



MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Essex County

February 2016

Inside this issue:

Sunday Sunset Services	2
Buddha In Thai Buddhism	3
February Calendar of	4
Orange Adult School Open House	5
Syria Forum	6

MARK IT DOWN

- ◆ Orange Adult School Open House, Thursday, 11 Feb, 6 PM
- ◆ Sunset Service, Sunday, 14 Feb, 6 PM

Where every mind is free and every soul is welcome!

Spiritually Speaking I: A Story of Light & Darkness By Rev. Erica Baron

Once upon a time there lived people who loved the light. As soon as the sun rose every morning, they were up to welcome it, singing songs of celebration for the light. And when the sun went down each evening they sang other songs, sad songs, songs of missing the light of the sun. They loved the light so very much.

They did not love the darkness. Once darkness fell every night, they would hurry to bed, since they could only bear the darkness when they were asleep. Even then, total darkness was frightening to them, and so they always kept a fire burning in every room.

The people's dearest wish was that the sun would not set in the evening, that darkness would never fall. But every day the sun set and they sang their sad songs and they endured the fearful, sad, strange darkness until they could greet the sun again the next day.

Now in this land were born two remarkable children. They were twins. One was a girl, and she seemed to shine from within. Whenever she entered a room, everything seemed to get a little brighter. And the people loved her very much.

The other was a boy, and he seemed to bring darkness with him. Whenever he entered a room, everything seemed a little dimmer. And the people did not like him. They feared him because he reminded them of the great darkness of the night.

But although the people loved the girl and did not love the boy, the twins loved each

other very much. And because the girl loved her brother so very much, the people mostly let him be even though they were afraid of him.

Now, as they grew, it became clear that these children were, in fact, magical children. The girl had the power to bring life back when it was harmed or lost. When she was a very small child, she could heal small cuts and bruises.

When she grew a little older, she could heal broken bones and other larger hurts. And by the time she was a teenager, she could make the crops grow faster and larger and fuller. She could bring plants and animals that had died back to life. The people suspected she could even bring people back to life, but they were a little afraid to ask, and she did not offer.

The boy, on the other hand, had the power to calm and quiet anything.

When he was a very small child, he could help his family go to sleep more quickly, thus saving them from the fear of the darkness. When he was a little older, he could calm animals when they were frightened and make them still. Sometimes, he would go first to an animal or a person who was hurt and help them to be calm enough for his sister's healing magic to work. And by the time he was a teenager, he could calm storms and winds and rains. He could bring anything to stillness.

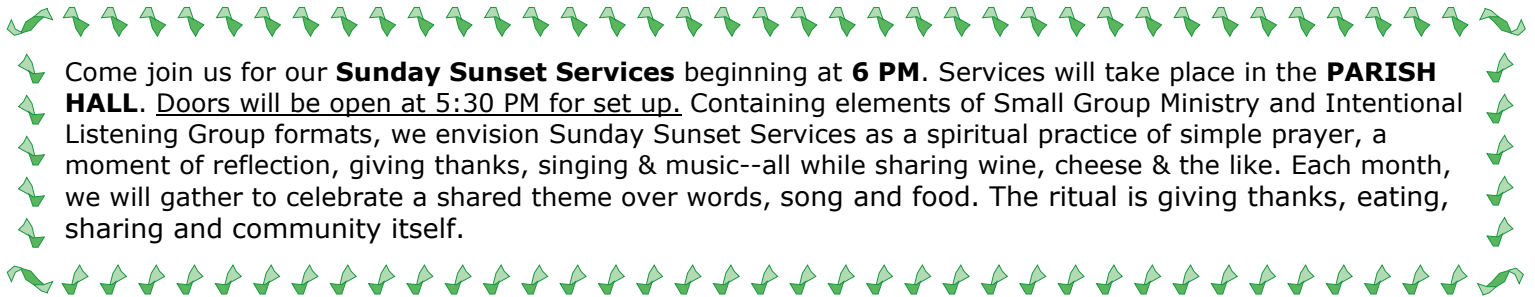
The people's love for the light and fear of the darkness only grew with time, perhaps more strongly with the twins always before them to remind them. And so one day, they decided to ask the girl for a favor. They asked her to see if her magic could hold the sun in the sky and stop the night from coming. The girl was



Continued on Page 2

Sunday Sunset Services

Services in Parish Hall start at 6 PM



Come join us for our **Sunday Sunset Services** beginning at **6 PM**. Services will take place in the **PARISH HALL**. Doors will be open at 5:30 PM for set up. Containing elements of Small Group Ministry and Intentional Listening Group formats, we envision Sunday Sunset Services as a spiritual practice of simple prayer, a moment of reflection, giving thanks, singing & music--all while sharing wine, cheese & the like. Each month, we will gather to celebrate a shared theme over words, song and food. The ritual is giving thanks, eating, sharing and community itself.

DATE THEME

- 14 Feb** *Balance* **Coordinators & Hosts — Darcy Hall & Greg Giacobe** **Musician - Bill Stafford, Usher - Wayne Eastman**
- 13 Mar** *Play* **Coordinators & Hosts — Darcy Hall & Greg Giacobe** **Musician - Bill Stafford, Usher - Wayne Eastman**
- 10 Apr** *Sustainability* **Coordinators & Hosts — Darcy Hall & Greg Giacobe** **Musician - TBA, Usher - Wayne Eastman**
- 15 May** *Parents* **Coordinators & Hosts — Darcy Hall & Greg Giacobe** **Musician - TBA, Usher - Wayne Eastman**
- 12 Jun** *Blessings* **Coordinators & Hosts — Darcy Hall & Greg Giacobe** **Musician - TBA, Usher - Wayne Eastman**



Spiritually Speaking [cont.]

reluctant, but after many, many months of being asked, she finally decided to try, just to get the people to leave her alone. One day, just as the sun was at its highest point, she went out onto the top of the highest hill in the land, and she threw her arms up into the sky, and she asked the sun to stop, to stay right there at the top of the sky forever.

She wasn't immediately sure that anything had happened. The sun usually moves so slowly. But before very long it became clear that something had happened. The sun had stopped in the sky.

The people were overjoyed. There was a big celebration. They sang all of their songs celebrating the sun. They loved the girl even more—at least at first. For the first week or so, everyone was happy and content.

But soon they began to get tired. Although they had always slept with a fire to ward off the darkness, sleeping in the full light of the sun was another thing altogether. They tossed and turned and woke up constantly. Some of them remembered that the boy could help with sleep, and asked for his aid, but his power of bringing sleep seemed to have disappeared along with the darkness.

After about a month, the exhausted, frustrated people began to see that this constant sunlight was a problem. Though they still loved the light, they began to wish that the sun would once again move in the sky. Each person at first thought that they were the only one who thought this. And given the people's love of the light and fear of the darkness, everyone was afraid, at first, to say anything about this growing longing for nighttime. But slowly, softly, as they began to confide in each other, they discovered that everyone felt this way. And they finally decided that something must be done.

They went back to the girl and asked her to get the sun to move again. It was her magic that had stopped it, and they figured her magic could make it move again. So, she went back up onto the top of the highest hill, threw her arms up into the sky and asked the sun to move. Nothing happened. She tried again. And a third time, but the sun stayed still. Sadly, she turned to the people and told them there was nothing she could do. There was a long moment of growing panic before the boy stepped forward. "Let me try," he said softly. Everyone thought about it for a moment and then decided this was a good idea.

So, he took his sister's place on the top of the highest hill, threw his arms up to the sky, and asked the sun to move.

Spiritually Speaking I [cont.]

The sun began moving at once, rushing toward the western horizon. Within ten minutes, it had set, and within fifteen, it was full, dark night.

The people were caught off guard. They had all come out to the hill to see if the girl's magic would work. They had no fires lit—they hadn't needed them in weeks. They had nothing with them to light their way. They had never been outside at night before, and they were terrified.

At first, they tried rushing home to get away from the darkness, but they soon discovered that rushing when you can't see where you are going is a bad idea. They slowed down, but still peered at the ground, trying to get home as soon as they could. But then, one of them looked up. "Oh!" she exclaimed. "Look!" Everyone looked up, and then they all saw the stars for the first time. They had never been outside at night before, and had no idea of the incredible beauty of a sky full of stars. They all stopped hurrying toward their homes and stood and stared in wonder. And then they realized how very tired they were, and so slowly now, and with more reverence, they started home again. They all slept for a very long time.

The people rested and were glad, and appreciated the darkness for the first time in their lives. Eventually, the sun rose again. As it did, the people got out of their beds and sang their songs to celebrate the coming of the light. But at the end of the day, as the sun began to sink toward the horizon, they did not feel like singing their sad songs. Instead, one of the musicians began singing a new song, a slow, quiet song of thanksgiving for the night. And soon the others joined in. It became their new sunset song.

And the boy and the girl grew up to be a man and a woman, and both of them were now much beloved by the people. Looking at them, still the best of friends as well as siblings, the people remembered that light and darkness are best in balance.

Rev. Erica Baron has served the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills in Kingston, New York, since 2013. She is a 2008 graduate of Andover Newton Theological School and a monthly contributor to the Nature's Path blog on Patheos. This essay is adapted from "Celebrating Darkness," which appeared on December 4, 2015, at the Nature's Path blog at Patheos.com.

Spiritually Speaking II: Dynamic Balance

By Rev. W. Frederick Wooden

When most people think of balance, they tend to think of a scale and to assume that a balanced life would not tip. That sort of balance, though, is static. You can attain it only if you never change. And that's impossible. Strictly speaking, the only balanced person is a dead one.

Balance is a seductive word, promising some imagined peace or wholeness and suggesting that to be out of balance is a sign of bad health or personal incompetence. But if we start with the idea that living is dynamic, then we have to reconceive our notion of balance in such a way that it can be dynamic, too. My oldest son, 15, just learned to ride a bike. I tried to help him long ago, but he kept hoping to learn without falling and to find his balance without moving forward. I told him falling is inevitable and to find his balance, he would have to keep moving. Perhaps, then, the question isn't how to find balance but how to move. Walking, as I have learned from observing the same child and confirmed by reading, is actually controlled falling. We keep from hitting the floor by moving forward.

What is true of bicycles and baby feet probably applies more generally. I feel most balanced when I sense that I'm moving toward a goal. Whether trivial (finishing three miles on the treadmill) or huge (leading a congregation), it helps me focus and direct my life. The direction keeps me upright, which is to say balanced.

Least I sound content and serene, I assure you I am not. Each day teeters, as I reel from anxieties about money, children, marriage, work, and self. But I don't fall, at least not often. That's because I have a direction, so that every time I stumble, I keep moving forward.

Rev. W. Frederick Wooden is senior minister of the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn, NY. His article appeared in the November/December 2000 issue of the [UU World](http://UUWorld).



SUNSET SERVICE: BUDDHA IN THAI BUDDHISM

The recapture of innocence by the destruction of the ego.

Victory of Divinity over Delusion.

He is smiling, free of fear and at peace as he leaves his body for the last time.

He sits beneath the protective umbrella of the Dharma, the universal law.

There is an in-dwelling perfection in every being, every being possesses Buddha-nature.

Left in the ruins of the city as the active temples.

Not everyone is a Buddhist, but everyone is a Buddha to be awakened.

The Buddha revered as a new paradigm of humanity, but he is not revered as a god.



At the 10 January 2016 Sunset Service, a documentary was shown featuring the figure of the Buddha in Thai Buddhism. Participants were asked to write down any phrase that captured their attention. Those noted are reproduced here. We like to thank all who attended for participating.

February 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 Orange Adult School Open House, 6 PM	12	13
14 SUNSET SERVICE: Balance 6 PM	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29					

Business...Finance...ESL...Technology
Negocios...Finanzas...ESL...Tecnología

Take classes in Orange at
Orange Adult School

Tomar clases en la
Escuela de Adultos en Orange

Obtenga más información en nuestra asamblea
Febrero 11, 6pm

Junto a Rosa Parks en la escuela de la Comunidad
Iglesia de Primer Unitarian Universalist, 35 Cleveland St Orange, NJ 07050

Para preguntas, póngase en contacto con Barry Devone, coordinador del sitio en Rosa Parks
Escuela Comunitaria (973)677-4000 ext. 1019

Learn more at our open house
February 11th, 6pm

Next Door to Rosa Parks Community School at
First Unitarian Universalist Church, 35 Cleveland St Orange, NJ 07050

For questions, contact Barry Devone, Site Coordinator at Rosa Parks Community School
(973)677-4000 ext. 1019

SYRIA

WHERE DO YOU STAND?



A Forum at the Sanctuary of the First Unitarian Congregational Society
Saturday, February 6th, 2016 at 2:30 pm

Monroe Place & Pierrepont St. • 50 Monroe Place, Brooklyn

Subway: 2, 3 to Clark St or Boro Hall • 4 to Boro Hall • A to High St or Jay St • F to Jay St • R to Court St.

Bus: B25, B26, B37, B38, B41, B45, B51, B52, B57

Sponsored by: First Unitarian Congregational Society of Brooklyn's *Weaving the Fabric of Diversity Team*

Send Inquiries to: Bob Patterson, rpatterson11201@yahoo.com • **Learn More About First U:** www.fuub.org

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

2016 Metro NY District Annual Meeting

Better Together

May 6-7, 2016

Hyatt Morristown – 3 Speedwell Avenue, Morristown, NJ 07960

Featuring Keynote Speaker, UUA Director of Multicultural Growth & Witness, Taquiena Boston



Musical Guests, Brother Sun will be making an appearance.



If you are interested in presenting a workshop at the 2016 MNY Annual Meeting, please submit a workshop proposal by March 1, 2016 [here](#). On the agenda will be a vote in support of the plan for regionalization. To learn more, go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNP4i-liIrN6vu38FCkqxJZdQPk737Pfi>

We are on the web: essexuu.org

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

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

Church Phone: 973-674-0010

Office Email: office@essexuu.org

Web: essexuu.org

**Acting President: Mindy
Thompson Fullilove**

**Vice President Pro Temp:
Frank Barszcz**

Treasurer: Bill Slezak

Secretary: Greg Giacobe

Administrator: Greg Giacobe

Sexton: Tony A Jones

**HUUB Director: Charlie
Wirene**



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
Society of Newark in 1834.



**First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Essex County**

PO Box 998.

Orange NJ 07051-0998

Making the connections

