



unity



April 2017—May 2017
Vol 33, Issue 3

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

Release & Rise



"Music comes from an icicle as it melts, to live again as spring water."

~ Henry Williamson

As I write this article, I look out on grey skies and rain trying to decide if it will turn to snow.

Yes, the weather is doing its transformation dance between winter and spring. It is making the decision to come out of slumber...to release old life and allow new life to rise. What does spring, butterflies and Jesus all have in common? The ability to transmute out of death to rise greatly as new life.

We who live in a climate where there are four seasons, have a greater understanding of this. As the cold weather comes in and snow blankets the ground, the trees and plants go dormant. Most plants die in front of our eyes. Yet, beneath the surface, beyond our eyesight, change is taking place. Deep in the soil, new life comes about. Trees and plants are gorging on the nutrients of the soil then they fight their way up through the heavy soil to become something grander than what they were. It rises out of the darkness into the light as new life.

"There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly."

~ R. Buckminster Fuller

"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."

~ Maya Angelou

The caterpillar is a beautiful example of something that fully comes apart to rise anew. The hungry caterpillar gorges itself with leaves, growing plumper and larger. One day, the caterpillar stops eating, hangs upside down from a twig or leaf, and molts into a shiny chrysalis. It is here the caterpillar radically transforms its body. It digests itself, releasing enzymes to dissolve all of its tissues, making a caterpillar soup. Eventually it emerges as a butterfly. It stands for hours gently moving its wings, pumping fluids into them to extend them fully. Then the butterfly soars gracefully away leaving nothing behind but a broken chrysalis to indicate its former bondage.

Jesus was sort of a human caterpillar. Jesus gorged on spiritual Truth. He continued to have a deeper and more expansive understanding of who he was. He was the son of God and allowed God to do its works through him (John 14:10). One can think of Jesus on the cross and his crucifixion, like the caterpillar attaching itself on a twig, as he is consciously deciding to free himself of his True self. The chrysalis and butterfly suggest the empty graveclothes of Jesus who has risen. He has burst forth into new life from the tomb. The bondage of death is broken. Christ is risen!

(Cont'd on Pg 2)

Mission Statement

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

Release & Rise *(cont'd)*

When you see a beautiful butterfly, or when you see the dead shell of a chrysalis on the ground, you do not grieve for the dead caterpillar. No, both of these experiences indicate the continuity of life itself. This account of Jesus is in fact alive to help us, to guide us, to give us hope for our own future. Like winter forming into spring, a caterpillar metamorphosing into a butterfly, the man Jesus transmuting into what he was born to be—Christ; we too are here to do the same. Ella Wheeler Wilcox said, “Go roll the stone of self away and let the Christ within thee arise.” When the beautiful, new self arises in you, you do not mourn over the old self. The old self becomes new when you take on and gorge the fruits of spiritual teachings, practice the teachings, and live the teachings by allow God to do its works in and through you.

“The spring wakes us, nurtures us and revitalizes us. How often does your spring come? If you are a prisoner of the calendar, it comes once a year. If you are creating authentic power, it comes frequently, or very frequently.”

~ Gary Zukav

As we move into this new season of spring, we too move into our creative expression. As the days lengthen and the ground finally reappears and new life comes forth, we celebrate our growth, our new Spirit.

Abundant Blessings,
Rev. Crystal

President's Corner

By Paul Frament
Leadership



On March 5, a new Board of Trustees was elected, and by March 16, we selected officers and had our first meeting. We have a good Board. Everyone wants to listen to Spirit, and to each other, and act as one cohesive unit. Our names and phone numbers are on the last page of every Sunday's bulletin, so I don't need to repeat them here. Speaking of phone num-

President's Corner *(cont'd)*

bers, please use them. The main responsibility of the Board Members is to represent the entire congregation. It would be difficult for 150 members to crowd into our library and conduct Unity business, so you elect us to represent everyone. Please help us to use everyone's inspiration and observations.

We plan to be a conduit for guidance from Spirit and lead Unity of Albany to interesting areas of growth and experience. But, the rest of you should not sit back and watch us, as if we are a Reality TV show. Everyone has the opportunity to use their good ideas to lead Unity into areas of service, fun and fellowship. Here are some examples of leadership from people not on the Board.

LeeAnn Lasher has a great knowledge of landscaping, and observed that our outside appearance could be vastly improved. She presented her ideas to a few willing gardeners (I wish that we were), and Pastor Fuller said OK. Just look left and right as you enter the Bradford Street entrance to see how that worked out.

LeeAnn is now living in Providence, Rhode Island, earning good money as a Nurse Practitioner, and she loves her job. Ann Marie Burke realized that we NEED a hiking group. Reverend Crystal's contribution was to allow a few minutes for an announcement, and Ann Marie, me, and others used sign-up lists and many e-mails to organize some fun-filled walks in the woods for about 15 of us.

Linda Neeb has a movie group, somebody has Course in Miracles study groups, Diane Teuschmann is often providing opportunities to gather to dance, and Tina Mazula is working toward a hiking group that avoids hills.

Do you have leadership skills? The answer is yes, if you listen to Reverend Crystal. Every Sunday, she explains to us an aspect of how the presence of our Creator is with us wherever we go. That presence opens doors, provides inspiration, and gives support. Try out your leadership skills. You will be pleasantly surprised.

How Sweet The Sound

By Rev. Roger Mock

Rowing to the Other Shore



Lorre Wyatt wrote this little bi-lingual song called *Somos El-Barco* some years ago. Here's the first verse and chorus:

*The stream sings it to the river,
The river sings it to the sea,
The sea sings it to the boat
That carries you and me.*

*Somos el barco, somos el mar,
Yo navego en ti, tu navegas en mi.
We are the boat, we are the sea,
I sail in you, you sail in me.*

I've been singing it for years and I realize now that it's actually a very Buddhist song. The raft is one of the principle archetypes of Buddhism. "We're all swimming to the other side," to quote another folk song, although in *Mahayana* (or big raft) Buddhism, it's more like we're rowing together. The Japanese have a name for the "other side" - Higan. It's a translation of the Sanskrit word *paramita* and literally means to cross over to the other shore. We are on this shore and the Buddhists are very frank about its nature. It's the place of ignorance and suffering. The Buddhas (there have been more than one) made it across to the "pure land" of enlightenment or Nirvana.

How to get there? You take three vows. You take refuge in the *Buddha* who showed the way across. You take refuge in the *dharma* - the raft itself; the teachings of the Buddha. And you take refuge in the *sangha* - all of us who are on this ship together and are committed to the journey. I sail in you; you sail in me. It's a simple and beautiful creed, is it not?



I bring all this up because we've just arrived at the Spring Equinox. In Japanese Buddhism it is the feast of *Higan*, which is also celebrated at the Autumnal Equinox. It's a time of balance. Day and night are of equal length. Temperatures are temperate. For those who observe Higan it is a significant moment. Through their practice they strive to live a life that is in balance. They focus on the six paramitas: giving, right behavior, endurance/patience, endeavor/effort, meditation, and wisdom.

Christianity has also chosen the Vernal Equinox to celebrate its holiest feast of Easter, itself a passage from suffering to transformation. It in turn is of course rooted in the Jewish tradition of Passover and the deliverance of a people from oppression to safety.

So it's a sacred time. For millennia, humans have striven to find balance in their lives at this time of year. They have gathered together and prayed and fasted and feasted, thankful for having made it through another winter. They have been a community of support—*sangha*—for each other. They have listened to the teachings handed down—*dharma*—of the great ones who have shown the way.

We ourselves live in a world very much out of balance. It's up to each of us to find the balance in our own lives; to practice ways of right living, patience, effort, prayer and wisdom. Then we begin to build small communities of balance and we learn the art of rowing together. We catch the river's song and we find the current.

We're doing it already, and it gives me great hope to be sharing this raft with you.

Love and light, *Roger*

Events Calendar

Looking for a Spiritual Community?

Join us at 1 of our 3 Sunday Services
9:00 am | 11:00 am | 6:00 pm
Summer (Memorial-Labor Day) ~
10 am | 6 pm

Ongoing

Prayer and Meditation

Wednesdays, 6:30–7:00 pm in the downstairs fellowship hall or in the Sanctuary.

Sundays 10:15—10:45 am in the large upstairs classroom. Jerry Patel and friends offer Sunday morning meditations each week between morning services. The regular practice of meditation builds peace and calmness within and helps us strengthen our awareness of our connection with the Divine. Group meditation makes the process easier and helps us move more deeply into the meditation experience. **Please arrive before 10:15 am** as the doors will close to hold the silence for this sacred gathering.

Get Fit and Stay Centered

Mondays at 5:00 pm

Kripalu Yoga

Deborah Foss (944-9858 for info)



Sundays, Matinee at the Spectrum

Unity Movie Group

The 1st Sunday of every month, join a group of congregants meeting at the Spectrum Theater to go to a 3:30 or 3:40 movie. There is a signup sheet available at the Bradford St. lobby.

2nd Saturday of the Month

Unity Hiking Club

Join us for a fun hiking experience. Each hike will be different, and details will be provided prior to our climb. Even if you can make only one occasionally, we'd love to include you on the list. It's a wonderful way to commune with God in His church ~ the great outdoors! Contact Ann Marie Burke or Paul Frament for more information.

1st Sunday of the Month

Friendship Sunday

Bring a friend to 11:00 am service and perhaps a dish to share for after the service.

Upcoming Classes

Tuesdays, starting April 4, 10:00-11:30 am
Tuesday Book Study Group
“Kingdom Come” by Rev. Ed Townley

We will begin the book “*Kingdom Come*” by Rev. Ed Townley. This book delves into the metaphysical meanings behind the “Book of Revelation” in the Bible and how it relates to our own spiritual growth. We begin on April 4th. Books available in the library. Please join us on Tuesdays! Contact Jane Bloom if you have questions at janeb915@gmail.com or 802-430-4490.

Friday, May 5, 7:00—9:00 pm and Saturday, May 6, 10:00 am—3:00 pm
Prayer Chaplain Orientation & Training

Have you been receiving the call to pray with others? Have you been wondering when the next training will happen to fulfill this yearning? The time has come. Rev. Crystal Muldrow along with the Prayer Team Lead, Dennis Ryan are holding a Chaplain Orientation and Training on Friday, May 5th, 6:00—9:00 pm and Saturday, May 6th, 10:00—3:00 pm. If you are interested, there is a sign-up sheet at the Bradford entrance or contact Dennis Ryan at unityalbanypraves@yahoo.com or in person. Note: It is highly recommended that current chaplains attend as refresher training.

Saturday, May 6, 10:00—2:00 pm
Spring Cleanup

Join us to spruce up the church, get rid of the cobwebs, and make it “spit shine”.

Wednesdays, May 10—June 14, 7:15 pm
The Quest for Prayer Class

Rev. Crystal Muldrow

Transform your prayer life. With the aid of the book, *The Quest for Prayer: Coming Home to Spirit* by Mary-Alice and Richard Jafolla, we explore the inner world of prayer. The Quest for Prayer identifies that heart's yearning for home, for a return to the Promised Land, and sees prayer as the trail that leads us there. It describes the language of prayer and discusses what it means when prayer does not appear to work. Books are available in our bookstore.

Audio/Visual Equipment

By Terry Bailey



Over the months, we've had numerous people provide input about our sound abilities. With the equipment we previously had, it was

difficult to address sound issues. I am really pleased to share with you that in December 2016 we were blessed with some new sound and video equipment. This new equipment allows us to provide an even better listening experience for you at our normal Sunday morning services as well as during our music ministry on Sunday evenings. We've also re-positioned the speakers to give you a more uniform listening experience.

As we continue to grow, we've occasionally been blessed with more people than our sanctuary can hold. This often occurs for our special services like Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve and Easter services. With our new equipment we are now able to live stream to the large flat screen TV in the Fellowship Hall. Now more people can enjoy the services without being cramped and possibly creating safety issues in the sanctuary. We can also live stream to You Tube for folks who can't attend these services. The new equipment will give us lots of flexibility as we continue to grow our congregation.

We have had some growing pains with this new equipment. We appreciate everyone's patience as we learn and adjust to the new

system. As always, we are grateful for any feedback concerning the A/V system. Please let us know if it is too loud or too soft. We will try to adjust accordingly. Feedback has been provided concerning the view from the camera used for streaming the services and we are looking to correct that. Note that, at the time of composing this article, we have made arrangements to meet with the sound system supplier and one of the top issues to be resolved is getting the wireless hearing assistance devices working properly.

And concerning safety, we ask that you refrain from walking behind the back pew on the side with the sound.

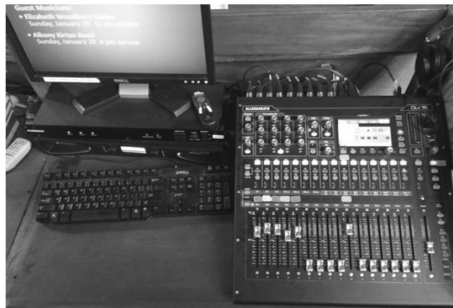
It's very crowded with all the great equipment and we would appreciate it if you could use other aisles to move about the sanctuary.

The audio/visual team is always open to adding new members. A familiarity with PowerPoint and sound systems is helpful, but not a requirement. Contact Terry if you are interested.

A big shout out to the A/V team! They are:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Cindy Moorcroft | Michelle Henry |
| Sam House | Ted Kriss |
| Paul Frament | Mudhar Muhi |
| Fred Elfenbein | Cheri Warren |

and your fearless leader,
Terry Bailey



Not too intimidating, right?



People to Know

Staff

Rev. Crystal Muldrow, Senior Minister

Jane Bloom, Licensed Unity Teacher,
(LUT) and Director of Youth
and Family Ministry

Rev. Roger Mock, Music Director

Barbara Zeller, Office Administrator

* New Board of Trustees



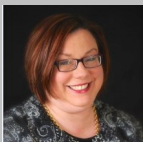
Paul Frament, Co-President
Hospitality



Orisa Skipper, Co-President
Inreach / Outreach



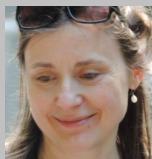
Ernie Klemm, Treasurer
Spiritual Education



Elaine Lasda, Secretary
Special Events



Sam House, Trustee
Building & Grounds



Karin Reinhold, Trustee
Prosperity / Sunday Worship



Josephine Faruol, Alternate

Annual Membership Meeting

Board Nominees

- Sally Decheine
- Josephine Faruol
- Paul Frament
- Sam House
- Elaine Lasda
- Tina Mazula
- Karin Reinhold

At the Annual Membership Meeting on Sunday, March 5, you voted on whom you would like to see fill a (1) one year term, (1) two year term, and (2) three year terms, plus and alternate on our Board of Trustees.

*See the results**

The vote on Proposed Bylaw changes was tabled at the time of the Annual Membership Meeting. The new board will assign a committee to review the Bylaws for amendment and vote at another time.

Did you know that you can attend Board of Trustees meetings? They are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm in the library.



Upcoming:
April 20
May 18



Editor's Note: Feel free to submit photos, articles, prayers, and/or poems for publication to Bonnie Kriss, tedandbonkriss@hotmail.com. Deadline for submission is 5/20 for the June/July newsletter.

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Welcome New Board of Trustees!



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Prosperity/Sunday Worship



Josephine Faruol, Alternate

Unity Prays

Prayer Chaplains

Do you know our prayer chaplains?

Dennis Ryan	Dottie Frament
Jane Bloom LUT	Ginger Hannah
Lois Crommelin	Sue Oringel
Betsey Ewalt	Bob Sinacore
Deb Foss	Robin Stapley

Our trained Prayer Chaplains at Unity Church in Albany are available to pray with you at the end of every Sunday Service. If interested in becoming a Prayer Chaplain, please contact Dennis Ryan at 505-9699, or at unityalbanyprays@yahoo.com and plan on attending a Prayer Workshop on Friday, May 5, 6:00—9:00 pm and Saturday, May 6, 10:00 am—3:00 pm.

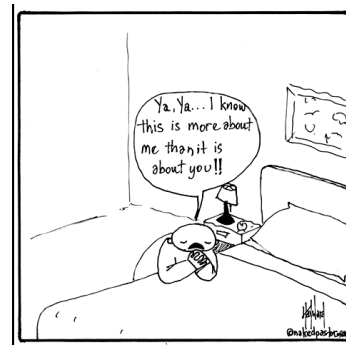
Prayer Team

You can **phone** or **email** a prayer request to the church and our Prayer Team will hold it in prayer for ten days. Leave your requests by phone at 518-453-3603 extension **13** or email them to unityalbanyprays@yahoo.com.

All prayer requests are confidential.

The Answer Box

Place your written prayers in the “Answer Box” in our lobby and Unity Church will hold them in prayer until the end of the month. We will then forward your request to Silent Unity, where they will be held in the Silent Unity Chapel for an additional 30 days.



Annual Membership Meeting

Board Nominees

Sally Decheine
Josephine Faruol
Paul Frament
Sam House
Elaine Lasda
Tina Mazula
Karin Reinhold

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Upcoming

April 20
May 18

Prosperity Update

Through February 27, 2017

	Month to Date		Year to Date	
	2/28 2017	2/28 2016	Jan-Feb 2017	Jan-Feb 2016
Income	13,672.64	18,744.21	37,381.74	39,143.26
Expenses	17,491.72	17,173.63	37,645.66	37,449.02
Surplus/Deficit	-3,819.07	+1,270.58	-1,263.92	+1,694.24

Note: Fiscal Year is January 1—December 31

“God is our Source. We bless and appreciate all the many channels through which God’s abundance prospers our ministry. We affirm that our fiscal year concludes with a financial surplus. We always have more than enough to spare.”

Food Pantry



Our friends at the food pantry have informed us that their current needs are personal items for babies, men, and women.

Thank you for your support to this worthy ministry!

Editor’s Note: Feel free to submit photos, articles, prayers, and/or poems for publication to Bonnie Kriss, tedandbonkriss@hotmail.com. Deadline for submission is 5/17 for the June/July newsletter.

By John Daubney

Spotlight On Service



Terry Bailey

Reverends Crystal and Jim Fuller before her have always talked about service as a vehicle to serve our Unity family, get to know each other better, grow spiritually, and TO HAVE FUN!! Terry Bailey has done just that as he “plays” at the church sound board most Sundays. Terry and the A/V team provide a conduit for the Unity message, through music and the spoken message, to be passed on to all of us each Sunday morning. It’s been said that “love is a verb” and through being a “small part” (Terry’s words) of the whole of the Unity network of volunteers, Terry has been demonstrating his love for what God has provided for him.

I started attending Unity about 12 years ago, following the encouragement of some friends who mentioned that Unity is not a “traditional” church. A special guest speaker once mentioned Unity as “a church for people who don’t like church” and that description works well for me. After growing up in the Presbyterian and Methodist traditions, something non-traditional was very appealing to me.

Following some initial resistance, the message taught at Unity now makes sense to me. I’ve come to believe that “being in hell” is simply not having a connection to the Holy Spirit, Universe, Divine Creator, etc... “There is only one Presence and one Power in my life and in the Universe”. I like the idea of a connection to a higher power that is here to help make my life better, right here and right now, instead of living my life with worry, hoping for some great reward after I pass away.

Diane Teutschman started me on my way of doing service for the church. She was coordinating the volunteers to do the slides and sound for the morning services and asked me if I would be interested in helping. Being an engineer, I thought, *how could I pass up the opportunity to*

play with PowerPoint presentations and learn the sound board? Paul Frament eventually took over the coordinator position and, then, when he was ready to step down, Rev. Crystal asked me to consider taking on the coordinator’s role. I said yes and I have been coordinating the Audio/Visual volunteers since November 2016, and trying to ensure there is a volunteer at the computer/sound board at every service.

I have been inspired by the music team and their commitment to providing such a special part of each service. For me, having a small role in getting that exceptional music out to the congregation is very gratifying. Since taking on a larger service role, I am also able to see and appreciate all the other “behind the scenes” volunteers who make our church such a warm and inviting place. The members of the A/V team and their willingness to learn the new sound board and to help each other is also incredibly inspiring to me. Working with Roger Mock and Cheri Warren to get the new sound system installed, and then learning the intricacies of that system, while a bit anxious at times, has been exceptionally gratifying.

I have also provided service on the Building and Grounds team, trying to keep our physical building as healthy as our spiritual organization. This service has included church cleaning days, repair of the front steps, defining significant building issues, and remembering to bring my shovel on snowy Sunday mornings to help keep the sidewalks clear.

I am grateful to be a part of the Unity in Albany family. I have found a spiritual place that makes sense and I enjoy the opportunity to provide service so that the Unity message can be passed along to others. Providing service has also given me the opportunity to get to know the other people in our church community. I encourage everyone to take on some type of service role, no matter how small it may seem. And, we are always open to new volunteers on the A/V team.”

*“I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy.
I woke and I saw that life is all service.
I served and I saw that service is joy.”*

— **Kahlil Gibran**



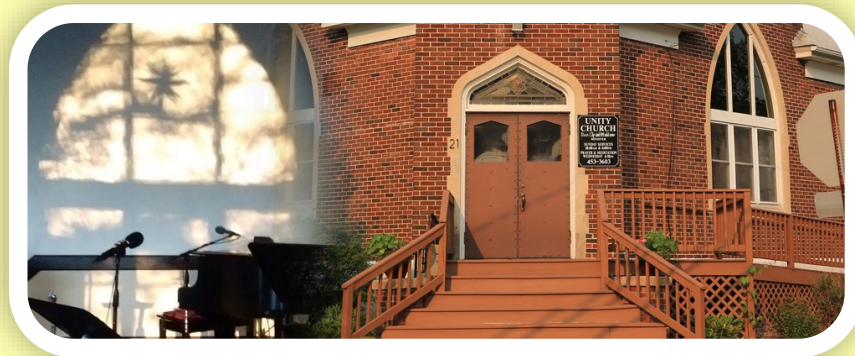
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.. a positive path for spiritual living



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!***

Sunday Worship Schedule

Sunday Mornings
at 9:00 am & 11:00 am

*Youth classes are available during the
11:00 am service*

Sunday Evening "OneSong" Service
at 6:00 pm each week

*Multi-faith service with music, meditation
and sacred chant*