

FIRST UNITARIAN
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
BR  **KLYN**
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Transforming Lives

Amanda White

(Member since March 15, 2015)



Were I to tell any of our high school classmates that Jenny Malin is the biggest reason I found religion again, they might be a bit confused at first. Jenny and I only spent time together during our junior and senior year when we were both heavily involved in our theatre department. After graduation, I never saw her again in person.

Coincidentally, our senior year happened to be the very same year that Mark Zuckerberg was sitting in his Harvard dorm room creating a social network that connected college students across the country. So when we both moved off to our respective universities, we stayed together through Facebook. And that's where I really got to know Jenny and who she was, which in a nutshell was a brilliant woman driven by her incredible faith which was nurtured in a very active UU family. Ask her "What is the meaning and purpose of life?" and she would say, "To appreciate and enjoy what is beautiful in the world including human community, and to help others enjoy this same joy on earth, and to be part of the increasing awesome!" Unfortunately, on October 26th, 2013, Jenny was killed by a drunk driver, 2 months before her 27th birthday.

In the 6 months before she died, I was going through a major shift in my life. I had finally escaped abuse and had begun working on healing the wounds of a lifetime shrouded in trauma, but I was socially and spiritually lonely and I realized I needed a community that could help me grow. When Jenny died, I spent hours thinking about her, about why this could happen to such a good person. Thinking about Jenny one afternoon, I found myself searching for a Unitarian Universalist church here in New York. I thought maybe my answer to this tragedy and to my own need for greater spiritual growth could be found in a similar community to the one Jenny grew up in.

It's been 4 1/2 years since I first walked through these doors, and my impression of First U has only grown with time: that to be a part of this community is not only how I nurture my own spirit, but how I keep Jenny's alive. What I have come to love most about this congregation are all the same qualities that I so admired in Jenny and that I seek to nurture in myself: honesty, compassion, acceptance, and empowerment, open-mindedness, creativity and joyfulness, obligated to justice, and committed to a better world. Jenny Malin and First U have changed my life. Working together we can change the world.

May 27, 2018

