



Unity of Fox Valley

January 2026

Why The Cold Knows What It's Doing



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Ministerial Musings



Why the Cold Knows What It's Doing

Winter has terrible public relations. It's blamed for cracked lips, awkward layers, and the sudden realization that the sun clocks

out at 4:37 p.m. Yet spiritually speaking, winter is a wise old angel disguised as bad weather. It doesn't shout. It doesn't sparkle (except when it literally does). It simply invites us—firmly and with wool socks—to slow down.

Spiritually, winter's first virtue is honesty. The trees stop pretending. Leaves drop, branches go bare, and the landscape says, "This is what's essential." No performance. No photosynthesis hustle. Just trunks, roots, and the quiet confidence of survival. Winter reminds us that there are seasons when growth is invisible, and that doesn't mean nothing is happening. It means the work has gone underground.

Which brings us to stillness. Winter specializes in it. Snow muffles the world like a divine "mute" button. Lakes freeze.

Animals hibernate. Even extroverts consider staying in. Spiritually, this is gold. Stillness is where we finally notice our own thoughts—an alarming experience at first, but ultimately useful. Winter teaches us that silence isn't empty; it's spacious. It's the room where wisdom stretches out and says, "Ah, finally."

Then there is rest, that radical spiritual practice we keep promising ourselves and never schedule. Winter enforces it with darkness and cold. You can't keep the same pace when the sun disappears early and your body just wants soup. Rest, winter insists, is not laziness—it's maintenance. Even God took a day off. Winter just takes a few months and hands you a blanket.

Enter the New Year, winter's loud cousin. If winter is the angel, the New Year is the life coach who just read one book and now wants you to "crush it." Resolutions appear. Gym memberships spike. Suddenly everyone is very serious about planners. Spiritually, though, the New Year isn't about becoming a brand-new person overnight. It's about intention. A pause in the calendar that says, "You got this, you can choose again."

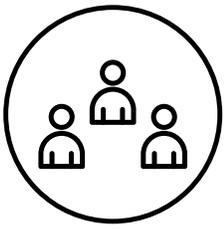
The spiritual virtue here is hope, but not the glittery, unrealistic kind. The New Year's hope is quieter: maybe this year I will be a little kinder, a little braver, a little more honest, a little more loving, a little more me. Maybe I won't fix everything, but I can take one step. Winter supports this kind of hope beautifully. Seeds don't panic underground. They pause in prayer. The New Year reminds us that waiting and becoming are not opposites.

There's also humility in both winter and the New Year. Winter reminds us we are not in charge of the weather, our schedules, or whether our nose will run. The New Year reminds us we didn't invent time and we can't fully control the future. Spiritually, humility is freedom. You don't have to be perfect; you just have to be present.

And yes, there is joy, though it may be wearing a scarf. Winter joy is subtle: lights in the dark, shared meals, laughter that feels warmer because it's earned. The New Year's joy is possibility—the clean page, the deep breath before the next paragraph. Together they whisper a spiritual truth we forget the rest of the year: life is cyclical. You don't fail forever. You don't succeed forever either. You grow, you rest, you begin again.

So if winter feels heavy, remember: it's not punishment, it's preparation. If the New Year feels overwhelming, remember: you're allowed to start small. Light a candle. Take a walk. Say one honest prayer, even if it's just, "Help," or, "Thank you."

Winter and the New Year aren't here to make you impressive. They're here to make you human. And spiritually speaking, that's the whole point.



Notes from the Board

December 8 the Board of Trustees welcomed newly elected Carl Strang. We are thankful for all the caring, question answering, and Treasurer's activities during her time with us, Judy Devoe provided.

New Officers have been elected:

- President Mickey Koziol
- Vice President Nate Birr
- Treasurer Carl Strang
- Secretary Donna Beichel
- Trustee Dave Rolison
- Trustee Joey Nelson

We approved December minutes and have postponed Treasurer's reports approval until January Board Meeting. We evaluated the Annual Meeting and will go forward seeking a committee to evaluate fundraising ideas. Mary and Dawn will advise activities Youth will be doing. We are grateful and appreciative to members submitting possible fundraising; they will be asked to serve on the committee (which should only meet a few times a year after service). One or two Board members will also serve on the committee whose main goal will be to identify potential fundraisers, research cost/income, ramifications such as impact on insurance/building modifications necessary, ownership of each project, and volunteers needed.

"Invest in Our Future" Fall fundraiser provided income to provide for expenses just under the \$15000 we had hoped for. Thank you for all who contributed extra to provide for our spiritual home.

We finalized Board Retreat information: January 10, Saturday, 8-5 at Nazareth Spirituality Center in Batavia, guided by Ellen Schnur who will continue to work with us on becoming even better Board Members to serve Unity of Fox Valley.

Board members have been assigned for counting and collection for 2026 Services.

In our continuing effort to get to know each other better (a suggestion during Ellen's previous training)...and in case you want to answer yourself... "If your were to name the one thing you care most about in life (other than another human being) what would it be?

And YES, we are getting to know each other better...



Youth and Family Ministry

As the holiday season settles into our memories, our youth and their teachers will begin the new year with a time of reflection and renewal through our Burning Bowl and White Stone Ceremony. This honored tradition invites us to pause, let go of what no longer serves our growth, and open our hearts to new possibilities. We will gather downstairs to begin with a guided meditation, creating a safe space to look honestly at those parts of our lives, such as worries, fears, or habits we are willing to release.

Following the meditation, we will write these thoughts on flash paper as a simple and meaningful way to symbolize letting them go. Together, we will then proceed upstairs to join the congregation and place our papers into the Burning Bowl, releasing them safely and peacefully.

Afterward, we will return downstairs for the White Stone Ceremony. This portion of our experience will include another gentle meditation, followed by choosing words or ideas to write on small white stones that reflect the intentions we wish to carry forward into 2026. This reflective practice helps us step into the year ahead with clarity and purpose.

As we continue on through the month of January, our youth will also explore the spiritual power of Faith. Using the color dark blue associated with this power and with the disciple Peter, we will reflect on faith as a steady inner trust that guides our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. As part of this exploration, the youth will revisit the Nativity narrative from our recent Christmas Pageant, particularly the stories of An Angel Visits Mary and Joseph's Dream, to see how faith was expressed through listening, trust, and courage. These stories will help the youth recognize how faith continues to support and strengthen them in their own lives.

In closing, I invite us to take the following words of Mary from Luke 1:38 into our hearts that beautifully express her faith, trust, and willingness to be an expression of the Divine, *"I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled."*

May your New Year be blessed, abundant, and joyfully fulfilled.

With gratitude,
Ms. Mary, LUT, CSE



Fundraiser / Stewardship Update

We concluded our fundraiser, **Invest in our Future**, and it was a massive success. We were able to raise a final total of **\$12,555.34**, which was just shy of our goal.

We could not have done it without your help.

Thank you!





Prayer Chaplain Ministry

The beginning of 2026 is upon us! It's a trite, over used statement, but I find myself wondering every year, "where did last year go?" Not that I'm unhappy to begin moving on, but as 2025 showed us, these unsettled times are continuing to be our "new norm!" I believe it's important now, more than ever, to hold on to the foundations of our personal faith! In light of this I invite you to focus on Unity's power of Faith this month to set the tone for this upcoming year...

Unity's 2021 Advent booklet, A Christmas to Remember, reminds us that the hope that keeps us moving ahead through uncertain times inspires the "faith that life is unfolding in an orderly way; that peace, love, and joy are more enduring..." and can help "us adapt to a time we never imagined having to live through."

The author of this piece, Rev. Teresa Burton, goes on to say that "Hope was a good place to start, but it could only take us so far" and that we need to use our "faith to see ourselves and one another through."

This affirmation comes from 2025's Advent booklet, With Love at Christmas.
I have faith in the light within me.

If you feel in need of more support during these times we invite you to reach out to your Prayer Chaplains - Denise Hage, Wanda Faye Holmes, Marie Manella, Luna Ninò, Bobbi Severson and Pam Skaar.

We make periodic Caring Calls to support you, our spiritual family, with your prayer needs. And there is at least one prayer chaplain available after service each Sunday, too. When we pray with you, we hold everything said in confidence, placing your requests in the sacred space of limitless possibilities in God's love; that place we often are unable to see for ourselves. If you have not been receiving prayer calls and want to start now, please contact the church office at 630-879-1115 or send an email to churchoffice@unityoffoxvalley.org and Bobbi or Marie will be in touch.

If you wonder how you can express more fully "the light that is within you," we would love you to consider becoming a Prayer Chaplain. Training classes are scheduled for April 17th & 18th and May 15th & 16th. These consist of two Friday evenings from 6-8PM and two Saturdays, from 8AM to 4:30PM. This training might be an opportunity for you to enrich your spirituality through service to our members. Both women and men are welcome to walk through this spiritual doorway.

The requirements for applicants are that you be a current Unity of Fox Valley member, demonstrate an understanding of Unity principles, have a willingness to pray with others, and have taken a prayer class. (The prayer class schedule is “in the works” and will be announced soon.) No former experience in praying with others is necessary and a commitment will be requested only after you’ve completed the training.

If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Bobbi Severson (630) 632-2368 bsever4785@gmail.com or Marie Manella (630) 803-1630 mleduc7@yahoo.com.

"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." - Matthew 25:40

Praying that January 2026 opens a door for you to joyfully claim new possibilities for who you want to be and what you want to manifest in the New Year.”

Marie, author
Bobbi, editor



The Prayer of Protection

*The light of God surrounds me / us;
I AM LIGHT.*

*The love of God enfolds me/us;
I AM LOVE.*

*The power of God protects me / us;
I AM POWER.*

*The presence of God watches over us;
I AM PRESENCE.
I AM DIVINE.*

*Wherever I am / we are, God is!
And all is well!*



Spiritual Programs and Groups

Men's Group

- We are excited to explore interesting topics this year. If you have any ideas, don't be shy!
- Here is the link to our page: <https://ufvweb-new.unityoffoxvalley.org/unity-mens-group/>



Women's Group

- After a brief hiatus, we are meeting again on January 11th. Please join us at 12pm in the Sanctuary.
- Here is the link to our page: <https://ufvweb-new.unityoffoxvalley.org/unity-womens-group/>
-



Safe Spaces



Every Thursday, 10:30 am

Dear UFV Family & Friends,

Please come join us! Bring your drink of choice, a treat, and perhaps questions, ideas, curiosity, imagination, a friend, or you may just come hang out a bit. We hope to see you. All are welcome!

Here is a link to the page:

<https://ufvweb-new.unityoffoxvalley.org/calendar/ss/>

ONLINE: A Course in Miracles



Every Thursday, 7:30 - 9:00 pm, Online

Dear UFV Family & Friends,

The emphasis for this session will be the workbook from *A Course in Miracles*. The course invites us to retrain our minds so that we can experience more peace in the world.

Everyone is welcome - you may join at any time.

Just look for the weekly email with the login information sent out every Tuesday evening.

Please contact Warren Wakerlin with any questions and request the login information:
wwakerlin@aol.com

Here is a link to the page:

<https://ufvweb-new.unityoffoxvalley.org/a-course-in-miracles/>

Sunday Worship & Services

Sunday Service



Every Sunday, 10am - In Person & Online

Come join us as we explore wherever God and Spirit may lead us. Our coming together is an affirmation to answer that call collectively.

YouTube Channel



If you cannot make it in-person, you can watch live via our YouTube channel.

Here is the link:

[Unity of Fox Valley YouTube](#)

Sunday School



Every Sunday, 10 am

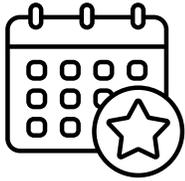
We are welcoming youth of all age groups to join us for an hour of uplifting spiritual connection through prayer, story, meditation, songs, game, and craft:

- Nursery (3 months to age 2)
- Children's Church (ages 3 to 6 - preschool to 1st grade)
- Juniors (ages 7 to 10- 2nd to 5th grade)
- Uniteens (ages 11 to 13 - 6th to 8th grade)
- Y.O.U (ages 14 - 18 - 9th to 12th grade)

Parents are welcome to join in on the fun too!

Any questions/ concerns, please contact Mary Nowroozi, Youth Director:
marynowroozi@comcast.net or Dawn Staszak, Teen Youth Director: dawn_311@yahoo.com

Please click [here](#), for the youth ministry website.



Events & Special Services

Soup Sunday



- The first Sunday of Every Month
- Sign up to bring soup to share
- Contact Bob Anthony with any questions:
banthony103@comcast.net

Name Tag Sunday



- The first Sunday of Every Month
- Grab a name tag up front!

Burning Bowl / White Stone Ceremony

- This service has been a tradition for our congregation seeking spiritual direction as a way of letting go that which is no longer needed so that we are open and receptive to experience new, enriching spiritual opportunities for the New Year!





Volunteer Ministry

Our yearly **VOLUNTEER FAIR** is this month. Sundays, January 18th & 25th, after the Service. We will be having our Volunteer sign up in the Fellowship Hall. Please stop by and see what interests you and sign up. We are so blessed by our many volunteers and want you to know just how grateful we are for your time and talent!
For more info, please contact Bobbi Severson: bsever4785@gmail.com





Church Office & Facilities Updates

Housekeeping

Our housekeeping schedule is as follows:

- Fridays, 11am - 2pm

- The cleaning crew will have priority of the church at this time.

Office Junk Removal

- We are planning on having a junk removal company take out some of the electronic junk we have around the church and office
- We need to schedule a company to come out to the church and assist with this, so we will most likely schedule an event around this, in order to ask volunteers for help



Young Living

- Did you know that when you purchase Young Living products Unity of Fox Valley benefits in more ways than just the cost of the item purchased? Young Living products are the highest quality and have many health benefits.
- We have a good selection of Young Living Products available for sale. From agave nectar to an array of toiletries and cleaning products! We also have
Essential Oils
available for calm & healing.
- Sue has brought samples of fragrances for anyone to test that heal and clean among others

For more info or questions on the products, please contact Sue Rolison:

sue.rolison@comcast.net

- Do you need us to order anything?

Place your order with Susan Korpan by the 12th of each month!

- auntsuz@gmail.com

- Please click

- [here](#)

- for the UFV Young Living website



Tithes & Offerings



Nothing is possible without your commitment and generous financial support.

Please click
here

or copy and paste the following link in your browser:

<https://www.paypal.com/biz/fund?id=44UC5B8W64KBQ>

You may contribute any amount, and you do not need to have a PayPal account to contribute but you do need an email address.

PayPal does take a fee from your donation.

If you would like to be sure your entire donation is given to the church, feel free to mail in your donation:

Unity of Fox Valley, 230 Webster Street, Batavia, IL 60510.

If your donation is for a specific event, please be sure to write that in the Memo area of your check.

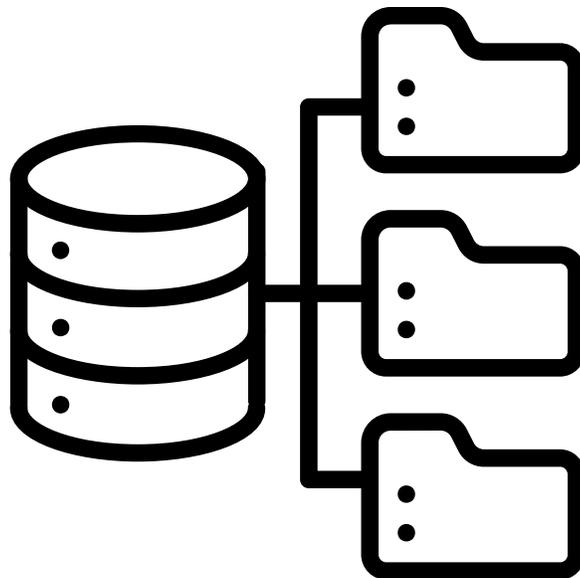


News from the Church Office

We are re-doing our website. In the spirit of updating things, please send any new photos you want included on the website to churchoffice@unityoffoxvalley.org

If you have any ideas, thoughts, or things you'd like added, feel free to contact AJ.

In other news, I will be creating an Enterprise Resource Planning Application to help assist with some of the functionality of the office manager position. My goal is to build a database and create a one-stop shop where people will be able to login, subscribe to events, and donate to specific causes of their choosing. This is a project that will take a few months, and if you have any ideas, feel free to reach out.





Contact Us

Follow Us on Instagram
Connect with us on Social Media by following us on Instagram

@unityoffoxvalley
<https://www.instagram.com/unityoffoxvalley/>

Contact Information
phone: 630.879.1115
churchoffice@unityoffoxvalley.org
fax: 630.879.1728
www.unityoffoxvalley.org
prayer line:
630.879.1129

Forward this email
Join Our Mailing List

A Note about Unsubscribing:

If you unsubscribe to any email you receive from UFV, you will no longer receive any email notifications from us -
including Sunday Service links