the tone for how I wanted to serve — with grace, love, and a great big giant open heart. Their inspiration was a driving force for

me to say yes! In addition to serving our youth, I also serve on the Small Business Fair committee, Unity Cares committee, and Hospitality committee.

If you have a desire to stretch your own “courage muscles,” I invite you to contemplate what it is you like to do, and find a way to offer yourself in that way to our community. It is a deeply fulfilling experience to give back. Beautiful things happen when you allow your heart to meet the hearts of others. You will never be the same again...I promise. “

“Whatever fills your awareness most intensely is what you will bring to life. Instead of filling your awareness with excuses, fill it with passion. With your moments, your skills, your words and your actions you will change your world and add to the lives of others. Today, choose to let that change be driven by what you love rather than by what you fear.”

Ralph Marston - Daily Motivator

Unity Church in Albany

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Albany, NY 12206
Telephone: 518-453-3603
www.unityalbany.org



Worship Schedule

Morning Services
at 9:00a & 11:00a

Sunday Evening Service
at 6:00p each week

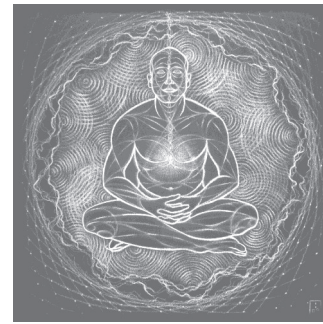
*Multi-faith service with music,
meditation and chanting
(different each Sunday)*

Summer Worship Schedule

**One Sunday Morning
Service** at 10:00a

May 24th—September 6
(Memorial Day – Labor Day)

Sunday Evening Service
at 6:00p each week
(continuing throughout the summer)



Sunday Prayer & Meditation

Jerry Petell "and friends"
will lead the Sunday morning prayer
and meditation from 10:15 to 10:45a.
Please arrive before 10:15 as the doors
will close at that time.



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, 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!



Supporting the Food Pantry

The director of the food pantry has let us know that they particularly need:

Laundry detergent
Cleaning supplies

While you're shopping this week, be mindful of your abundance, and attentive to the generosity of spirit. At other times, you may want to keep this rotation in mind.

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 cream, 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.