



# unity

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

## Only Love Can Do That



**A**s we live in a world that seems to be preoccupied with the satisfaction of self more than ever, we need to

remember these words of H. Emily Cady, “Pure love always asks, ‘What can I give?’” never “What shall I receive?”. February and March are wonderful reminders that love, ultimately, is about service to others.

February is the month of love as we celebrate St. Valentine’s Day on the 14<sup>th</sup>. The life story of St. Valentine is murky; mythology and legend often supersede fact. The commonly accepted story of a priest named Valentinus starts with Emperor Claudius who was committed to rebuilding the once great Roman Army. Claudius believed it was important for men to volunteer for armed services rather than draft men into service against their will. However, given the choice, most young men in the Roman Empire refused to serve. They wanted to stay at home with their wives and children.

Claudius came to believe that only single men would volunteer for service, so he issued a royal edict that banned further marriages. He actually outlawed weddings in the Roman Empire.

One of Valentine’s favorite duties as a priest was to marry people. Valentine secretly continued performing marriage ceremonies. They whispered the words of the ceremony while listening for soldiers on the steps outside. Eventually, he was caught and died at the hands of the Roman Army for his acts of love.

Lent starts in February and comes to its conclusion with Holy Week and Easter Sunday at the end of March. Jesus’ life and giving of that life for humanity is one of the greatest acts of love. Myrtle Fillmore stated it well when she wrote, “The Master said that he came into the world not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He did not seek to be loved by others, merely to satisfy the human desire for affection; His great purpose was to love. He radiated love like the sun radiates light.”

### *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

### Thank You!

By Rob Geyer



I am grateful for the opportunity to have served on the Board for the last three years. It has been a rewarding and challenging experience, especially during the most recent year with the minister transition from Jim to Crystal.

I want to thank the congregation for their warmth and unconditional love and support.

This is such a beautiful church to be a part of and being among you is so enriching for me.

I'd like to share something about the transition with you. At the beginning of the process, the Board was strongly encouraged, for a host of reasons, to consider having a transitional minister. We met to discern what guidance spirit had for us and came away with a very strong sense that this church had such a deep spiritual consciousness that having a transitional minister would not be necessary. We felt that our love and commitment to each

"The human spirit is stronger than anything that can happen to it." — C.C.Scott

other and to our mission of searching for and finding our next perfect minister was very heart-centered and that we would be very successful. From my perspective, that carried forward throughout the process. Each candidate picked up on this and commented about how "alive" this church was and what a joy it was to be here with us.

Significantly, participation during the workshops, church services, Q&A sessions and all of the extras (like touring and hospitality) was incredible and overwhelming. And when it came to choosing a new minister, the process was effortless and beautiful. We have indeed found our next perfect minister in Crystal.

Another thing which speaks to our devotion and love for this church is the continued strong participation through church service attendance, which never lessened during the transition and all of the other events and facets of the church which we maintained.

I want to thank you all for being the loving spirits you are. I'm so glad to be "home" with you.

## Prayer Partner Project!

Facilitated by John Frederick



The **Prayer Partner Project** is a 12-week event designed to help us learn how to pray, and how to pray for others. Prayer is highly ordered thought, an amazing way to deepen our Spiritual Consciousness and strengthen our connection to God, to others and to our Highest Self while building Spiritual Community.

An opening/organizing meeting will be held on Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 PM (after the 11:00 service). **Prior sign up is required.**

Each person will be given a **secret** Prayer Partner to hold in prayer for the 12 weeks of the Project. Participants (gently and quietly) will get to know their Prayer Partner and pray for them daily. This is a 12-week obligation and everyone must commit to completing the project.

Monthly Prayer Partner meetings will allow us to discuss prayer (Unity-style!), share experiences, read Unity literature and get further acquainted. Our closing meeting, on June 5<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 PM, will be celebration, a time for closure and reflection, as well as thanksgiving and gratitude – and discovering who your Prayer Partner was!

Please prayerfully consider joining us.

## Only Love Can Do That *(cont'd.)*

*Easter is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. Its inner meaning and spiritual significance is the "awakening and raising to spiritual consciousness of the I AM in man..."*

-Charles Fillmore.

The metaphysical meaning of the resurrection is that we all have eternal life. From the depths and death of darkness, we all have the opportunity to raise our consciousness to a higher vibration. We can only do that if we love one another, everything on the earth and earth itself.

When Jesus was asked, "What are the most important commandments, he replied: Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all our soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself..." (Matt.22:37-39). Can you imagine if everyone in the world made it their life purpose to follow the commandments, what kind of beautiful world it would be? Fear, suffering, hatred and darkness would be eliminated if we allowed ourselves to evolve to a higher spiritual consciousness. There would be no lack. We would all make sure that everyone's needs would be met. We would live in the knowing that there is more than enough for everyone, for there is no lack in God. Charles

Fillmore wrote, "Love, in Divine Mind, is the idea of universal unity. In expression, love is the power that joins and binds in divine harmony the universe and everything in it."

*Darkness cannot drive out darkness;  
only light can do that.*

*Hate cannot drive out hate;  
only love can do that."*

- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I've quoted some wonderful people whose lives were taken for their acts of love. I'm not suggesting that you place your life in any danger. I am suggesting that you.. we.. all give our lives over to being love and light in the world.

The talks in February are based off a book called, *Tiny Buddha's: 365 Tiny Love Challenges*. I invite you to take the daily challenge with me. Each day supplies a small way that we all can be the light and love. Let us evolve into what all of our true natures are; the Christ.

Book recommendations for Lent, Holy Week and Easter are: *Keep a True Lent* by Charles Fillmore, and *The Week That Changed The World* by Ernest C. Wilson

*"Love recognizes no barriers.  
It jumps hurdles, leaps fences,  
penetrates walls, to arrive  
at it's destination full of hope."*



# How Sweet the Sound

## Are You Feeling Used?



By Roger Mock

**S**peaking for myself, I do feel used on occasion - and that's good. Really good, actually. Writing this little column provides an example.

Sometimes, like today, I really have no idea what I'm going to write about when I sit down to type. An idea shows up and I run with it, I hit "send" when I'm done and I think "maybe next week's will be better." A couple days later someone thanks me and tells me it was just what they needed to read. That's the kind of feeling used I'm talking about.

Or maybe I'm planning for a Sunday morning and later find I have "unintentionally" chosen the perfect song for that week's message. That has happened enough times for me to know something other than coincidence is at play. I'm sure you've had your own experiences of having been used in this more benevolent sense of the term in small ways like these or in much larger ways.

A few years ago, Mark Shepard and I attended a Unity music conference at which keynote speaker Rev. David Ault asked if we were willing to be a vehicle through which the Universe can express Itself in love, joy, health or kindness. If you attend Unity services you will recognize those words from the song that Mark was inspired to write after Ault's talk. Will-



ingness is the key word here. *A Course in Miracles* says that all God asks of us is a "little willingness"—willingness to be used by God, willingness to let go of our own ideas for a moment and allow Spirit to lead, willingness to be a vehicle for good. It's a small crack in the door that can allow the unlimited power of God's will to enter our lives and work in and through us. (Insert Star Wars reference to the "Force" here).

As I write this in mid-January, we are preparing to celebrate the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. He apparently was not a saint. He was deeply flawed, his personal life was a mess, he was often on the verge of giving up his seemingly impossible struggle for racial justice but, in the end, he was simply willing to be used for good.

I think there really is a plan to save the world, to create a heaven on earth. I think it all comes down to enough of us being willing to open to that greater Will just a little bit, just enough to let the winds of Spirit in. It's a quiet, hidden revolution as in this saying of Jesus:

***"The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."*** - Matthew 13:33

- ◆ *Where can you be the little bit of leaven that is needed this week?*
- ◆ *Where is that door wanting to be cracked open just a little in your life right now? In mine?*

***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!***

## Small Business Fair

**D**id you wish to know more about your church commUNITY? Come see what individuals have to offer in the way of services and products at our annual Small Business Fair. There is much talent in our commUNITY! The event will warm you in this cold winter month. Because of overwhelming participation, we have set aside two dates: **Sunday, February 21st and Sunday, February 28th.**

If you have a small business and would like to share information about it, please consider participating in the Small Business Fair in the Fellowship Hall between both services and after the 11 o'clock service. This is a fabulous, well-attended, and successful event for all involved.

If you are interested in participating in this fun event, please contact Bonnie Kriss at 373-2135 or at [tedandbonkriss@hotmail.com](mailto:tedandbonkriss@hotmail.com) or Ann Marie Burke at 713-4017 or at [amburkie@aol.com](mailto:amburkie@aol.com).



## 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

**A**s 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

### In Duet with Jessica Roemischer

January 31, 6:00 PM



Award-winning pianist, composer and author Jessica Roemischer returns on the last Sunday of January for our 6:00 pm service, offering an evening of heart-centered music, inspiring reflection and guided meditation.

Don't miss this opportunity to experience a deep and profound healing journey with Jessica.

Jessica Roemischer is an award-winning pianist, composer, writer, photographer and teacher. Born into a musical family, she began piano at age six and was improvising and composing from the outset. As a pianist and performance artist, Jessica uniquely melds music and the spoken word "in duet" with those present. She reads from her writings and poetry, accompanying herself on the piano, highlighting themes of universal meaning. An unforgettable aspect of Jessica's events is the invitation she extends to join her at the piano. As a volunteer comes forth with music of striking originality, everyone gains a sense of a newfound possibility.

### Coffee House

February 6, 7:00 PM

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



### Small Business Fair

February 21 and 28



If you have a small business and would like to share information about it, please consider participating in the Small Business Fair in the Fellowship Hall between both services and after the 11 o'clock service. This is a fabulous, well-attended, and

successful event for all involved. If you don't have a small business, come anyway and enjoy what others have to share!

### Membership Class

Wednesday, March 2, 7:15—8:30 PM

If you are hearing a call to deepen your connection and commitment to your spiritual community, then you are invited to attend our Membership Class. We will explore what Unity is, what it means to step into membership at the church, discuss the Mission of Unity Church in Albany and join together in a sacred circle of sharing what membership in our ministry means to you.

### Unity Church Annual Meeting Sunday, March 8th, 12:20 PM

The meeting will include brief reports from Reverend Crystal and board members. It will also include the election of two trustees to serve on the church board. Only church members can



serve on the board or vote for trustees. The meeting itself is open to members and non-members alike.

### Maundy Thursday

March 24, 7:00 PM

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 participate 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.

### Prayer Partner Project

Sunday, March 13, 12:30 PM

John Frederick has created a 12-week project designed to engage Unity in healing prayer for others, one-on-one. It enables us to grow in awareness of our own ability to affect others through the power of prayer, while simultaneously opening up a consciousness of our own spiritual connection with God. For more information, contact John Frederick.

### Palm Sunday

March 20

Join us for our Palm Sunday service, as we explore how Jesus' triumphant journey, is a means to your own triumphant journey to peace, love and harmony.

## Spotlight on Service

By John Daubney



### Glyne Griffith

*There are those among us who are naturally inclined to be “out front” or to be drawn to leadership positions and we welcome and embrace and are enriched by those men and women. There are also however, as Glyne Griffith points out, men and women who are by nature more reserved and with a tendency to observe rather than to become more involved. What his story points out, however, is that they too, can be attracted to service as they allow themselves to be touched by the Unity message and the genuine friendliness and acceptance they experience from the congregation. When that happens, Spirit may naturally move them to want to contribute in a way that is in line with their talents and gifts and sometimes stretch beyond self-imposed limits.*

I first came to Unity of Albany about three years ago and did so as a result of helping a friend of a friend. My friend, Mary, from Barbados called me and said that her closest friend, Sonia, had been diagnosed with breast cancer. She indicated that her friend wanted a second opinion and so I got in touch with an oncologist here in Albany. Mary and Sonia then travelled from Barbados to Albany and spent three weeks at my home. Sonia was then able to receive the second opinion she desired and the medical treatment that made a difference in the overall outcome of her early diagnosis and successful treatment.

The three weeks that my two friends from Barbados spent with me coincided with the Easter period, and so on Good Friday, we all attended a Catholic mass and the Stations of the Cross. Sonia then searched online for a Unity Church and located this church, where we all attended Easter Service. So, on that Easter Sunday three years ago, I attended Unity Church in Albany for the very first time. I recall that we were all moved by Reverend Jim’s message and by the way he delivered it. After the service, my friends decided to go downstairs for extended fellowship and I followed them. I was intrigued by how relaxed and friendly everyone was. Nobody approached us to pressure us to join Unity or any such thing. I remember appreciating that very much.

What attracted me to Reverend Jim’s delivery that Sunday was that he embraced other religious traditions and he also invited the congregation to go into a meditative mindset during the service. His approach to Christian practice seemed to me to invite the questioning mind; even the skeptical mind. I

absolutely loved this approach and found myself returning to Unity in Albany Sunday after Sunday, long after my two friends had returned to Barbados. I also realized that part of what I found so fulfilling about each Sunday service at Unity was the spiritual message and connection and comfort I experienced through the music. The songs were always lively and contemporary and they engendered a contemplative mood.

For many weeks I attended service and felt the warmth and movement of Spirit throughout the congregation, but I was reluctant to actively participate. By nature, I’m not a joiner, but more of a spectator who likes to stay on the sidelines for as long as I can and observe and contemplate. Eventually however, after speaking with Geri Ann Laiacona and Debbie Singer, I decided to volunteer in the Unity bookstore. This was my first active involvement in terms of service and I



volunteered in the bookstore every third Sunday for several months. Many months later, when Heather Diddel phoned me and indicated that, through its process of discernment, the Board of Trustees was asking me to consider serving as a member of the Search and Find team to select our new minister, I immediately agreed to serve. It’s true that I still don’t think of myself as a joiner and I still prefer to be an observer on the sidelines, but the

feeling of being called to act in service and to be responsible can take me out of myself.

Because of my tendency to “remain on the sidelines”, I can’t honestly say that I’m a role model for participation and service. There are so many others folks like Patricia Hunt-Perry, Rob Geyer, Orissa Skipper, John Frederick, and many others here at Unity who consistently model service. What I can say about my own experience of service at Unity is that sometimes I feel as though I’m becoming involved despite myself, and despite my tendency to hang back and be an observer.

I would therefore say to anyone who, like me, has been hesitant to actively serve, to pay attention to what you feel called and moved to do. If someone like me can learn to serve, then indeed anyone can heed the call to service. The benefits and rewards are that you will move beyond yourself and your own feelings of limitation. You will feel part of something that is so much more than yourself and your own personal, daily concerns. That experience is a most freeing and deeply spiritual experience and has helped me to feel the warmth and embrace of that Spirit that is Unity.

Namaste.

## Unity Church in Albany

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



### 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.