



# unity

December 2015—January 2016  
Vol 32, Issue 1

Unity Church in Albany • 21 King Avenue • Albany NY 12206 • 518-453-3603 • [www.unityalbany.org](http://www.unityalbany.org)

## Our New Minister

**U**nity Church in Albany is very excited and pleased to announce that we have a new minister!



**Rev. Crystal Muldrow**

## New Life - New Beginning

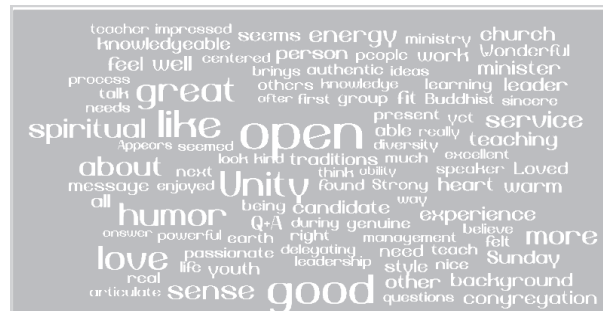
**L**ike many people, the Fall/Winter holiday season is my favorite time of year. As a child, it was my favorite time of the year because of all the things that I could get. Halloween had an abundance of candy. Thanksgiving brought family from long distances back to me, and all of my favorite foods were in front of me to devour. Christmas provided me with stacks of gifts under the tree. As I matured, I realized that the joy and happiness of the season was more about giving than receiving.

There is no other part of the year that has three consecutive celebratory months so rich

with spiritual significance. We are familiar with the Christian celebrations; from All Hollows' Eve to Christ's Mass Day. Let us remember that, during this time, the Jewish people are celebrating Hanukkah to commemorate the reclaiming of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and its rededication to the service of God. Buddhists celebrate Bodie Day to commemorate the day that Shakyamuni Buddha experienced enlightenment, where he woke up to understand the root of suffering and the liberation from it. People of various Pagan faiths celebrate Yule. This holiday marks the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere and celebrates the rebirth of the sun and beginning of winter. It's interesting and not a coincidence that, in the season where nature is hibernating, the days are shorter and the nights longer, that there are celebrations about light, life and birth. It's surmised that many of these festivals were created to appease God(s) so that light would come back, days would be longer, and the new life of spring would appear. Many theological scholars believe this to also be the reason Christmas is celebrated at this time. It is the Christian substitute for the winter

*Mission Statement*

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



(cont'd on pg 3)

## President's Corner

### Intentional Acts of Kindness

By Rob (Geyer)



Every so often I wonder.. “what would create stronger bonds between people?” Most often my answer is simply, “the experience of sharing with each other”. I love finding out new and interesting things about folks and getting a better sense of what is important to them. So I've decided to share something with you about myself.

In the early part of summer, I was watching some You Tube videos and came across two about “random acts of kindness”. A 20 year old and a 26 year old decided they'd perform one random act of kindness on their birthday for each year they'd been alive. The idea found a home in me, so I decided to do 63 random acts of kindness for my 63rd birthday. But because that's a large number, I gave myself the whole month of August to complete the project.

It was a fascinating and enlightening experience. As I thought about the magnitude of 63 random acts of kindness, the term “random” evolved into “intentional”, because a great deal of planning needed to occur. Several interesting things happened as I started in. The vast majority of “acts” were done anonymously, so I never knew or saw the reactions of the receivers. This felt somewhat disconnecting to me, but as I thought about it, I recognized some real value because it allowed my ego to rest and take a nap. Once it was asleep, a nice warm feeling settled in and I could “enjoy” the act of giving without expectation of equivalent reward. Another thing that occurred was that the actual cost of the “intentional act of kindness” (for those I DID see a reaction from the receiver) did not seem to matter. Some FREE acts were just as meaningful as those with a high cost. I wondered if this had more to do with my INTENTION while either creating or performing the “intentional act of kindness”. After reflecting on this, it felt that when I was

very personally connected, even if only briefly, the entire experience was much more beautiful.

You may be wondering what I chose to do, so here's a sampling; let others out into traffic, put happy sticky notes on random boxes at the grocery store, put \$1 bills in children's books at the library, buy ice cream for strangers, relocate bugs from inside the house to outside, buy a flowering plant for someone in a local nursing home, drew a picture and framed it and gave them to individuals, said hello to others and gave them genuine compliments and sent healing energy to others.

During the process a few of the 63 stood out. I took colorful helium balloons to my daughter's pediatrician's office for them to give to sick children. Seeing the face of one of the children was so incredibly heartwarming to me. Baking cookies and delivering them to my neighbors was fun, but also frustrating, because it was so hard to catch people at home. Giving a huge tip to a waitress felt great because I know how hard they work.



I have to say though, that two of my favorites were ones I did for ME. In my prior life (before Unity) I received very strong (harmful) programming. I was taught that I came last, that I could share in the goodness of life, but only after everyone else's need were met. So I decided that part of my 63 would include ME. Several were very special. One was an all out FUN day trip with Maureen to Saratoga and Lake George, both special places to us. Another was while Maureen and I were at the Maine seashore where I spent a lot of time body surfing next to a brother and sister. They were the epitome of JOY in motion. I can still see their radiantly smiling faces and hear their laughter. I'm still reliving it.

Overall, I loved creating and performing these “intentional acts of kindness” and experiencing the simple joy of connecting to others. I'm pretty sure that everyone of you has their own enlightening stories to tell. If you get the chance, I'd love to hear about them.

## New Life - New Beginning (cont'd.)

solstice. There are no written records of the birth of Jesus. Yet many scholars believe that he was actually born in September or early October. It makes sense that whom we deem as the “Light of the World”, his birth would be celebrated in this season.

In Unity, we also celebrate the birth of Jesus as the light that still helps us move out of darkness and liberates us from our suffering. Cora and Charles Fillmore wrote in their book, *Teach us To Pray*, “When Jesus was born in the manger in Bethlehem, the star appeared in the east and pointed the way for the Wise Men to the spot where the young child lay. A mighty soul had been incarnated and had come to do a mighty work on the earth. So great was the occasion that the whole heavenly universe sang with joy...” We celebrate the birth of the man who would be deemed our savior. He is celebrated because he is our example how to fully actualize the truth of who we are, The Christ. We celebrate the birth of who Charles Fillmore coined as our “Way-Shower”. “Jesus is the Way-Shower. He came that we might have life more abundantly; that is, He came to awaken man to the possibilities of his own nature.”

As you go through this Christmas holiday, allow the thoughts of the birth of Jesus to give birth within yourself, a clear vision of the truth of who you are; The Christ. The whole heavenly universe sang with joy when you were born too! Be the miracle that God created. You are a gift to the world and have many gifts to give. So go out, and enjoy the gifts of giving, for this is the true meaning of Christmas.

I am so grateful and excited to be able to share new beginnings and new life with all of you at Unity Church in Albany. I'll be arriving just in time to participate in our annual New Years Eve Burning Bowl ceremony with our Ordained Interfaith Ministers and Licensed Unity Teachers. The Burning Bowl ceremony is a wonderful opportunity to release and let go of what is holding you down, in preparation for the start of the New Year. Sunday, January 3, I'll be introducing you to the White Stone Ceremony. This is your opportunity to begin the New Year with a clean slate, a white stone. On the stone you'll write a new word, a new name, which will serve as guidance and direction for your new year. Happy Holiday!

## Background



“I am excited to be considered for the position of Senior Minister at Unity Church in Albany. I believe that my personal abilities and spiritual gifts make me a great match for the minister you desire. As the founding minister of the internet ministry, *Unity Community of Spiritual Unfoldment (UCSU)*, I gained extensive experience about how to create all of the varied components of a ministry. My involvement at UCSU prepared me for my position as the interim minister, where I worked with the board of trustees and the congregation of *Unity Church of Peace: Practical Spirituality (UCP)* in Jefferson City, Missouri. I was instrumental in imbuing the church with renewed energy and empowering it to shine in new and beautiful ways that quickly attracted their next Senior Minister.

Because of my healthy relationship and former success with UCP, when their minister announced she was resigning, I was the first person they asked to support them through their transition.

In addition to being a Unity minister (ordained in 2006), I was also ordained as a Buddhist monk in 2012 and have served as a dharma teacher for Dharma-kaya Buddhist Association in Kansas City, MO.”



## The Search

During the summer and fall of 2015, our Search and Find Team brought in three applicants they discerned to be both well qualified and a great fit for our church community. They were indeed, each one having their own considerable gifts, passions, strengths and visions for our 21st century Unity church. We are deeply indebted to **Rev. Nat Carter** and **Rev. Julie Montague** —for all that they shared with us in their interviews and weeks of dialogue with our S&F team, for all the careful and prayerful thought they gave throughout the process, and especially for all that they shared on the weekends they visited — through their workshops or presentations, their meetings with staff, board and teams, those difficult Q&A sessions, and especially the wisdom and prayerful presence they offered to us at Sunday services. We know that Spirit will guide them forward on their journeys to their own next adventures for the unfolding of their highest good and those they will serve.

## Search & Find Team

Heather Diddel, Dottie Frament, John Frederick, Glyne Griffith, Ernie Klemm, Roger Mock, Patricia Hunt-Perry, Orisa Skipper, Cheri Warren



# How Sweet the Sound

## The Magical Kitchen

By Roger Mock

I recently re-read these words from Don Miguel Ruiz's book *The Mastery of Love*:



"Your heart is a magical kitchen. Open your heart. Open your magical kitchen and refuse to walk around the world begging for love. In your heart is all the love you need.

Your heart can create any amount of love, not just for yourself, but for the whole world. You can give your love with no conditions; you can be generous with your love because you have a magical kitchen in your heart."

Isn't the magical kitchen a wonderful image? Just say the words "My heart is a magical kitchen" to yourself a couple times and you can feel your consciousness start to shift. If you believe those words even a little, it's like you hear the tumblers turning in the lock, like you've begun to crack the code.

And what's in that safe? It's the really good stuff and it's not someone else's treasure you're trying to steal like a burglar. No, it's all yours. It's your birth-right. "It's the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom," said Jesus. But like the guy in the parable, we dug a hole and buried it to keep it "safe". We kept it under lock and key because we thought we could lose it.

Speaking of magic, it's like that Malvina Reynolds song, *The Magic Penny*. "Love is something if you give it away, you end up having more. ...it's a treasure and you'll never lose it unless you lock up your door." Once you get that safe open and the loot out of there all heaven could break loose, because that treasure isn't a treasure until it's shared, of course.

Okay, let's get back to the kitchen. It's a yummiest metaphor. It's the loaves and fishes, right? And of course, the message of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes is not that we have to find a guy who can perform the magic trick or we're all gonna starve. No, it's that all we need is already there within each one of us and when we trust that and begin to share it, we can expect an amazing feast with plenty left over to share with the local food bank.

Don Miguel says, "Selfishness comes from poverty in the heart, from the belief that love is not abundant. But when we know that our heart is a magical kitchen, we are always generous, and our love is completely unconditional."

Have fun exploring your magical kitchen this week. Cook up something amazing!



**We have manifested our new and wonderful minister! We expect and embrace change as we welcome her, open to her unique gifts, and encourage her to grow along with us. With the power of Spirit working in and through us, we move into the next exciting chapter of Unity Church in Albany. YES! And so it is! Amen!**

## Handicap Parking

As a result of the Board's ongoing concern for increased accessibility outside and inside our building, we have just obtained permission from the City of Albany for a new handicap parking space. Soon there will be another handicap parking sign to mark the space just in front of the existing handicap space at the Bradford Street lobby entrance to the church. With winter weather just ahead of us, the timing of the extra handicap parking could not have been more perfect.

We are aware that these handicap parking spaces and the accessible ramp are not merely conveniences, but are absolute necessities for some of our congregants. And if the drivers with handicap park, there is room for a 3rd UNDESIGNATED yet handicap accessible space in front of the two designated spaces. The potentially would be between the mailbox and the corner, all drivers without a handicapped sticker or who need it. It is our belief that 3 handicap parking spaces is the bare minimum we need for our current congregants and for those we hope to attract and welcome as we improve our accessibility.



gregants to be able to safely enter and exit our parking permits are attentive to how they ED yet handicap accessible space in front of 3rd undesignated handicap parking space right by the front entrance stairs. We ask that license leave that third space open for those parking spaces is the bare minimum we need as we improve our accessibility.

The Board invites everyone to join them in holding a consciousness of compassion and consideration for those who need handicap accessible parking spots, with the awareness that even those of us who are now able-bodied can, at some point, have a physical condition that temporarily requires accessible accommodation.

Also, if you are a driver with a handicap permit, be conscious of parking your car on Bradford Street in such a way that a total of 3 cars with handicap permits can reasonably fit along the curb between the corner entrance and the side ramp entrance to the lobby. Thank you for demonstrating in a very tangible way that we truly welcome diversity and recognize the dignity and needs of everyone who is drawn to attend our church.

## UnityChurchCares

***"To understand another is one of life's richest blessings, and to be understood by another is perhaps love's sweetest, most satisfying gift."***

-Hemingway

As a church commUNITY, there are times in our lives when we may need help. **UnityChurchCares** is volunteer ministry to offer such service in times of need. Utilize your church commUNITY for caring and support in the following ways:

Examples of congregant needs:

- Do you need a ride to church, or an appointment?
- Are you having surgery and need a call for support?
- Are you having a short term occasional setback?
- Are you unable to prepare a meal due to temporary circumstances?
- Wish to share joys and/or accomplishments?

How to reach out for needs:

- Complete request form and insert in pink mailbox, both located in Bradford St. lobby
- Leave message at church telephone: call 453-3603, ext. 14
- E-mail requests to [email@unitychurchcares@yahoo.com](mailto:email@unitychurchcares@yahoo.com)
- Contact church minister, board member, or committee member

As a volunteer, perhaps you may be willing to be of service in the following ways (examples):

- Offer a ride to church or appointments
- Offer support via phone calls, cards, etc.
- Help with short term assistance...meals, errands, etc.

How to become a volunteer:

- Leave a note in pink mail box in Bradford St. lobby
- Send e-mail to [email.unitychurchcares@yahoo.com](mailto:email.unitychurchcares@yahoo.com)
- Phone call to church at 453-3603, ext. 14
- Contact minister, board member, or committee member

Be a person "on-call" monitoring needs of our commUNITY:

- Be "on-call" to monitor requests approx. 3-4x/year
- Check pink mail box for requests
- Monitor voice mail at church
- Check email requests
- Check in with individual's request for specific needs
- Access list of volunteers to carry out requests/needs

**UnityChurchCares** is a program to help one another. Who else to turn to but your church commUNITY? We are a loving commUNITY who assists in a non-judgmental way, with love, and compassion. "We are your family, we hold you in our hearts, you are the face of God."

## Events Calendar

### Church Christmas Party

Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 7:00—9:00 PM

Join your Unity friends for an evening of fellowship, carols and games. Everyone is invited, so feel free to bring family and friends. Light refreshments will be served. This event is free, no signups required. All are invited to bring some food or love donations that we will deliver to a local food bank for local families in need.

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 PM

Rekindle the Christ light in your heart this Christmas. Join our Worship Team and our Unity musicians as we sing and celebrate the birth of Christ Consciousness into our world. We have scheduled our service at 5:30 PM so that you can participate still have the evening free for family and friends. Join us as we listen to the Christmas story, share prayers, songs, and light our Christmas candles together. What a wonderful gift to give the Christ child in you!

### New Year's Eve Burning Bowl Service

Thursday, December 31<sup>st</sup>, 5:30 PM

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

### Albany Peace Project Kick-off Concert

Friday, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1:00 – 3:00 PM



The Albany Peace Project begins its third year of daily meditations for peace in the city of Albany with this kick-off event. It will feature music by the Unity of Albany Music Team, reports on our progress from founder Bethany Gonyea, and our first guided meditation for January.

The Albany Peace Project is a 10 year research study designed to determine if an organized group of trained meditators creating a “coherent state” in their bodies and then focusing peaceful intention outwardly can measurably reduce local violence. Our hypothesis is that focused peaceful intention has real world impact, and dozens of prior research studies suggest it as well.

### Coffee House

Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> 7:00-9:30 PM

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

## Speakers & Guest Speakers

### Debra Burger

Sunday, December 6, Services, 9:00 & 11:00 AM

### Trans-Portal – Phil “Shiva” Jones & Frank Evans

Sunday, December 6, Evening Service, 6:00 PM



Trans-Portal is a two man band whose goal is to awaken the inner mind and move the soul. Trans-portal is: Phil “Shiva” Jones, vocalist/didgeridoo master (founding member of the ‘60s/’70s British spiritual rock band Quintessence) and guitarist Frank Evans. They are joined by our Unity

Music Team for an evening of Sacred Chant infused with healing intention and devotion.

### Joan Horgan with Roger Mock & Music Team

Sunday, December 13, Services, 9:00 & 11:00 AM

### Journey to Bethlehem



Joan and Roger, with our music team, will present – in place of the regular talk – a shortened version of the musical Advent program they have performed each Advent for several years at St. Vincent de Paul Church and at the College of St. Rose. It will feature songs, readings and reflections on

Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem and the birthing of the Christ in our own lives.

### Joy Adler

Sunday, December 13, Evening Service, 6:00 PM



We welcome back award-winning singer, songwriter and healing practitioner Joy Adler, who will join our music team this week for our weekly multi-faith music and meditation service. Joy is an extraordinary singer who sings from the depths of her being. You can find out

more about Joy’s music, and download a free song, at her website: [www.joyadlermusic.com](http://www.joyadlermusic.com)

### To Be Announced

Sunday, December 20, Services, 9:00 & 11:00 AM

### Rob Geyer

Sunday, December 27, Services, 9:00 & 11:00 AM





## Spotlight on Service



Cheri Warren

*The seed for serving grows and blossoms over time as we put ourselves in a fertile (spiritual) environment. If you hang around a barbershop long enough, sooner or later you're bound to get a haircut. In time, as gratitude grows, we naturally want to use our special God-given gifts to serve others. Cheri Warren's curiosity and passion for people, computers and photography, manifested itself into action, in a playful way, as she committed herself to Unity. We are so fortunate.*

In my adult life, prior to finding Unity Church in Albany, I had not attended church services except on holidays, and even then only occasionally. I feel so blessed that my involvement in the Albany Peace Project and knowing Dottie Frament, led me to Unity Church in Albany. I wanted to learn meditation and she suggested I might be interested in checking out the Peace Project. That was January 1, 2014. I came for the APP kickoff day and was hooked! When I went home and shared with John that I wanted to attend a church service he thought "hell must have frozen over." He attended with me that Sunday and quickly saw what I saw, and we've been coming ever since! At first, I would just attend church and feel totally filled by the people, the service, the music, and the way Spirit flows so gracefully at Unity. I was completely enthralled by it all but had no interest in stepping into any kind of service role. I had been working way too much and I wanted to just BE me, without any of the baggage of my life. I was tired and in transition, and I just needed the spiritual "fill." I started by attending the 11 AM service, along with the 6 PM service. Each had its own unique substance and was now sustaining me in everything I did.

By the following year, I was wanting to get to know more people. So, after hearing that we needed to create a new version of our church directory, I volunteered. I love to take pictures (<https://cherylwarren.wordpress.com/>)! Capturing the essence of people and animals is a particular passion of mine. As the project unfolded, I became aware that I had gifts that could be used to create the directory and it was a great way to connect

with all the people at Unity who wanted to be in the directory.

Once I had done the directory, it was pretty clear that I had some people and computer skills. I really enjoy working with others and finding "win-win" situations where people can excel with their gifts and together we create something that is greater than the whole. As time passed, Jim and Kay's memory book project came up and I was really pleased to be asked to create it. Jim and Kay then asked John and I to create videos of services for them and we were thrilled to do that! It was also such a gift to me to make multi-camera videos of our exceptional music team. I had been wanting to learn how to make videos, especially music videos, and here was a group of people who were willing to allow me to "play." So my service was really an opportunity for me to play, and I believe that when I'm playing, Spirit is working through me.

The next big opportunity came with the New Minister Search and Find Dream Team. At first I was asked to help with the technology to enable Skype interviews with potential candidates. After the first candidate's Skype interview, I was asked to join the team.

You may be thinking, WOW, that's a lot of effort! It was a lot of effort for every member of that Dream Team which Heather Diddel so ably led within an environment of love and light, but it was worth every late night and all our effort on so many levels. My particular role was to utilize technology to perform data analysis, using the information gained from the congregation's questionnaire forms to create a database which I then summarized. Using these visuals, the team was able to assess the feelings of the congregation. I felt deeply blessed to be a part of this essential effort. I realized I had gifts that could be of use and that I was working with a team of people: Heather Diddel, Dottie Frament, Patricia Hunt-Perry, Roger Mock, Glyne Griffith, Orissa Skipper, Ernie Klemm, and John Frederick, for all of whom I have the highest regard. I learned so much about me, about each of them, and about Unity. I can honestly say that I could feel Spirit working through all of us as we went through the experience of enabling the Board to make a choice for our next minister. Grace and gratitude were overflowing in every interaction. What is not to like about that? I was feeling filled to my core as my gifts were being used in service to the church.

I'd encourage you to seek out opportunities to serve in ways that make you feel like you are playing and let Spirit work through you!

## Unity Church in Albany

21 King Avenue  
Albany, NY 12206  
Telephone: 518-453-3603  
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### 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.



### 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.