

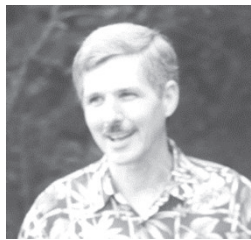


unity

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

Willing to Change



“I am willing to change.” This is a truly powerful statement if it is meant and if it is offered to our Source (to God) rather than to our egoic self. To the ego or human personality, change typically means rearranging the same old living room furniture in the same old room and then proudly proclaiming, “Look at what a great thing I have done.” But when the willingness to change arises from deep inside and is then offered back to that Source, then we have actually created an opening for new and liberating thoughts and things to enter our life and our world. Until then, we simply rearrange the thoughts and things we already have.

Over a year ago I began to realize that it was time for a change in my life; I could feel it “wanting” to happen.

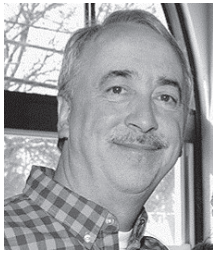
Once the awareness began to arise into my mind, I was then faced with the question, “Am I willing to change?” There were certainly parts of me that thought change wasn’t a good idea and wanted to delay the process at the least or perhaps to dump the idea altogether. Noticing a call for change arising from within is an important step, but it is also simply a first step. Many people sense calls for change and perhaps even feel that change might be beneficial for them but they may not be willing to take outer steps necessary to actually change, after all change brings with it uncertainty. What if things don’t turn out as we expect? What if change brings challenges with it? So sticking with what we know, even if it isn’t great, may seem to be a way to stay in familiar territory. Most of us (me included) appreciate having a degree of stability and sameness in our lives. And we are all aware that welcoming change means

(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.

President's Corner



Rob (Geyer)

HOME. That's the word I've heard most often when folks talk about Unity Church in Albany. That it feels like **HOME.** A place they've needed and wanted and at last, finally found. A place for their spirit to feel at peace, but also a place

from which to grow and expand into new directions; energized, excited and free. A place where everyone **FITS.** Where others support you and help you soar or sit quietly with you and listen and sometimes, when you need it, cry with you. This church is so special and filled with such a beautiful consciousness. A consciousness that seems to grow and evolve, and if we allow it, to lift each of us up, higher and higher.

I imagine you may feel as I do, that Jim and Kay are a major part of this heavenly consciousness and although their path is to move into new adventures, a huge part of their consciousness will remain with us. And we can feel it any time and every time we think about them. What a beautiful exchange of energy we can have with these two that we love!

And so, during this time of transition from one wonderful minister and wife to the next, we are given an opportunity to create and hold a vision of a new and expanding consciousness. I invite each of you to open your hearts wide and send your love out. To

ask for every good thing for each of us, for our church and for our world. To ask that everyone is able to both give and receive abundantly and with a sense of gratitude and joy. I thank you all for being a part of this life experience and for richly blessing our community.

You are all so beautiful!

Affirmation for our new minister:

Together, we affirm that we are calling in, and are ready to receive, our church's next, wonderful minister with love, grace, ease, and open arms, hearts and minds.

YES!

And so it is!

Party for Jim & Kay

We will be having a celebration and send off party for Jim and Kay following our Sunday 11:00 AM service on September 13, 2015. Rest assured that some of our best party planners are at work creating a spectacular fun event. More details will be following once set.

Congratulations to AFSI Grads!

Five of our Unity friends are now ordained Interfaith Ministers, having completed the ordination program with All Faiths Seminary International. **Rev. Roger Mock, Rev. Kay Fuller, Rev. John Frederick and Rev. Barbara Sinacore** completed their program and were ordained this June. **Rev. Anthony Antonechia** was ordained in June 2014 and completed his Masters of Divinity.

Each of these new ministers has visited numerous places of worship, interviewed spiritual leaders from a variety of traditions, attended monthly classes in NYC, written many many papers, presented

talks and completed a final retreat and exam at the Ananda Ashram. They were ordained at Park Avenue Methodist Church in Manhattan. The All Faiths Seminary began in the late 70's when Rabbi Gelberman, Swami Satchidananda and Rev. Jon Mundy opened the first Interfaith Seminary in Manhattan. The program is carried forward today by Rev. Jon Mundy, its Executive Director. Congratulations to our new Interfaith Ministers! May the knowledge and understanding they have received in their training continue to bless them and our congregation for years to come!

Willing to Change *(cont'd)*

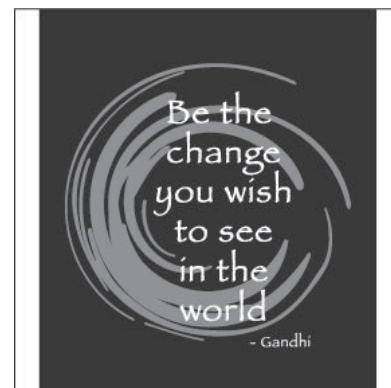
releasing sameness and engaging uncertainty. But here's the thing to remember, nothing of this physical world can or will continue on in its present form for very long; everything *will* change. This includes all the things we love and all the things we don't love. This includes our friends and our selves. The only things that don't change are things of Spirit (not just the thinking mind but Spirit) and those generally aren't the places where we resist change. Resistance to change typically centers around the physical world and more specifically our personal world. So how can we begin to develop and strengthen our willingness to change? We might begin by starting to think of change in a positive way, as evolution or forward movement. We all like to think of ourselves and our lives as moving forward, so practicing holding mental images of change as evolution and forward movement can strengthen our willingness to welcome change. Practicing this at times when our lives feel relatively safe or stable makes it easier to relax into imagining change as a positive thing. If we also include the idea that God (or our own soul) are encouraging us to evolve and move forward toward better things through change, we can strengthen our willingness even more. With ongoing mental practice

we can begin to relate to the idea of change not as a disruption or fearful thing, but as a positive evolutionary pull toward greater good in our lives.

Don't get me wrong, welcoming and stepping into real change (not just rearranging familiar things) will require some exercise of our will-power (we all have some) as we begin to act on our inspiration to change. But with preparation and practice we can all become more comfortable with the idea of change and more willing to change. Remember, God is the source of our inspiration and God wants only the very best for us. So becoming willing to notice and respond to your inner Divine nudges will always be a step toward greater happiness even if it feels scary at times.

May we notice and be willing to welcome the evolutionary impulses for change—for forward movement—that are arising in our lives today.

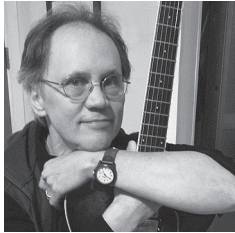
Amen



Roger's Take

How Sweet the Sound

By Roger Mock



The other morning, while looking through some pieces of music I had collected for possible future use, I came across an amusing little round for four voices with these lyrics: “Though I know my voice is only mediocre, I will sing to the Lord, because they say with God it’s the thought that counts!” That could certainly be my motto! When I was nine years old I tried out for the choir with the other fourth graders in our Catholic grade school. We were marched up to the choir loft where the aging organist (undoubtedly younger than I am now) played a note and asked each of us to match it. I did not match it and was immediately excused. A few years later I took up the guitar, joined the church “folk group” and, well, you know the rest.

A couple of hours after discovering that little song, I happened to watch an interview with a spiritual writer who has recently come up on my radar, Mark Nepo. He was talking about how the word “perfect” originally meant “to be thorough” (rather different than “to be without flaws”). On top of that, the King James Bible quoted Jesus as having commanded, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Even given that original meaning of the word “perfect,” it still remained a flawed translation. The mean-

ing of the word in the original Aramaic was “whole-hearted.” Let’s hear the corrected passage: “Be ye therefore whole-hearted, even as your Father which is in heaven is whole-hearted.” Do you feel the weight falling from your shoulders? Consider that Christians have, since the early 1600s, been trying to live up to the King James translation. It explains a lot...

Nepo commented that Jesus did not ask us to be without flaws, but to inhabit our humanness and reveal heaven on earth through being thoroughly human. It matters not if we make mistakes or if we stumble; what matters is that we do it with a whole heart. It’s about **presence**, not performance. In fact, the mistakes are kind of essential. There is an understanding in Tibetan tradition that the spiritual warrior (one committed to a life of transformation) always has a crack in their heart. That, says Nepo, is how the mysteries get in. I’m guessing he was also thinking about my favorite stanza from songwriter Leonard Cohen, “Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.” Cohen, after all, is a longtime student of Zen Buddhism.

So let the song of your life be sung full-throated and full-hearted, caring not for any apparent lack of perfection in your delivery. With God it’s the heart that counts.



Letter from Rev. Jim

Dear Unity Friends,

Let me begin by thanking each of you for twelve plus years of support, friendship and encouragement. I arrived in Albany as a newly ordained minister with a desire to help and share and also with much to learn. You welcomed me not just as your minister but also as a part of your community and spiritual family. Together we spent twelve years learning and growing together. We also grew in relationship and many of you have become friends. Your love and support allowed me to both serve you and to grow in my ability to serve. Reflecting back, I am delighted at how much we have grown together. And together we have welcomed many new friends and supported them in their spiritual growth. I invite you to reflect back on our time together and consider the growth you have seen and experienced. While we may not have reached the end of our learning and growing, we have definitely made great strides forward as individuals and as a church community.

Now the time has come for me to move forward in another way. I know that for some of you this change brings up painful or fearful feelings, perhaps even anger. As I move through this change, I also continue to experience feelings of both fear and sadness at times. Yet I understand that these are natural and represent bits of old stories and belief systems that are calling out for healing, not reaction. So I am mentally redefining them as “opportunities” to learn, to be gentle with myself and to remind myself of what is really

True about me. I also suspect that they will continue to pay occasional visits until I have fully released what Charles Fillmore would call “my old thinking.”

As you move through your experience of this change, I invite you to also be gentle with yourselves and take any challenges that arise in your mind or difficult emotions as opportunities for healing rather than reasons for self-criticism or blame. I invite you to trust and support our teams and leaders in their work

and to reach out to friends within the congregation for the support and connection you need.

My intention is to maintain a presence on Facebook so that we can continue to share our ongoing journeys together. Please know that a big part of me would love to stay with you in Albany; however, a higher part of me is clearly guiding that

now is my time to move on. So please know that I love you all, I care about each of you deeply, and I will continue to hold you in my mind and heart as beloved friends. May our paths cross again in the not too distant future and may you be safe and loved and well in the meantime.

*Blessings always,
Rev. Jim*

**I am your church dear Lord
Send all your people to me.
And I will love them, every one
And help them to be free.**



Dates to Note

Stay Fit / Get Centered at Unity

Yoga with Deborah Foss

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

Pilates with Kay Fuller

Saturdays at 9:00a
thru the end of August
(439-1775 for info)



Unity Coffee House

Saturday, August 8th @ 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.

Elaine Silver

Sunday, August 23rd

10:00 AM musical service

“Spirituality and The Beatles”

6:00 PM Kirtoncert

Part concert - part Kirtan

Lots of singing, some Sanskrit, some English. Together we will raise the vibratory rate and leave feeling great. *Free*



Elaine Silver has a voice you'll never forget. It has been described as stunningly clear and fine, magnificent, rich and supple. She sings a cappella or accompanies herself on guitar and banjo, and has performed in concert for hundreds of thousands at

colleges, festivals, churches, clubs and children's events throughout North America and Europe. She was featured nationally on The Wisdom Channel and on New Jersey Network's award-winning television program State of the Arts. Elaine is the recipient of a Garden State Music Award for Outstanding Folk Performer, and has appeared in concert with Arlo Guthrie, Doc Watson, Tom Paxton, Suzanne Vega, Jorma Kaukonen, Tom Chapin and many more of the folk world's brightest stars.

Elaine often teams up with best-selling author Alan Cohen as musical accompanist for his workshops and special events. Other authors she has worked with include Deepak Chopra, Wayne Dyer, don Miguel Ruiz, Marianne Williamson and Neale Donald Walsch.

October 9-10 (Fri-Sat)

Unity Fall Retreat with Patricia Hunt-Perry

Dominican Retreat Center, Niskayuna
“Embracing Loss & Grief for Healing and Renewed Joy”



Throughout life we encounter many losses: loss of a first love, loss of a dream, divorce or ending of a relationship which might involve children, getting older, diminished phys-

ical ability, death of a beloved family member, friend or pet, observation of suffering around the planet and much more. Even our joyous occasions such as the birth of a baby or a marriage can bring losses with them.

Throughout this retreat, we will engage our losses and cultivate insights into how these losses can become doorways for moving deeper within ourselves and connecting to That which gives us the strength to move through our grief. We will explore the gifts and jewels which emerge as we become more skillful at facing and moving through loss and our fear of loss and learn tools for engaging with grief through dialogue and experiential practices.

Patricia Hunt Perry, Ph.D, Professor Emeritus of Social Thought, pioneered the area of interdisciplinary course creation by teaching graduate and undergraduate courses on grief, death and dying for 30 years at Ramapo College. Her understandings were deeply enhanced by spending time with and taking teachings from spiritual masters in this country and in India: Ram Dass, Krishnamurti, Flora Courtois, Mother Serena, Thich Nhat Hanh, the Dalai Lama, and Mooji. Patricia has offered spiritual counseling and has given numerous talks and papers on loss both in this country and abroad.

Fall-Winter Worship Schedule

Starts Sunday, September 13th

Services at 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM & 6:00 PM

Youth classes meet during the 11:00 service

Spotlight on Service

By John Daubney



Ernie Klemm

The old spiritual adage that proclaims: “If you want to keep what you receive, it’s vital to give it away”, is as important today as it has ever been. It seems the universe works that way. Ernie Klemm listened to his inner voice; was inspired by the example of others who gave of themselves, and was eventually inspired to get involved in service at Unity. As he will tell you, the rewards have been plentiful and Ernie in turn has inspired others. Thank you Ernie!

“I began my Unity experience 31 years ago when the Catholic Church refused to marry my then-wife and me due to my wife being pregnant. But we were able to find a friendly minister, from a church called Unity of Daytona Beach, who had no preconceived notions or judgments, and with open arms married us.

I didn’t reconnect with Unity, however, until the mid-1990’s after years of going back to the Catholic Church — Einstein has commented on this behavior—when my family and I realized that there was something more for us to experience spiritually. For myself I realized there is more to my existence than I what I had been taught and believed. I wanted to be able to transform my thoughts, especially the negative ones, through being more in touch with my emotions, beliefs, the love within me, and through self-forgiveness.

We remembered that Unity church minister in Daytona and our positive experience there so, after moving to Tennessee, we found a Unity church in Nashville. We called and talked with the minister and asked some questions. One of them was particularly funny, but important to us, as we were in a new part of the country which had a very strong religious culture. We asked the minister at that time, Jimmy Scott, if Unity was a cult. He laughed gingerly and said no that it was definitely not a cult. He told us that he had a hard enough time getting people to come to service on a regular basis, let alone getting them to join a “cult.” So we started attending and we fell in love with the church, its youth

education program, the congregation, and the philosophy. We stayed connected with this church until we left to move to Albany. After arriving in Albany, we became busy with the things in our lives and fell away from church. We also fell into the judgment mode and thought *there was nothing like our last church, so why bother going to another church.* This was, I now see, a big mistake, but we learned. Then about four years ago, I found myself at a crossroads and woke one morning knowing that the answers to my questions and to my path were at Unity. Immediately, I began attending Unity Church in Albany.

As I attended Unity, I became blessed with knowledge and understanding but, at a point, I felt selfish as I was taking and not giving anything back. As I watched others give, I realized I needed to step up and just help. I did this out of a desire to serve, however, and not out of feelings of guilt. I was most inspired by Jim and Kay

Fuller, as well as Heather Diddel, John Frederick, Dottie Frament, Jane Bloom, and Dennis Ryan. Dennis actually discussed his calling to serve and return to the church what he was receiving. I realized at that point it was time for me to just help where I could, and as a result that approach felt com-

fortable for me. As an introvert it’s all about the small steps.

Over the 4 years I have been part of Unity in Albany, I have participated in the children’s teaching program, hospitality, and currently I am an usher and teller. I also have helped with building maintenance from time to time. For me, giving back to this place that provides me comfort, acceptance, understanding and teachings is just logical. The 4T program teaches that we need to give to receive, so when a place gives unconditionally as Unity of Albany does to me, it just felt right in my heart. I’m sure this feeling is the same for all who give. They understand the giving and receiving philosophy, and its benefits.”

“To give and receive are one. I can contribute good to someone’s life today by being full of love. .. I’ll never be empty-handed again.”

Daily Meditations for Practicing the Course
Karen Casey, Author



Unity Church in Albany

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



Sunday Worship Schedule

One Sunday Morning Service at 10:00a
May 24th—September 6

(Memorial Day – Labor Day)

Two Sunday Morning Services, 9:00 & 11:00a
(Beginning September 13th)

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



Sunday Prayer & Meditation

During the summer, Jerry Petell and friends will lead the Sunday morning prayer and meditation from 9:15 to 9:45 AM. Please arrive before 9:15 as the doors will close at that time. Sunday prayer and meditation will return to its regular schedule (10:15-11:045 AM) in September.



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!**



FOOD PANTRY

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.