



MAKING THE  
CONNECTIONS

# First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County

September 2011

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Update

## MARK IT DOWN

- Sept 11 Sermon: "The Wrathful  
God of History"
- Sept 14 Board of Trustees Meeting@  
7:30pm, Sonen Room
- Sept 18 Sermon: "The Hidden  
Injuries of Class"
- Sept 25 Report from GA



## Time, Water and Ingathering

The deluge and aftermath of Hurricane Irene challenges us to acknowledge that life on earth is intricately intertwined with water. The cycle of water has neither a beginning nor an end. Yet it has been in motion for billions of years. We have experienced water cleanse, purify, polish, hydrate, build life, and more recently, devastate, destroy, and overwhelm millions of people. Even still, without it life on earth would cease to exist.

On Sunday, September 11, our congregation will celebrate the gift of water during the Water Ceremony—a First UU tradition—as we begin our 2011-2012 worship services. We will also take a moment to recognize those who lost their lives on that day ten years ago, thus marking the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the crash of Flight 93 in Shanksville, PA. Remember to bring your water memento—a bit of water from your summer travels—to add to the community bowl. Water from home or a picture (if you do not mind it getting wet) is also welcome.

# From Darrell's Desk

## A Moderate Amount of Shakin' Goin' On

So, I'm sitting here in my office at home, trying to think of a topic for this month's newsletter message. My office chair has wheels and I feel it moving, well, downhill. My desk starts to shake. I look out the window and see the building next door gently swaying.

Then it all stops. Then it starts again. It was that moment, when it started again, that was unsettling, because, since it started again once, I'm thinking, who knows what is next.

I then received an email from my neighbor down the hall, concerning some business of our condominium association. I asked her if she felt a kind of swaying and shaking of the building. Yes, she said, but she was inside a closet doing some clothes sorting and wasn't sure what it was.

A few minutes later, she sent me a link about the earthquake. It was 5.9 on the Richter scale, toward the high end of the moderate range, epicenter outside Richmond, Virginia. The article said City Hall in Newark was evacuated but no injuries had been reported anywhere.

Even as I am writing this, I got an email from a friend who works at Boston University. He wrote that about half the people in his office

felt it, and a building in nearby Kenmore Square was evacuated.

We all had a jolly time last spring is missing the fellow who had miscalculated the time of The Rapture. For just a second there, it did occur to me that he might have been only a few months off. Then again, earthquakes are more biblically apocalyptic, rather than rapturous. I get these "last days" prophecies confused.

Perhaps Samuel Johnson was right when he commented that nothing focuses the mind so much as the knowledge that one is to be hanged the next morning. I suspect narrowly avoiding being hanged does much the same thing. That is, I'm sitting here right now in a state of mind that is rather vividly focused. It had not previously occurred to me to rejoice that the building next door is not swaying.

Likewise, I am absolutely joyful that my chair is not rolling away from my desk. I'm as pleased as can be that the desk itself is perfectly still. All these are completely new sources of the greatest pleasure to me.

My little Corgi is almost asleep in her crate next to my bookcase. How nice that her rest was barely interrupted. I have

heard that cats are sensitive to tremors. Not mine. They gave me no warning at all.

If I let myself, I am a little spooked right now, a little nervous. There is a little "dodged a bullet" feeling creeping over me.

I sat down a little over an hour ago wanting to write something that might cause us to appreciate life a little more, to live a little more fully and so on. Then I sat through a minor earthquake. I hope in the future to experience less dire sources of inspiration.

Minister's Email  
[minister@essexuu.org](mailto:minister@essexuu.org)

“...A wealth of youth ministry and mentoring experience”

# New Director of Religious Education

Search for DRE comes to exciting end  
by Flore Dorcely

Our continued search for a new Director of Religious Education was successful this summer. Please join me in welcoming Lakesha Groover who will be assuming leadership of our Religious Education Program this year. Lakesha is beginning her second year at Drew Theological Seminary studying for her Masters in Divinity. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Human Services with a concentration in Family and Children's Services from Northeastern University in Boston.

In addition to her strong

academic foundations, Lakesha comes to us with a wealth of youth ministry and mentoring experience within inner city urban settings. She has led in educating and encouraging youth toward active and creative participation in church services by incorporating the arts.

In terms of outreach, she has collaborated with college students, community leaders, business executives, parents, and government officials to ensure that inner city children have access to services that promote healthy development. Her work with the Big Sisters organization has included administratively planning

and implementing programs by coordinating groups of volunteers.

We are so excited to have Lakesha lend these considerable talents to our church!

I am very grateful to all those who helped support the effort including Darcy Hall, Anne Miller, Darrell Berger, Paul Axle Lute, Greg Giacobe and the members of the Board of Trustees.

## Social Hour and Altar Flower Volunteers Needed

Many of our church's activities are run and coordinated by volunteers—members and friends who give their time and talents to help make the church a pleasant experience. Would you like to help? We are currently looking for volunteers to serve as hosts for our Sunday Social Hours held after services, as well as to bring flowers for our altar table each Sunday before service. For Social Hour, please contact the coordinator listed in this month's newsletter, or call the church office at (973) 674-0010 or at [office@essexuu.org](mailto:office@essexuu.org). We will contact you to confirm your date. Thank you.

# September 2011 at a Glance

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 "The Wrathful God of History"	12	13	14 Board of Trustees Mtg 7:30pm Sonen Room	15	16	17
18 "The Hidden Injuries of Class"	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Report From GA	26	27	28	29		

# Sermon Teasers

11 September

*The Wrathful God of History*

Rev. Darrell Berger

Musician: Dave Braham

Our Ingathering worship this year happens to fall on the tenth anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center. I will try very hard to honor this without allowing the tragedy to consume what is also a very festive traditional celebration for us. We will gather on the lawn, weather permitting, a bit before worship and process into the sanctuary.

Unitarian Transcendentalist Theodore Parker wrote, "I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice. Things refuse to be mismanaged long."

For UU's, this is a statement of faith. My faith has been sorely tried lately. Perhaps yours has been, too.

18 September

*The Hidden Injuries of Class*

Rev. Darrell Berger

Musician: Dave Braham

This title is entirely stolen from a book by Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb in 1972. It clarified for me many of my experiences growing up in a working class area outside Toledo Ohio, with parents who had aspirations for me that took me far away from Ohio and the working class. Though it is seldom discussed, UU harbors many fugitives from the classes to which they were born. How did we find our way to a UU pew? What can we do to help others find us?

25 September

*Report From GA*

Georgiana Hart

Musician: Dave Braham

Georgiana Hart will speak on how the General Assembly in Arizona in 2012 will influence our work in the church this coming year. Additional discussions will focus on how the Unitarian Universalists in Phoenix will focus on action embracing our immigrants rather than a "business as usual" agenda and how some actions in New Jersey this summer refuted other states repulsion of their immigrant people and how a program of visiting detainees and education can influence our thinking here in Orange. The process of initiating and voting on Actions of Immediate Witness will not be carried out in 2012, but the issues presented this year on strike supporting of grocery workers, fighting racist hearings on the Muslim population and legislating for maximum disclosure of corporations represented much of the work of the GA.

Promoting social action and our Share The Plate program come together this same week when Karen Dinkins of *Planned Parenthood* will be share that organization's needs and aspirations for the community.

Meetings & Events:

Board of Trustees, Wednesday, 14 September, 7:30 PM, Sonen Room

Senior Ushers

Musicians

11 Sep Gregory Giacobe  
 18 Sep Paul Axel-Lute  
 25 Sep Ann E. Lang

Dave Braham  
 Dave Braham  
 Dave Braham

**Coffee Hour Coordinator for September: Flore Dorcely**

# Fall "Share-the-Plate" Recipient

by Greg Giacobe

Social & Earth Action, at its May 8, 2011, meeting chose the next recipient for our "Share-The-Plate" program. There was one submission made, and the committee endorsed it wholeheartedly: The Gale Center, located at 560 MLK Blvd, in East Orange, operated by Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan New Jersey. The choice was confirmed by the Board of Trustees when it convened for its meeting on May 10, 2011. The Gale Center offers a variety of women's health services and reproductive services to both genders, especially teens, women of color and those with little or no health coverage. These services include abortion referrals; birth control; emergency contraception; general health; HIV testing; patient education; pregnancy testing, options & services; STD testing & treatment; and women's health. Many of these services are at nominal or no cost, and are much needed in the community. Recent moves at the state and national level to limit or cut funding for reproductive services have impacted the availability of many of these services.

The Share-the-Plate collection period will run from September 11 through January 29, 2012. The program requires that at least half of the cumulative unrestricted donations made during the Offertory will be set aside for a

designated charity. Checks made to the church as part of members' pledge fulfillment, or for any other previously announced appeal (such as Chalice Lighters), will not be included.

The goals of Share-The-Plate is to promote the congregation's stated vision "to be a life affirming liberal religious community where people of diverse beliefs, ideas and backgrounds come together to provide spiritual and intellectual growth to one another and to work together in Orange, New Jersey for a greater good in the world", and to fulfill the congregation's mission "to study and practice religion in freedom and fellowship", and "[t]o provide support and care for our [religious] community and the community at large". It will also be seen as a way to enhance the meaning of the church's relationships with and among partners in the larger local community, build awareness, learn more about ourselves and the projects the church gives to, and to develop a philosophy of giving within the church community. However, the program is not intended to displace other regular and special funding appeals.

Members can submit potential candidate organizations and programs to Social & Earth Action, either directly, by mail or through the church web site ([http://essexuu.org/share\\_the\\_plate.html](http://essexuu.org/share_the_plate.html)). The committee will review submissions to see if they align with the church's mission, vision and the

Continuing to promote  
the congregation's vision

program's goals before sending their choice to the Board of Trustees. All charity recommendations must be submitted by a church member, be either a 501(c)3 or 501(c)4 non-profit organizations, and do work that is consistent with Unitarian Universalist principles. The member must also supply a name and description of the charitable organization or project and supply contact information.

Separate checks for the charity, either given during the Offertory or sent to the church for this purpose, should either be made out to the charity or to "The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County" with "Share-the-Plate" noted on the "memo" line. To the extent allowed by law, checks written to the church will be acknowledged as a tax deductible donation. A church check for at least 50% of all unrestricted donations given during Sunday collections, as well as any received checks to be forwarded, will be sent with an acknowledgement letter no later than ten days after the last collection for that charity.

**For more information, contact Georgiana Hart, Social & Earth Action Chair, at 973-763-1139 or [luchahart@verizon.net](mailto:luchahart@verizon.net).**

# Share-the-Plate Fall 2011 Update

**by Greg Giacobe**

It has been a very successful year for our Share-The-Plate program. Overall, the church’s Sunday collections last year have experienced a noticeable upturn over the prior year. Total Sunday collections for 2009/10 were \$1209.50 while for 2010/11 it was \$ 1603.75, an increase of 32.6%. Thank you all for making this program a success!

First launched in late 2008, Share-The-Plate is designed to help local under-funded and deserving charities in the Orange area, and was envisioned as a way for our

church community to live out its values and mission in a tangible way. Please see accompanying article for details on how you can become involved and nominate a charity. Each fall and spring, Social & Earth Action collects and reviews any nominations we receive, one nomination the committee thinks most reflects the church’s values and mission, as well as most in need. This selection is then presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. Soon afterwards, the charity is contacted and the collection period is determined, then details are publicly announced, and collections begin. At least half of each Sunday’s Offertory collection is set aside for the designated charity. At the end of the collection period, an announcement appears in the next edition of the church newsletter, tallying the amount for that period’s charity as well as a running total for the program.

Recipient selection last year was in early October when the Social & Earth Action committee convened. At that time, the UUA/UUSC Pakistan Flood Relief Fund was the selected recipient. The donation period extended from October 17, 2010, to January 30, 2011, and raised a total of \$539.25. Although not aimed locally, the committee determined (and the Board agreed) that the situation in Pakistan was pressing. Our Spring 2011 recipient was also non-local. At its December meeting, S&EA chose to funnel contributions to the L’Union Nationale des Normaliens d’Haïti (UNNOH), a Haitian organization supporting student teachers, through Mr. Anthony O’Brien, Secretary of the PSC Local 1 (AFT). This was arranged due to the cumbersome and disadvantageous exchange rate between the U.S. and Haiti. Still, the program, which ran from February 6 until May 31, 2011, raised \$550.

Since its inception to July 1, 2011, Share-The-Plate has collected and distributed \$3163.75. This is all due to our church’s giving spirit. Thank you very much.

Past Share-The-Plate Recipients

Feed The Needy (St. John the Evangelist RC Church, Orange NJ)	\$695.50
Haitian Pastors Association, East Orange, NJ	\$1379.00
UUA/UUSC Pakistan Flood Relief Fund, Boston, MA	\$539.25
<u>Anthony O’Brien (UNNOH), New York, NY</u>	<u>\$550.00</u>
<b>Share-The-Plate – Cumulative Total (as of 1 July 2011):</b>	<b>\$3163.75</b>

**WHERE EVERY MIND IS FREE AND EVERY SOUL IS WELCOME!**

**MAKING THE  
CONNECTIONS**

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH OF ESSEX COUNTY

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Minister's Email: minister@essexuu.org

Office Email: office@essexuu.org



**Founded in Orange in 1890 as the First Unitarian Church of Essex County**, the congregation has worshipped in the present Sanctuary since its construction in 1892-93. The Church continues the ministry of the Union Universalist Society (also known as the Church of the Redeemer), founded as the First Universalist Society of Newark in 1934.

**The Reverend Darrell E. Berger**  
**Flore Dorcely: President**  
**Greg Giacobe: Church Administrator**  
**Barrie Peterson: Chaplain**  
**Angela Randall-West: Newsletter Editor**

*We are on the web!*  
[www.essexuu.org](http://www.essexuu.org)

**First Unitarian Universalist Church  
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