



MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County

February 2014

Where every mind is free and every soul is welcome!

Spiritually Speaking: *A New Beginning* By Rev. Gordon Clay Bailey

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Despite the fact that Unitarian Universalist (UU) worship's roots are in Protestant Christian liturgical traditions, there is a critical difference between the meaning of UU worship and the meaning understood by other traditions with Protestant identities. It is the difference between worship founded on covenant and worship founded on creeds. This distinction is critical for our free faith, and answers basic questions about why we choose to be UU. This article will call your attention to both our history and our present situation at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex with both a loving eye and a future orientation.

Who are we, as individuals and as Unitarian Universalist? Who are you within this important community? Are you the venerable member that does all of the little things to help us stay focused, on task, financially

afloat? Maybe you're the voice of concern, or reason? Only you and your cohorts know for sure what role you may have played in the past. What ever is behind us is part of the history of this Church and that history needs to be acknowledged and honored. However, I'm focused on the here and now, on this new beginning!

Here we are in February, Black History Month, and more importantly for you and I FUUEC's new story time. I'm interested in both what we do on the day-to-day basis and spiritual people and on how we as a covenantal community lead our collective UU lives. In this place, time and space I see a group of Unitarian Universalist committed to a particular way of being together. As I see it we are a people with purposes and principles that guide us in our interactions both within the community and beyond. As

Martin said he's seen the Promised Land and from that I take its up to us to move forward towards that land, that "Beloved Community" not gingerly but with full intentionality.

I'm looking for you, that is each of the members and friends of this Church to once more find more love, more patience, more time and more effort to give to deepen our individual spirituality, strengthen the impact of our congregation in this community, and with hope, courage and love move forward towards the promised land where human needs, human minds, and human hearts are held and healed in love.

This is my quest as your minister; this is in part my pledge to you. I will need everyone's help. I'm asking for everyone's participation now. I can't wait to fulfill the dream!

MARK IT DOWN

- ◆ Tuesday, 18 February, Board Meeting, 7:30 PM, Sonen Room



Rev. Gordon Clay Bailey came on as consulting minister with the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County as of 1 January 2014. He also serves as consulting minister with the UU Congregation of Rockland County in Pomona, NY, and is a Board Certified Clinical Chaplain and Pastoral Counselor with the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy. Additionally, Rev. Bailey has a small practice in consulting, counseling and coaching institutions, individuals and families and is the Founder/President/CEO of a new not-for-profit: New York Interfaith Associates, Inc. an organization devoted to interfaith dialog, clinical pastoral education and practical training (CPE/T) as well as spiritual care. Rev. Bailey is married to Lisa Stiffler Bailey and they have four children (Jennifer, Devin,

February Sunday Services

Services start at 10:30 AM

02 Feb **Beloved Community Sunday Discussion Leader - Mindy Thompson Fullilove Social Hour Host - Georgiana Hart**

09 Feb **Remembering Kemet/Egypt and All We Owe Her! Rev. Gordon Clay Bailey Musician - Dave Braham, Usher - Georgiana Hart, Social Hour Host - Gregory Giacobe**

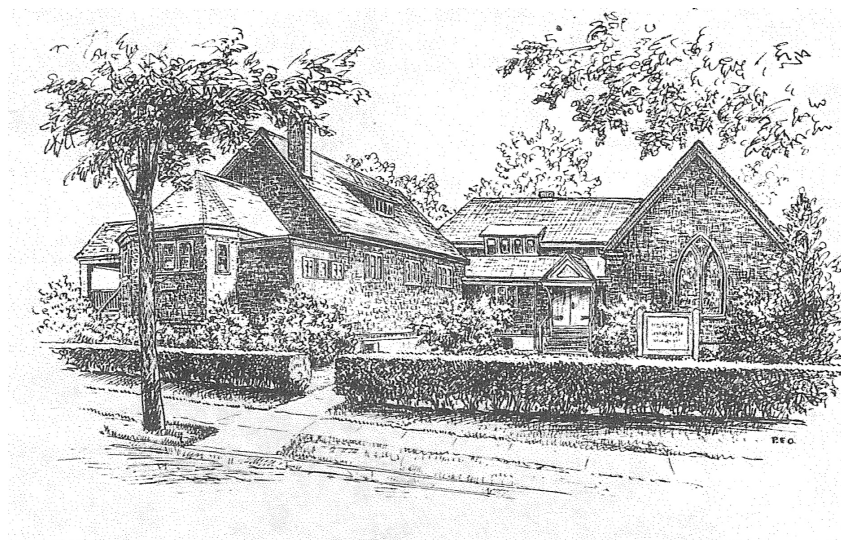
Kemet, the jewel of the Nile! Kemet the place where monotheism begins and the Egyptian Book of the Dead takes place. Kemet home of the first physician and medicine begins in earnest. Join us as we look closely at the history and spiritual gifts of this most amazing African nation.

16 Feb **A Nation Without Us Rev. Gordon Clay Bailey Musician - Bill Stafford, Usher - Gregory Giacobe, Social Hour Host - Darcy Hall**

What would the United States be with out Africans? For that matter what would the Americas be without them? This service during Black History month will explore the possibilities of how our country and the world would have been shaped radically differently without this historical set of circumstance.

23 Feb **East-West Sunday: The Ramayana Discussion Leader - Wayne Eastman, Social Hour Host: Darcy Hall**
11:15 AM

Our East-West session spiritual education session this month will be devoted to the Ramayana, an epic story for the ages and for all ages that blends animals, love, action, adventure, and multiple spiritual meanings. Long-time church members Wayne Eastman and Darcy Hall will lead the session.



Board Secretary's 2014 Report

After an absence of several years, this report is intended to update members and friends on the state of our liberal religious faith community here in Orange, NJ as we continue our discussions about a possible merger with our faith cohorts in Montclair. As a matter of certification, all UU congregations must submit statistics on their membership, pledging income and total expenditures to the Unitarian Universalist Association. Deadline for submitting these figures this year was Monday, 3 February 2014. They are used to calculate the Annual Giving level for each congregation to the UUA as well as the district in which the congregation resides. It also certifies that our church can send the allotted number of delegates to the UUA's General Assembly in June. For the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County, the following figures were reported to the UUA on 21 January 2014:

Current Membership: 33
 RE Enrollment: 0
 Pledging Units: 24
 Pledging Income: \$28,350
 Average Weekly Attendance: 13
 Non-member Friends (if known): 4
 Total Expenditures: \$110,000
 Fiscal Year Starts: 7/1



Compared with the last year's figures, membership has declined by nearly 30%, and the number of pledging units declined by a quarter. Since our RE program was suspended at the end of the 2011-12 church year, no comparisons can be made with previous years. Financially, our pledging income declined by over 26% while the church's budgeted expenses decreased by nearly 7%. Average weekly attendance at services has decreased by nearly a third. Over a longer term, membership had decreased by over a third in the last five years, and nearly half since 2004. The number of pledging units has dropped substantially from 2009. Our expenditures are roughly where they were five years ago, but have increased by 20% over the last decade. Unfortunately, our pledging income continues to fall, likely as a result of our falling membership. It is roughly half of what it was five years ago. Comparison of the present fiscal year with past years is tabulated below.

FY	Cert Mbrs	% Δ	RE Enr	% Δ	Pldg Units	% Δ	Total Expen s	% Δ	Pledge Incom e	% Δ	Avg Wk Attd	% Δ
2014	33	--	0	--	24	--	110,000	--	28,350	--	13	--
2013	47	-29.79	0	0	32	-25.0	118,050	-6.82	38,350	-26.08	19	-31.58
2009	51	-35.29	15	-100	35	-31.43	103,625	6.15	56,925	-50.2	39	-66.66
2004	61	-45.90	17	-100	41	-41.46	92,000	19.57	50,000	-43.3	N/A	--
1994	62	-46.77	24	-100	38	-36.84	57,938	89.86	27,081	4.69	N/A	--
1989	90	-63.33	25	-100	66	-63.63	52,300	110.33	N/A	--	N/A	--
1981	120	-72.5	20	-100	65	-63.08	35,000	214.29	N/A	--	N/A	--
1961	189	-82.54	59	-100	0	N/A	14,000	685.71	N/A	--	N/A	--

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February 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 BELOVED COMMUNITY 10:30 AM	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 SERMON: Kemet/Egypt 10:30 AM	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 SERMON: A Nation W/out Us 10:30 AM	17	18 Board of Trustees Sonen Room 7:30 PM	19	20	21	22 Newsletter Deadline
23 EAST-WEST: Ramayana 11:15 AM	24	25	26	27	28	

Share-The-Plate Winter/Spring 2014 Update & Recipient

There have been many changes at First UU and it shows much in our collection plate. Due the resignation of our minister, discussion about merging with a nearby congregation, and now hiring a new minister, the church had to cut back on the number of formal services for the church year. This impacted on our Sunday collections and therefore on Share-The-Plate. Total Sunday collections so far for 2013/14 it was \$ 864.00 while for 2012/13 it was \$ 2526.50. With the pick up in the number of formal services for the rest of the year, we assume the total amount for collections will double by the end of the church year.

The recipient for the Fall 2013 was ORNG INK, a community arts program by & for youth, run under the auspices of HANDS, Inc., Valley Arts & the University of Orange. The period ran from 8 September 2013 to 26 January 2014 and raised a total of \$432. At its 12 January 2014 meeting, Social Action decided, under the circumstances, to continue with ORNG INK as the Winter/Spring 2014 recipient. The period will run from 2 February to 8 June 2014.

In total as of 1 February 2014, Share-The-Plate has collected and distributed \$6297.50 since its inception. 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
Anthony O'Brien (UNNOH), New York, NY	\$550.00
Gale Center – Planned Parenthood of Metro NJ	\$1493.50
Interfaith Food Pantry of the Oranges	\$622.75
ORNG INK	\$1017.00

Share-The-Plate – Cumulative Total (as of 1 February 2014): **\$6297.50**

FEBRUARY 2014 INTERFAITH CALENDAR

- 02 Candlemas (Christian)
Four Chaplains Sunday (Interfaith)
Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Anglican)
Imbolc/Lughnassad (Wicca/Pagan), Northern/southern hemispheres
- 03 Setsubun-sai (Shinto)
- 04 Vasant Panchami (Hindu)
- 14 Saint Valentine's Day (Christian)
- 15 Nirvana Day (Buddhist/Jain)
- 16 Triodion begins (Christian)
- 26 [thru 1 March] Intercalary Days (Baha'i)
- 28 Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)

Board Secretary's 2014 Report cont.

The updating of our membership roster also insures you will receive your copy of The UU World, the denominational magazine. You may also subscribe to the magazine's weekly e-mail update at <http://www.uuworld.org/subscriptions/emailnewsletter.shtml>. If you are having a problem receiving your copy of the UU World, please contact me at secretary@essexuu.org.

2014 Congregational Poll

In addition to the above statistics, the congregational certification process also lets UU congregations give input of the proposed Congregational Study/Action Issues (CSAIs) for the upcoming Social Witness cycle that will end with a new Statement of Conscience in 2016. This year, because the church's attention has been devoted to the issue of merger with Montclair, Social Action decided to leave the decision to the Board of Trustees. The list of qualifying proposed CSAIs were release on 15 November 2013 (see below). Both a hard copy and email version of a ballot were composed and sent out to all Trustees and Officers and asked to be returned by the January 2014 Board meeting. Six of the seven members of the Board returned a completed ballot. The Validation Threshold was set at the Board's quorum for conducting any business (4). Tabulation, scoring and recommendations arrived at remained the same as in past years.

Proposed Congregational Study/ Action Issues	Yes	No	Abstain	Score	Recom.
Empowerment: Age and Ability Reconsidered	4		2	3	Yes
Ending the War on Terror	5		1	4.5	Yes
Escalating Inequality	5		1	4.5	Yes
Gun Violence: A Public Health Issue	5		1	4.5	Yes
Renewing and Securing Our American Democracy	4	1	1	2.5	Abstain
UU Values & the Pursuit of a Just Peace for Israelis & Palestinians	5		1	4.5	Yes

Due to rules stated by UUA Commission of Social Witness, a congregation can vote up to a maximum of five proposed CSAIs when they certify. For this reason, only those CSAIs that has a "Yes" recommendation were submitted.





Pomona @ The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockland (UUCR)

Mardi Gras History and Traditions

Mardi Gras is music, parades, picnics, floats, excitement...and one big holiday in New Orleans! Everyone is wearing purple, green, and gold, and adorned with long beads caught from the beautiful floats. They sit on the ground throwing balls; playing music, having a picnic, and watching the crowds walk by between parades.

During Mardi Gras, all of the businesses and roads are practically shut down--people walk everywhere and meeting new friends. People are dressed in crazy costumes, kids are everywhere, and they love it! How did it all begin, and have the traditions changed?

We will share an afternoon and early evening of **MUSIC**, culture, history, and tradition and of course **Food** (Vegetarian, Chicken and everything GUMBO)! **This is a child friendly event!**

Join the UUCR community as we celebrate this awesome occasion and engage in the sheer joy of the season.

When: Saturday, 8 March 2014

Time: 4 PM to 8 PM

Where: 137 Conklin Rd, Pomona NY

Cost: \$ 20.00 per person, \$35.00 for two, \$50.00 for a family (3-5)

We are on the web: essexuu.org

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

Mailing Address:
PO Box 998.
Orange NJ 07051-0998

Meeting Address:
35 & 47 Cleveland St
Orange NJ 07050-2907

Church Phone: 973-674-0010

Office Email: office@essexuu.org

Minister's Email: minister@essexuu.org

Web: essexuu.org

Minister: Rev. Gordon Clay Bailey

President: Darcy Hall

Vice President: Mindy Thompson Fullilove

Treasurer: Bill Slezak

Secretary: Greg Giacobe

Custodian: Anisha Sanders

Administrator: Greg Giacobe

WE VALUE: Community...
Exploration... Fellowship...
Spirituality... Liberal Religious
Education... Diversity... Freedom...
and Action.

OUR VISION: To be a life-affirming liberal religious community where people of diverse beliefs, ideas and background 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.

OUR MISSION: To study and practice religion in freedom and fellowship. To provide support and care for our community and the community at large.

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 1892-3. The Church continues the ministry of the Union Universalist Society (also known as the Church of the Redeemer), founded as the First Universalist



**First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Essex County**

PO Box 998.

Orange NJ 07051-0998

Making the connections

