



unity

October—November 2015
Vol 31, Issue 6

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

Affirmation

By Dottie Frament

We who stay as Jim and Kay are called away, are being called too. We are called to deepen our roots even more into this place, to connect our highest thoughts with our deepest faith, to connect consciously with each other, and to open to the power of Spirit through us. May we all experience the delight of remembering or arriving at a tangible embodied awareness of the miracle that we are as Unity Church in Albany.

Thank you, Mother Father God, for drawing each of us to this community and being with us as we applaud in celebration for what has been and for what will be for us who are Unity Church in Albany.



consciousness, joy, humor and friendship. Like a little child finding a lady bug, four leaf clover or other special treasure, I wanted to carefully preserve what I had discovered, put it in my pocket and never let it go. Annoyingly enough, Jim chuckled and said, “I will leave. I have other things to do. And so do you. And when that time comes, this church will have grown its spiritual consciousness and will call in a minister of

very high consciousness who will take you even farther.”

Now, here we are, five years down the road. It’s happening, just as Jim said it would. He and Kay are once again showing us what it means to walk their talk and to follow spiritual

guidance, this time in the form of an inner nudge. A nudge to open up to what wants to be expressed through them, to them and all of us. Even when it is not easy, even when it means leaving friends you love, as well as fellow travelers, kindred spirits, and a life that works wonderfully well.

Even as I hear that little child voice in my head urging, “Please don’t go!”, I am grateful. Grateful for the gift of walking this path with Jim and Kay for much of the last 12 years. Grateful for all the learning—whether it was (1) learning about Jim’s irrepressible pun-loving nature, (2) Kay’s remarkable sense of adventure (did you know she used to pilot a little plane all over

Reflection

Reflections on the last 12 years and ripening fruit....

By Heather Diddel

About five years ago, I said to Rev. Jim, “Don’t ever leave.”

I may have said it in a joking manner, but I was dead serious. Even as I knew it was wishful thinking. In getting to know Jim and Kay as I discovered Unity truth teachings, I found something I had never even thought to dream of—spiritual principles that resonated deeply, a minister who walked his talk and showed us how to walk an ever-evolving spiritual path of truth and discovery, and a married couple who walk a path of sincere, ever-deepening spiritual

Mission Statement

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

(cont'd on pg 2)

President's Corner

New Beginnings

By Rob (Geyer)



Do you remember your first day of kindergarten? Was yours an exciting and anxious time? Did you feel ready for the unknown? Right now Maureen and I are experiencing this through the eyes of our five year old granddaughter, Kirsten. We see and HEAR the unbridled enthusiasm in her face and voice. She got the teacher she wanted and new

clothes and new cool multicolored sneakers. One that lace up! My mind flashes back to my kindergarten class in Watertown, New York at Butterfield Elementary. My older sister and I only lived a couple of blocks from our school, an easy quick walk. Once we arrived, I was pointed in the right direction and WOW...Miss Hanrahan, my teacher was there.

My first crush!! She was beautiful and smart and nice. As much as I remember, it was a wonderful year filled with new friends and new experiences.

Hmmm...what does this have to do with Unity in Albany? Well, this feels the same way to me. The opening created through Jim and Kay's departure for their New Beginning creates an opportunity for our New Beginning. It feels a little like, well actually, it feels a lot like how a kindergartener might feel. Excited and anxious at the same time. One of the great truths I've found at Unity is that how I approach anything and how I feel about my experience is very much a matter of my "choosing". It is up to ME. I get to decide, regardless of all that moves and changes around me, how I experience the world. So I am choosing to see and feel the beauty and wonder as we choose our next minister, and form a new relationship and extend our consciousness even higher. I am so grateful to have all of you along for this trip. Thank you.

Reflection (cont'd)

tarnation?) and spiritual ministry, (3) the gift of Wednesday classes that brought life-changing truth teachings and new friends, (4) Sunday messages that evolved over time to reveal quietly-stated, stunning new spiritual epiphanies in Jim's spiritual growth and gave us permission to move in new directions on our own spiritual paths, and more.

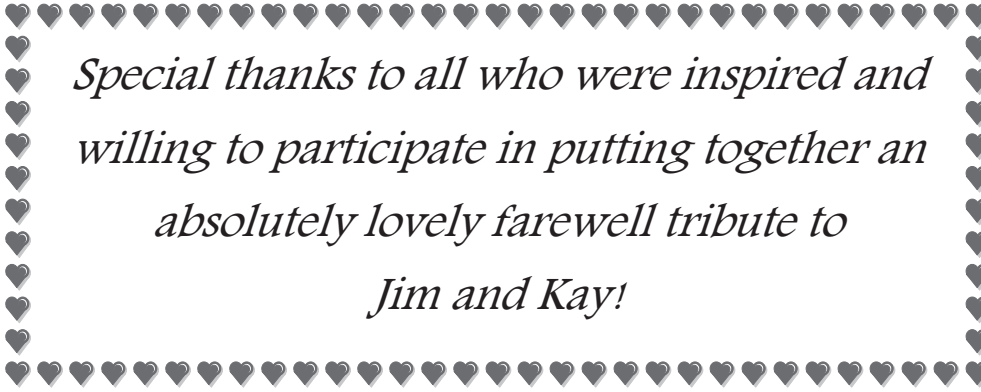
One of the deepest learnings for me is about community. I remember Jim saying one Sunday, "Look around. Everyone here is your people. No exceptions." Through Jim and Kay's heart-centered ministry, I have experienced Unity as home, a place where we are all welcome. Exactly as we are. Truly. None of us are "alone," no matter who or what we may think we are on any given day. We are always connected, we always "belong", we are always held by the same invisible hand. To quote Jim, it is a friendly universe; that truth permeates this community. We can "lean in" when we are tired, broken-hearted or deeply troubled. We can raise our hands and dance together in celebration and joy. And most remarkably, we can be one another's best teachers, friends, and family.

I heard a biologist once say that fruit ripens most quickly when it is placed with other fruit. I have learned that we, too, ripen and grow best when we are in community with other spiritual seekers. At our last board meeting, Dottie Frament shared her realization that community is where

spiritual growth happens. Rev. Jim mentioned that "A Course in Miracles" basically says the same thing. And I was reminded of ripening fruit.

In the twelve years that Jim and Kay have been here, we have all grown and ripened together. We are a different community now. I believe that we are the community Jim described five years ago—a community that has grown its spiritual consciousness and is committed to walking a path of truth and growth.

I sense the depth and strength of this community's connection as we walk through this time of transition together, as we gather to celebrate the end of one phase and the beginning of another. Together, we continue to grow and ripen into a richly diverse community of sincere spiritual seekers. Together, we support Jim and Kay as they take the next steps on their path, and we know in every cell of our being that they are forever part of us and our community. Together, we will call in the next, wonderful minister and keep moving ahead on our path. Together, we will navigate new waters and thrive. Together, we will embrace the great mystery called life and discover our strength in our vulnerability. Together, we will savor the beauty of ripening with one another as we move forward and discover what this friendly universe has to offer ... and so it is. ... Ahhhh-men!



*Special thanks to all who were inspired and
willing to participate in putting together an
absolutely lovely farewell tribute to
Jim and Kay!*

Dates to Note

Friday, October 2, 7:30 pm

**A Journey of Spirit and Healing Through Sound
with Rich Goodhart**

A vibrantly magical experience including world music invocations, healing sound meditations, chants performed on a wide array of exotic and rare world instruments.
 Cost: \$20 paid in advance \$25/at the door



Rich Goodhart is a Shamanic Sound Healing master practitioner, Qigong/Taiji teacher, musician and writer. He is a composer and recording artist working with world music in non-traditional forms. His most recent CD of world rhythm shamanic journeys and healing sound meditations is titled Shaman Mirror Medicine

Tree. New Age Retailer has called his music "The ultimate soundtrack to one's most private ritual dream."

Talking With God

4-week class with Rob Geyer

Mondays, October 5, 12, 19 & 26, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Is one of your greatest desires to feel connected to God? Are you yearning for a deeper relationship? One where you experience a two-way conversation. If you answered "yes" to these questions, please join Rob Geyer for an intimate spiritual writing workshop. Cost: \$10 per session.



Rob's professional career began with 25 years in the banking industry and concluded with 13 years of management, finance and technology for a non-profit in Albany, New York. For the past 18 years he has been communicating directly with God. In retirement, Rob has increased his focus on spirituality and sharing the message that each person can experience their own personal conversations with God. Rob has two adult children and two young grandchildren. He currently lives with his wife, Maureen, in Delmar, New York.

Unity Fall Retreat with Patricia Hunt-Perry

October 9-10 (Fri-Sat)

Dominican Retreat Center, Niskayuna

Title: Embracing Loss & Grief for Healing & 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 physical 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. *(Detailed information on Page 5)*

VISITING MINISTERS and GUEST SPEAKERS

With Rev. Jim Fuller's departure in September, we have scheduled both visiting Ministerial Candidates and a variety of Guest Speakers to cover the time until we have a new minister on board at Unity of Albany. Here is the schedule as it currently stands as of our print date. See ww.unityalbany.org/services for the updated list.

Ministerial Candidate: Rev. Julie Montague

(Photo & Biography on Page 6)

Saturday, October 3, Workshop, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

Workshop title: **Unity, A Million Healing Miracles**

Do you believe you can heal your life, health and change any circumstance? We were created by the Creator to have within us everything we need to live in perfect health and wholeness. Our founders, Charles and Myrtle Fillmore founded the Unity Movement on healing and millions of people still call each year for healing in every area of their life. This workshop will explain how Unity Principles are so effective in healing. How Spiritual healing works and how to apply these ideas for your own and your loved ones health and wholeness.

Sunday Morning Services 9:00 am & 11:00 am:

Meditation and Message

Talk Title: **Grace, Wisdom and Yes, There is a Plan for Your Life!**

Q&A Session following 11:00 am Service

(cont'd on pg 8)

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!

Roger's Take

How Do I Love Thee? Let me count the ways ...



By Roger Mock

Well, apparently there are four possibilities. At least in ancient Greek there are four words given for love. They are: *storge* to describe familial love, *philia* to describe love for a friend, *eros* for sensual love and—the word for love we hear Jesus use most often in the New Testament—*agape*. *Agape* can be seen as God's love or the highest form of love, though the older meaning is something like "love with a moral compass" or maybe "love that shows no preferences - unconditional love."

A human is like a refracting prism in the way it takes in love from Source and divvies it out in a multi-hued spectrum. Unity's founder, Charles Fillmore, wrote that "In reality there is only one love; when man expresses divine love in limited ways he makes a separation in consciousness and his expression of love is personal instead of universal."

All of the different varieties of love can be traced back to the purer form.

According to Socrates, sensual love or *eros* helps the soul recall knowledge of beauty, and contributes to an understanding of spiritual truth. A 19th century mystical poem by Augusta Drane put it this way:

"It is the melody of all sweet music. In all fair forms it is the hidden grace."

Eros is about desire and fulfillment of desire and, though the human tendency is to be distracted and waylaid by the "sirens" of sensuality, our ultimate lesson is to learn that all of our yearnings are really yearnings for full communion with the Divine, for a return to the Source of love, indeed to Love Itself.

Philia, the love of one friend for another, is an exclusionary love. You are my friend. They are not yet my friends though they could conceivably become my friends, but those hooligans over there - get real. *Philia*, too, can be traced back from the personal to the universal. The relationship of trust, honesty and sharing that is friendship works as a kind of mini classroom. Once we learn how to "do *philia*," we can make the conceptual leap that the ultimate

goal is to extend *philia* to the whole world. And so we entertain notions of universal brotherhood and global friendship as the ideal. However unattainable such a utopia may at times seem, we all know that peaceable kingdom is what we need to strive and hope for.

Storge, or familial love, teaches a similar lesson. We have a bond with family that is simply a given. Family is family. It's different from friendship. We may have little in common with a sibling in terms of our likes and dislikes and proclivities, but the family bond remains for us unless we allow that deeper trust to be severed by some kind of

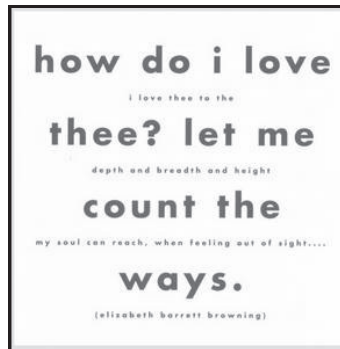
"unforgivable" behavior. Like *philia*, *storge* leads us back to universal love as we begin to "get" that we are all family.

In this way we can see the classroom nature of the human experience. Divine Love is "stepped down" to us in this world of limitation that we might learn through the microcosm of human relationships to give and receive love within—to put it frankly—the very harsh conditions of earthly life; a place where it is much easier to withdraw, to protect

and defend ourselves, rather than to reach out and embrace all that we encounter as a manifestation of one loving Source.

A classroom implies that we have come from somewhere and that we are going somewhere before and after our "schooling." I suspect and believe that that "somewhere" is the realm of Spirit where we live in the fuller knowledge and presence of universal, undiluted Love. Perhaps the soul chooses the earthly experience of limitation in order to increase that love.

As children my siblings and I spent a lot of time in the summer at the lake. We loved to see how long and how far we could swim underwater, holding our breath. Little by little we could increase the time and distance. What a relief, though, to come back to the surface and take a deep, full breath of air! I think our earth experience is like that. I think that we plunge back into this realm of physicality and limitation many times for our own soul's growth in the limitless, all-pervading Love that brought us into being and always supports and guides us in our journey Home.





Embracing Loss & Grief *for Healing & Renewed Joy*

Unity Fall Retreat
with Patricia Hunt-Perry



October 9-10 (Friday-Saturday)

Dominican Retreat Center, Niskayuna

Cost: \$180 – incl. private room, meals & snacks, workshop program

Music by Roger Mock

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

Culturally we are not educated or prepared to deal with loss. We are often afraid of and out of touch with our deeper feelings. Because we fear grief, we push it away or repress it not realizing its impact as a shadow on our lives. This shadow of grief, if not realized and looked deeply into, can insinuate itself through our relationships and make us act in ways which go against our True nature or isolate us from the outer world.

Throughout this retreat we will engage our losses and cultivate insights. We will learn 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. We will learn tools for engaging with grief through dialogue and experiential practices.

Patricia's understandings have been deeply informed by her life experiences. As a young child she experienced a number of losses including the divorce of her parents, the childhood deaths of two close

friends, and the loss of a home. Early experiences with nursing home residents led to a deepening understanding of the ongoing cycle of death and grief. The onset of a serious illness in her 50s has radically changed her life since. These and other experiences of loss led her to engage deeply with grief on a very personal level, to find healing practices, including humor, and to find the gifts that a loss can ultimately bring.

Patricia Hunt Perry, Ph.D (Professor Emeritus of Social Thought) pioneered interdisciplinary course creation 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 India including: Ram Dass, J. Krishnamurti, Flora Courtois, Mother Serena, Thich Nhat Hanh, the Dalai Lama, and Mooji. At the invitation of Thich Nhat Hanh she was ordained in Tiep Hien Order of Buddhism as a Dharma Teacher, from which she is now retired. Patricia has offered spiritual counseling and has presented talks and papers on loss both in this country and abroad.

For more information: Call (518) 453-3603 or email unityalbany@yahoo.com

TO REGISTER: Send \$75.00 (non-refundable deposit) with your name, address, email address, phone numbers and indication of preference for vegetarian or gluten free diet if applicable to:
Unity Church, 21 King Ave., Albany, NY 12206 (Make checks payable to Unity Church.)

Dates to Note

Sunday, October 11 – Cary Bayer
Morning Services 9:00 & 11:00 am

Afternoon Workshop, 1:00—3:00 pm, \$25.00
Workshop title: **From Ritual to Spiritual: Embodying the Teachings of Christ**

Learn how to permanently forgive people from your heart; the power of affirmative prayer; how to renew your mind daily; how to reconnect to your original innocence.



Cary Bayer is the New York and south Florida-based founder of Higher Self Meditation and former teacher of Transcendental Meditation and trainer of its teachers. Cary has authored more than three dozen publications, CDs and DVDs, including Meditations on Enlightenment, and Higher Self Meditation. As a Life Coach, his clients have included Oscar-winner Alan Arkin, David Steinberg and Quality Inns, among others.

October 13 to November 24, Tuesdays at 6:30 pm
Evening Book Discussion Group
How to Pray Without Talking to God
By Rev Linda Martella-Whitsett

This evening Discussion Group explores identifying our true Divine Nature, affirmative prayer, and developing a true spiritual practice. The meetings are facilitated by Licensed Unity Teacher, Jane Bloom. Join us for great discussions in the church library every Tuesday from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. Sign up in the church lobby. Please order your copy of the current book: "How to Pray Without Talking to God" from Amazon or any other bookseller prior to our first meeting and bring a journal. Call or email Jane Bloom for more info: 802-430-4490, janeb915@gmail.com.



Sunday, October 18
Rev. Phil "Shiva" Jones
Morning Services 9:00 & 11:00 am
Music & Message



Sunday, October 25
Jessica Roemischer
Morning Services 9:00 & 11:00 am
Music & Message
Master pianist and deeply spiritual soul, Jessica returns to Unity Albany to offer her powerful, transforming music interwoven with an inspiring message.



Sunday, November 1—Rob Geyer
Morning Services 9:00 & 11:00 am
(Photo & Biography on Page 3)



Sunday, Nov. 8—Bob Sima
Morning Services 9:00 & 11am
—**Music & Message**
Evening Service, 6:00 pm
—**Music Meditation**

A multi-dimensional experience of inspiring message-rich live music, conscious breathwork, silence, and guided meditation – all interwoven to take listeners on a beautiful inward journey.

Workshop 1:00 – 3:30 pm
Title: Practical Breathwork

Practical Breathwork examines and experiments with both ancient and modern philosophies of breathwork. It combines an enticing blend of discussion, meditation, exercises, active participation, and live devotional music. These sessions will inspire a foundation for profoundly life-changing practices that will: • Reduce your stress level • Enliven your divine energy • Deepen meditation • Improve overall health and well-being. Shift from OVERWHELMED to OVERJOYED with the power of the BREATH.



Bob Sima is an award-winning singer-songwriter and creator of Practical Breathwork which bridges mystical teachings of ancient pranayama (yoga breathing) with modern day practices to guide clients to build a breathwork practice which results in optimal health, balanced emotions and renewed spirit.

www.bobsima.com

Sunday, November 15
"Ramananda" John Welshons
Morning Services 9:00 & 11:00 am
Our dear friend and beloved spiritual teacher returns to offer another heart-opening morning message.



Sunday, November 22
Rev. Roger Mock
Morning Services 9:00 & 11:00 am
Ordained an Interfaith Minister this past June, Roger will deliver a musical message with a Thanksgiving theme.



Thursday, November 26
Thanksgiving
Pot Luck Lunch



Sunday, November 29
Rev. John Frederick
Morning Services 9:00 & 11:00 am
Ordained an Interfaith Minister this past June, John (and maybe Manny & Erica) returns to inspire with another heart-felt message.



Spotlight on Service

By John Daubney



Orisa Skipper

Those who give of themselves; who have learned the benefits of service, freely-given, are among the happiest people you might encounter day-to-day. Possessing a beautiful smile and a giving spirit, Orisa Skipper, exudes the joy that emanates from being a giving person. Both in her work life and in service here at Unity, Orisa has proved that prayer can not only guide you through difficult times but can also lead you to your true “calling” when you’re willing to ask Spirit for that kind of guidance.

I am a big fan of people, nature, and animals. I developed my love for nature and animals growing up as an only child on a small farm in Oswego County. Living not far from Lake Ontario, the winter was brutal, but also magnificent; a real *blast* if you were a kid. I would climb the snow drifts to touch the roof of our house, and get screamed at by my mother to get down. I think being around so much natural life led me to holistic interests later in my life.

I had the ability to read peoples energy field at the age of 3, although I didn’t know that was what I was doing until years later. In high school I enjoyed sports, cheerleading, and friends, who I still keep in contact with today. As an only child I had many moments to myself and became interested in doing yoga poses, which I came across in one of my “Teen” magazines. I was hooked from then until now.

After marrying my high school sweetheart just two months after high school graduation, we moved to Albany for college. In the course of 16 years we had four children—two girls and two boys. The marriage was unhealthy and efforts to make it better were unsuccessful. I found myself at 33, divorced, with four children—15, 14, 6, and 4. The ensuing struggle to just survive, seemed very long and never ending.

When I first moved to Albany, I would get a little home sick. My mother suggested horse riding which helped since I am a horse lover but it became expensive, so in the 1970’s I started running regularly. It became a positive outlet for me. It made me feel healthy and strong enough to make my life work.

Prior to the divorce I had also completed a Licensed Practical Nurse program. As an LPN, I experienced working with babies, children, and adults with special needs for 15 yrs. I truly have a connection working with the elderly, and have for 30+ yrs.

It was through Unity that I realized the power of prayer and really connected with Life. I didn’t stop running, but I did start connecting with spirit on my runs. My runs became more important than ever!

The day I walked into that red brick building on Madison Avenue with the sign out front that read Unity, my life started to change. Although I loved the medical field, at 43 and without anything else “calling my name,” I also had a strong desire to leave nursing. On December 31, 1993 I wrote a letter to God at the Burning Bowl service, asking for guidance on what to do with my desire to leave nursing.

In April 1994 my first answer (I missed it at the time) came in a TV news story about a cardiologist discussing how his patients’ recovery were positively affected by massage prior to surgery. My second answer was an advertisement about the practice of Massage Therapy. With the third answer, I finally got what was happening! This came at a baby shower where I only knew two people out of 50, but struck up a conversation with a massage therapist!

I then applied to Finger Lakes School of Massage Therapy in Ithaca, NY and started classes that September. I truly found my passion and have learned so much about myself, spiritually, in that field.

As I reflect on my years at Unity, I recall all the loving support and kindness I have received. The wise words I have heard spoken at Unity have been a light in the darkness for me. I am so grateful and honored to now be serving on the Board of Trustees and able to give back.

At the Burning Bowl service on December 31, 2014, I asked, in my letter to God, to be guided toward giving more service in church. It has happened! The power of prayer is magnificent, and each day I ask for divine guidance. Being on the Search Team and now a member of the Board of Trustees, I recognize the unity that we have created and the loving support that we give each other. I am aware of the strong foundation we have through this divine love-energy, and I now trust my own inner potential because of that energy. The responsibilities that being a board member requires brings me joy and gives me a clear vision for keeping our congregation strong! The power of prayer is magnificent, and each day I ask for divine guidance.

Much love and abundant blessings to all!



Unity Church in Albany

21 King Avenue
Albany, NY 12206
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www.unityalbany.org



Sunday Worship Schedule

Two Sunday Morning Services at 9:00 & 11:00am

Youth classes are available during the 11am service

Sunday Evening Service at 6:00pm each week

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



Sunday Prayer

&

Meditation

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

WELCOME
COME GROW WITH US

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.